

POLAND on 28/04

I would like to cordially thank Dr. Simon Thurley and express my profound appreciation for **his** initiative to organise the European Heritage Summit, which surely will contribute to the development of international cooperation and, in consequence, will have positive influence on the protection of common heritage. I am delighted that I can participate in this prestigious international meeting and I would like to state with satisfaction that the two years' cooperation of the National Centre for Historical Monument Studies and Documentation (the Centre) with English Heritage already has visible results.

The legal basis for the protection of Polish heritage is regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, the Monument Protection and Preservation Act, the Archives Act and the Museum Act.

In the Polish legal system, it is the Minister of Culture and National Heritage who is responsible for monuments protection. His deputy, being at the same time the General Conservator of Monuments of the Republic of Poland, performs these tasks and competencies on his behalf. On the regional level, the monuments protection is carried out by the voivode, represented by the Voivodeship Conservator of Monuments. The National Centre for Historical Monument Studies and Documentation is the biggest in Poland specialised institution of culture acting in the domain of cultural heritage protection. We are directly subordinated to the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and we have regional offices. Our institution constitutes a scientific and programme base for the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, the General Conservator of Monuments and, on the regional level, Voivodeship Conservators of Monuments.

The main tasks of the Centre are:

- to keep record of national monuments by gathering documentation concerning monuments of architecture and town-planning, parks and gardens, cemeteries, monuments of technology and mobile monuments (interior equipment of palaces, manors, sacral buildings, etc.). The Centre also gathers the documentation of works carried out in the monuments;
- to draw up opinions and expert reports for monument protection institutions;
- to elaborate, implement and propagate new technologies of research and monument documentation – we set standards;
- to carry out interdisciplinary research on monuments;
- to organise specialist trainings, conferences and to issue specialist publications;

- to propagate knowledge of monuments, organise events and meetings, including the coordination of the European Days of Heritage and International Day of Monuments Protection;
- to cooperate with national and international organisations acting in the domain of monuments protection;
- to run UNESCO contact point and to coordinate activities related to the periodical reports on Polish sites entered to the UNESCO's List of World Heritage (1 of the 12 sites on the UNESCO's list – Mużakowski Park in Łęknica – is under our direct supervision)
- to undertake actions related to the protection of non-material heritage;
- to cooperate with all levels of government and self-government authorities in the domain of monuments protection.

The Centre considers the international cooperation as very important – we are conscious of the fact that there is a lot to do. Among our priorities is the preservation of the common heritage on the East i.e. on the territory of Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania, as well as in cooperation with our German partners, mainly on the territory of Silesia, Western Pomerania and Prussia. We will develop our cooperation with Czech Republic and Slovakia. We actively participate in the works of the Baltic Sea Monitoring Group on Heritage Cooperation – all in the domain of common heritage preservation.

The main problems covered by our activities are:

- degradation of the cultural landscape. This phenomenon concerns mainly historical cities (even those entered on the UNESCO's World Heritage List) and rural areas. There are no mechanisms of integrated protection of natural and environmental monuments.
- heritage management. It is the main problem and the domain in which we are still learning. The key issue is to find the appropriate functions and mechanisms for abandoned manors, palaces, parks and gardens management. It concerns also military and technology monuments as well as monuments in degraded (post-industrial) areas.
- increase of the role of monuments in the development of tourism and entrepreneurship through creation of integrated tourist products.
- elaboration of the rules of public and private partnership in the domain of monuments adaptation for other functions.
- it seems necessary to create an effective system of cultural heritage information exchange between European partners. It is particularly important for the research on monuments and conservation technologies. I think that in the future it will be necessary to create a European Internet portal, which would constitute an excellent platform of information exchange.

Monitoring of sites and facilities having particular importance to the common heritage is also indispensable. The periodical report we made out for the World Heritage Committee showed how much there is to do. Besides sites entered on the UNESCO's List of World Heritage, the so-called "Monuments of History" were also granted a specific form of protection. These are historical sites and facilities of particular value for the culture, recognised as the monuments of history by the President of the Republic of Poland, upon the request of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. Until now, 30 sites were recognised as the monuments of history by the Presidents of the Republic of Poland, following special criteria and procedures of designation. Besides the obvious prestige, these sites have priority in financing renovation and conservation works from the state budget. This unique form gives the possibility of their privileged promotion, what is particularly important for their tourist development. I would like to inform that the Centre is finishing the works on the scheme of monitoring of monuments of history and sites entered on the UNESCO's World Heritage List. This document will contain, among others, a management plan for each of these sites. We shall start the monitoring in 2007.

The following presentations show how many problems lay ahead. Thanks to the exchange of experience and constant cooperation we are able to more effectively protect our common heritage.