

ICOMOS

Report on the ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission to Curonian Spit (C 994)

19th to 22nd January 2015

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**REPORT ON THE ICOMOS REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION TO
CURONIAN SPIT (C 994) (Lithuania / Russian Federation)
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The mission expert would like to warmly thank the Lithuanian authorities for the welcome received. The excellent organization of the programme (well prepared whilst remaining flexible), as well as the openness and high level of professionalism that prevailed during the visits and meetings within a friendly atmosphere, allowed for the mission team to obtain the relevant information in order to form impressions on the specific issues at hand as well as a good overall view of the current situation, the state of conservation and the questions concerning the Curonian Spit. In particular, the mission expert acknowledges the information and detailed answers received from the representatives of the Ministries of the Republic of Lithuania, of the Kursiu Nerija National Park, and of the National Commission for UNESCO.

Further thanks is extended to all representatives of the companies and Institutions whose participation was necessary and instrumental to the successful completion of the mission, whose assistance and availability throughout the mission is therefore gratefully acknowledged. With special thanks to the representatives of the Kurshskaja Kosa National Park (Russian Federation), who joined the mission programme during the meeting held in Nida. The mission expert also expresses his gratitude to the Institutions which assured venues for meetings: Klaipėda State Seaport Authority, Kursiu Nerija National Park and Nida Art Colony.

Last but not least, the ICOMOS International Secretariat is also thanked for fully ensuring the mission's logistics.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the specific Terms of Reference (ToR) of the mission, there was only limited possibility given to assess the overall effectiveness of the management of the whole property. Whilst a short visit to the Lithuanian part of the property was realized during the mission (a trip by boat and another trip from the Klaipėda-ferry to Nida by car), a visit of the Russian section of the property was not possible (due to a lack of time). However, during the consultations and discussions about the issues, it became quite clear that there are still considerable challenges to be dealt with.

The origin (causes) of these challenges seems to be mostly, but not exclusively, closely connected with the dynamic natural phenomena from which the spit originated and which are still present with subsequent impact. As for the contemporary man-made challenges – development pressure, tourism management, traffic issues, etc. – the effectiveness of the management seems quite variable, with some positive signs on the one hand (e.g. in the Lithuanian part, illegal construction-activity has been slowed down or even stopped) and some recurrently conflicting areas (i.e. diverging views of National Park regulation and local development expectations) on the other.

Focusing on the issues specified in the ToR of the mission, the conclusions are the following:

Concerning “The preliminary plans to construct a suspension bridge from Klaipėda across the Lagoon to the Spit”:

On the basis of the current legal situation and the design status, ICOMOS concludes that there is only a tentative (conflicting) idea, but no legal possibility for it, and therefore there are no preliminary plans to construct a suspension bridge from Klaipėda across the Lagoon to the Spit. The main element of the mission’s conclusions – based on the on-site visit, even if the mission was under a time constraint – is that the construction of any bridge anywhere across the Curonian Lagoon would have a serious effect which would irreparably damage the integrity (and therefore the OUV) of the property both visually and physically.

In contrast, the current situation, namely the absence of any bridge, operates as an “automatic regulatory filter” and contributes significantly to avoiding the overloading of the site with traffic (inclusive of transit traffic and parking plots). Therefore, the Management Plan for the World Heritage property – currently in the process of being prepared – should declare clearly and explicitly that the present situation (without any bridge across the lagoon) should be sustained.

Concerning “Construction of a liquefied gas terminal outside Klaipėda”:

On the basis of the EIA document, the detailed discussion held on the process and on the basis of the site-visit, the main outcomes are as follows, the mission considers:

- The preparation, permission process and realization of an Liquefied Natural Gas terminal (LNGT) project followed all national level requirements and prescriptions of the Lithuanian republic, including the fulfillment of a number of international obligations accepted by the State Party (i.e. ESPO and other conventions),
- In specific phases of the process however all of the information was not shared – in accordance with article 172 of the “Operational Guidelines” – in due time with the WH Committee through the WH Centre (e.g. the EIA was only communicated after the decision had been already made by the State Party authorities); and there wasn’t sufficient information concerning information-sharing with the other State Party concerned (the Russian Federation) with regard to the EIA. This situation highlights the importance of having a common World Heritage Management Plan in force between both relevant SPs and a consolidated, institutionalized cooperation system between them, assuring its efficient implementation.
- The main element of the mission’s conclusions, also based on the on-site visit, is that the LNGT does not create an adverse effect on the visual integrity (and therefore the OUV) of the property, because of the given context: the traditionally existing contrast between the humanized but natural-like landscape of the Curonian Spit and the highly industrial “port-scape” of the Klaipėda marine port. The “double identity” of the view does not seem to be disturbed by the new, added element of the LNGT which in its appearance fits into the port-scape and is located at a reasonable distance from the previously mentioned landscape. Some temporary constructions (e.g. large white tent) are to be removed from the site.

Concerning “The proposed construction of a deep sea port at Klaipėda”:

On the basis of information received during the presentation and discussions, the main outcomes of the mission are as follows:

In order to meet the requirements of the “Deep Sea Port” technical characteristics, one of the proposed options - in which the widening and deepening of the existing “channel area” is foreseen but where the intervention does not exceed the external borders of the current territory of the port - may comply with the requirements for the protection and conservation of the adjacent World Heritage property, if the EIA and HIA certify that there will be no adverse impacts on the OUV. The overall environmental impact study to be completed for the main fairway in 2015-2017, together with other EIAs and the HIA, must be submitted however to the World Heritage Centre for evaluation by the Advisory Bodies before any irreversible decision is made.

This option, connected with the proposed enhanced mobility system connecting Klaipėda city with Curonian Spit and taking the burden (of traffic, parking etc.) off of the WH property itself, might lead to a sustainable situation respecting the carrying capacity of all areas, namely of the WH property, the south-western part of the city of Klaipėda (the lagoon shore) and also of the port area of Klaipėda.

- The option of a deep sea OUTER port at Klaipėda - which has also been mentioned as a possible alternative (or the 2nd phase) of the development project - raises serious questions and undoubtedly needs an even more in-depth and detailed EIA and a special Heritage Impact Assessment concerning the visual impact and other environmental questions. It is therefore strongly recommended that the State Party look in parallel for an alternative location.
- Based on the presentations and on the on-site visit, the mission considers that the Deep Sea Outer Port development might pose an adverse effect concerning the OUV of the property, linked not only to visual impacts but also to the possible changes in sea currents and the stability of the dunes on the Spit. Information on any further preparation activity and the results of forthcoming EIAs and HIAs should be communicated to the WH Committee through the WH Centre – in accordance with article 172 of the “Operational Guidelines” – in due time (before decisions are made), in order to avoid a similar situation as is the case with the LNGT project. The Management Plan for the World Heritage property – currently in the process of being prepared – should contain special conditions and prescriptions concerning this development project and, more generally, the need for HIAs in line with ICOMOS Guidance.

General recommendations concerning management needs:

- The World Heritage Management Plan (for the whole property, inclusive of the Lithuanian and the Russian components) including a system of inter-institutional and international (trans-boundary) cooperation, should be finalized urgently in order to strengthen the efficiency of the management of the Curonian Spit property.

- The WH Management Plan also should contain a capacity development strategy for national park administrations and municipality staff (considering the management needs of the WH property).
- The detailed recommendations of the 2013 ICOMOS Advisory mission regarding the Management Plan still remain valid

Furthermore, a number of recommendations made by the 2010 Reactive Monitoring Mission also remain valid. Without repeating them *“in extenso”*, they are as follows:

- **Construction policy on the shores or on the fore-dunes:** “It is the landscape of the dunes and the water features, the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon, that make the unique landscapes of OUV. They must be preserved intact. The Curonian Spit is a priori a National Park conserved for the enjoyment of visitors interested in its specific values. These values are fragile and vulnerable, the property is small, and therefore it cannot and it must not attempt to cater for every wish of every holiday maker.”
- **Actions for resolving conflicts of interest between the National Parks and the Municipalities: It was still possible to attest that** “the National Parks are accused of standing in the way of the economic development of the area, of being restrictive, negative, even hostile to the holiday makers and the local inhabitants. Consequently they tend to be lax with the rules and prohibitions put in place to conserve the different zones of the National Parks, which is not in the interest of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.”
- **Creation of Buffer Zones:** “The buffer zones may be necessary for a variety of reasons including the intrusive visibility of buildings in the settlements, at the shoreline, and also outside the settlements, e.g. next to the nature reservations or dunes in general. Another type of buffer zones may be necessary because of the sinking of the water tables and the noise pollution. The matter needs to be carefully considered.”
- **Mitigation of the housing problem in the Lithuanian part of the Curonian Spit:** the effort already made in this regard should be continued; the WH Management plan should contain clear policies and efficient tools for this purpose.
- **Education and information strategy oriented to local community and other stakeholders:** “In order to help a more effective work process, seminars / conferences are to be organized on a regular, yearly basis on various themes, with the goal to educate the inhabitants about the Outstanding Universal Value of the Curonian Spit, its fragility, the importance of the National Parks personnel in safeguarding it etc. in order to lessen the friction and help to better preserve the property.”

Special recommendations concerning issues examined by the recent mission:

- Concerning **the LNGT**, the continued monitoring of possible (non-visual) impacts is recommended,
- Concerning the proposal for the construction of a **“suspended bridge over the lagoon”**: it is recommended that the SP of Lithuania declare that no bridge construction is allowed in the context of the Curonian Spit World Heritage property, and to insert this decision in all relevant regulatory or legal documents as well as in the (forthcoming) WH Management Plan;

- Concerning the **project of the construction of Deep Sea Port and/or a Deep Sea Outer Port in the Klaipeda Port area**: all information connected with the Deep Sea Port project, including EIAs and HIAs should be reported, in accordance with article 172 of the “Operational Guidelines”, in due time (after receiving the results but before a decision is made) to the WH Committee through the WH Centre and before irreversible decisions are made.

Besides the above-mentioned issues, comments and recommendations, there are some other elements to be mentioned. In order to enhance tourism management infrastructure, it is foreseen to establish a new and complex visitor-center in the Lithuanian part of the property, in the settlement of Juodkrantė. This proposal is still in a very early stage; only its concept was outlined during mission. The idea is to place this ensemble in the “Amber bay” on the spot of a former (currently non-existing) industrial (amber-mining) ensemble; further documentation on the development, including an HIA, should be reported in due time to the WH Committee and before any irreversible decisions are made.

The necessity to have a World Heritage Management Plan for the property has already been mentioned in this report several times, this can be considered as the most important observation of the mission.

A final observation: any future missions concerning this particular property would be more efficient if in each and every case both the Lithuanian and the Russian parts were visited and evaluated.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

1.1 Inscription history:

The World Heritage transnational property of the Curonian Spit was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 (24th session of the World Heritage Committee, Cairns, Australia, 27 November - 02 December 2000).

Outstanding Universal Value A retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2014 and is set out in Annex 6.8.

The report of the Second Cycle PER-REP, 2014 set out the following attributes of OUV:

Attributes expressing the Outstanding Universal Value per criterion

- *Characteristic panoramas and*
- *the silhouette from the Curonian Lagoon.*
- *The spatial-planned structure and architecture of villages (wooden fishermen's houses and professionally designed buildings of the 19th century) and*
- *the elements of the marine cultural heritage.*
- *The natural dunes, and*

- *a man-made protective coastal dune ridge,*
- *forests with unique sand flora and fauna.*
- *The social-cultural traditions, spirituality and the social perception of the area.”*

1.2 Integrity and authenticity issues raised in the evaluation report at the time of inscription:

In ICOMOS’s opinion, the Curonian Spit qualifies for inscription on the World Heritage List under cultural criteria v. However, it was noted that the management plans for the two components of the nominated property should be harmonized and integrated before it can be inscribed. It is especially important that an effective joint tourism management plan be implemented. To ensure the proper management of the entire Spit, a joint consultative commission should be set up, operating in the same way as the Franco-Spanish commission for the World Heritage property: “Pyrénées - Mont Perdu.”

The above “comment” was completed (also by ICOMOS) with an additional *Recommendation*: “At the meeting of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee in Paris in June 2000, this nomination was referred back to the two States Parties, requesting them to take active steps to create the collaborative mechanisms proposed by ICOMOS.¹ At the time this evaluation was prepared for printing, this information had not been received. In the event of the information being made available before the extraordinary meeting of the Bureau in November 2000 and found to conform to these requirements, ICOMOS recommends that this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion v.”

1.3 Examination of the state of conservation by the World Heritage Committee

The state of conservation of the Property has been examined by the World Heritage Committee at its 26th(CONF 202 21B.57), 27th(27 COM 7B.70), 28th(28 COM 15B.75), 29th (29 COM 7B.67), 30th (30 COM 7B.87), 31st (31 COM 7B.114), 32nd (32 COM 7B.98), 34th (34 COM 7B.91), 35th (35 COM 7B.99), 36th (36 COM 7B.78) and 38th (38 COM 7B.28) sessions, the 25th and 26th session of the Bureau, and the 25th extraordinary session of the Bureau.

In this context it seems appropriate to mention that this is one of the most frequently reported properties on the World Heritage list; after inscription in the year 2000, the following SOC reports have been prepared for the WH Committee (separately and/or jointly): 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 - and recently have been submitted by the relevant State Parties: 2010 SP (Lithuania) SOC Report Curonian Spit;2010 SP (Russian Federation) SOC Report Curonian Spit;2011 SP (Lithuania) SOC Report Curonian Spit;2011 SP (Russian Federation) SOC Report Curonian Spit;2012 SP (Lithuania) SOC Report Curonian Spit;2014 SP (Lithuania) SOC Report Curonian Spit; 2014 SP (Russian Federation) SOC Report Curonian Spit.

¹Emphasis added by the author of this evaluation.

1.4 Justification of the mission (terms of reference, itinerary, program and composition of mission team)

The mission was requested by the 38 COM 7B.28 decision adopted by the World Heritage Committee concerning Curonian Spit (Lithuania / Russian Federation) (C 994), namely on the following point:

“9. Also requests the State Party of Lithuania to invite an ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property in 2014 to consider the proposed bridge and port projects as well as the liquefied gas terminal project;”

The documents providing justification of the mission are provided in:

- annex 6.1: Terms of reference
- annex 6.2: Composition of mission team
- annex 6.3: Itinerary and program

2. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

2.1 Protective legislation

The national parks of Lithuania are governed by the Law on Protected Areas adopted by the Parliament on 9 November 1993 (N° 1-301), modified on 4 December 2001.

The national parks of the Russian Federation are governed by the law on Specially Protected Natural Areas adopted by the Federal Parliament on 14 March 1995.

2.2 Institutional framework

The entire Curonian Spit is protected in the form of two National Parks.

- The Lithuanian part is made up of the National Park "Kuršių nerija (Curonian spit)", created by decision of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania n° I -1224 on 23 April 1991
- The Russian part is made up of the National Park of "Kurshskaja Kosa", created by resolution of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR n° 423 on 6 November 1987, as amended in 1995.
- Since 2008, an Agreement has been in place on cooperation between the Curonian Spit National Park in the Russian Federation and the Kuršių nerija (Curonian spit) National Park in Lithuania.

2.3 Management structure

- **Lithuanian part:** Kuršių nerija (Curonian spit) National Park Administration **site manager:** Deputy Director Ms. Lina Dikšaitė, Naglių str. 8, LT-93123 Neringa, Lithuania Tel/Fax: +370 46951224, e-mail: lina.diksaite@nerija.lt;

- **Russian part:** Curonian spit
site manager: Anatolij Kalina, Director, NP "Curonian Spit" (Russia)

The management system of the WH property is based on national legal and spatial territory planning documents of both States.

Lithuania:

- Curonian Spit NP Borders Plan (2010),
- Special Management Plan of the Curonian Spit NP (2012),
- Klaipėda City Municipality General Plan (2007),
- Neringa Municipality General Plan (2012),
- CSNP forest Management Plan (2013).

Russian Federation:

- Medium Term Development Plan of the "Kurshskaya Kosa" National Park for 2014–2018,
- General Plan for Rural Settlement in the "Curonian Spit" (2013),
- NP "Kurshskaya Kosa" Forest Management Plan (2012).

International agreements between the National Parks and Municipalities.

3. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES / THREATS

3.1 Management effectiveness for the whole Property

Following the specific ToR of the mission, there was only limited possibility given to assess the overall effectiveness of the management of the whole property. Whilst a short visit to the Lithuanian part of the property was realized during the mission, (a trip by boat and another trip from the Klaipėda-ferry to Nida by car), the visit of the Russian section of the property was not possible (because of lack of time). However, during the consultations and discussions about the issues, it became quite clear that there are still considerable challenges to be dealt with.

The origin (causes) of these challenges seems to be mostly, but not exclusively, closely connected with the dynamic natural phenomena from which the spit originated and which are still present with subsequent impact. As for the contemporary *man-made* challenges – development pressure, tourism management, traffic issues, etc. – the effectiveness of the management seems quite variable, with some positive signs on the one hand (e.g. in the Lithuanian part, illegal construction-activity has been slowed down or even stopped) and some recurrently conflicting areas (i.e. diverging views of National Park regulation and local development expectations) on the other.

Managing the conservation of this living and evolving landscape certainly requires both traditional and 21st century knowledge about processes and interventions. Acknowledging the efforts already made, there is undoubtedly a need to further enhance the effectiveness of the management with regards to the cooperation between the Lithuanian and Russian parts of the property. The basic tool for this should be a common Management Plan with a consolidated-institutionalized system of cooperation, but this tool – in spite of reiterated suggestions, demands and requirements by the World Heritage Committee – is still missing. During the mission,

it was possible to be informed (from the Lithuanian side) about the draft of the overarching Management Plan, which is under preparation. Hopefully it will be possible to finalize this document soon, and to launch the adoption process – of the same document, to be done separately by the authorities of both State Parties but preferably simultaneously.

3.2 Nature and extent of threats to the property, taking into consideration the values for which the property was inscribed and the specific issues outlined by the World Heritage Committee—focusing on the issues specified in the ToR of the mission:

3.2.1 “The preliminary plans to construct a suspension bridge from Klaipėda across the Lagoon to the Spit”

During the mission, this issue was presented by the Lithuanian representatives within the larger framework of the Curonian Spit transport specificities, as follows (excerpts from the presentation of Mr. Vidmantas Bezaras, Director of Protected Areas and Landscape Department, Ministry of Environment):

- Transportation in the Curonian Spit is specific due to the geographical characteristics of the location: one can reach the Curonian Spit by land only from the Kaliningrad Region, while vehicles and passengers from Klaipėda are transported through the Curonian lagoon by ferries and boats. The transportation between Klaipėda and Neringa is carried out by two ferry lines; one ferry line transports passengers, the other passengers and vehicles. From 2014 the ferry line Klaipėda - Nida began to operate for passengers and cyclists. During the summer season, private carriers also offer water transportation services.
- The shortest route from Kaliningrad to Lithuania is along the Curonian Spit. The Curonian Spit is not protected from possible transit traffic; therefore, the environmental impact may be higher and independent of the efforts of the national park or municipal authorities.
- The first idea to construct a bridge was raised 40 years ago. Lithuania then decided not to build it. Ideas of a bridge construction were discussed in 1985, 1997, 2003 and 2013. In 2003 Neringa municipality proposed three alternative locations for the bridge but the President of the Lithuanian Republic, the Government, the Ministries of Environment and Culture and the public did not accept the bridge idea. In 2013 Klaipėdos Seaport again revived the idea of building the bridge, because shipping in the port in the future will become much more intense.
- On 19 December 2013, the Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania established a Working Group to look at the issues related to the possible construction of the bridge to the Curonian Spit and to assess the alternatives for the transfer of the Smiltynė ferry from its current place in the seaport of Klaipėda. Representatives from the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Transport and Communications, from the Municipalities of Klaipėda city and Neringa, other state authorities were involved. In December 2013 – April 2014 the Working Group held meetings and considered only theoretical proposals on the construction of the bridge to the Curonian Spit.

- Members of the Working Group expressed their initial arguments for or against the possibility of having various transportation modes to connect the continental part of Lithuania with the Curonian Spit (tunnel, skyway, bridge, ferry, water buses, etc.). No specific decisions concerning planning or construction of a bridge were taken. In January 2014 the Neringa Municipality held a special Municipality Council meeting at which the question on the construction of a bridge was discussed. The Neringa Municipality supports the idea of building a bridge to the Curonian Spit. The municipality's representatives expressed this position in the meeting of the Working Group. Klaipeda city municipality did not accept this idea. The municipality has made a survey; most of the city's population did not accept the construction of the bridge.

The opinion expressed by the representative of the Ministry of Environment is as follows:

- The construction of the bridge would require certain modification of the relief, vegetation and other landscape components in three areas: on the continental part, in sensitive ecosystem of the Curonian Lagoon, on the shores of the Curonian Spit and on the Great Dune.
- The replacement of the ferries by a bridge would increase car traffic intensity – which contradicts conservation objectives of the National Park, since it would magnify air pollution and reduce the value of the recreational site.
- Currently, the ferry is one of the prominent attractions for the tourists arriving to the spit.
- Financial costs and economic justification are of high importance. According to preliminary estimations, the construction of bridge with access infrastructure would cost not less than 80 -100 Mio EUR. By now, more than 30 Mio EUR have been invested into the infrastructure of ferries. That infrastructure would be abandoned or demolished. For more than 20 development projects in the Smiltynė area and its recreational zones have been planned in coordination with the development of ferries infrastructure.

The construction of a bridge is not provided in any strategic or territorial planning documents of the Republic of Lithuania, listed as follows:

- The master plan of the territory of the Republic of Lithuania 2002;
- The Plan of Curonian Spit National Park boundaries and zones, (12 2010);
- The Management Plan for the Curonian Spit National Park (06 2012);
- The Master Plan of Klaipeda county (2013);
- The Master Plan of Klaipėda city (2007);
- The Master Plan of Neringa municipality (2012);

The opinion of the Ministry of Environment and the Government of the Lithuanian Republic is expressed in a legal document, currently in force; The Management plan of the Curonian Spit National Park (apr. of GoLR 2012): *“Article 98: The construction of a bridge across the Curonian Lagoon is not planned since it would be inefficient for transport and dangerous for the preservation of the Curonian Spit.”*

On the basis of the above-detailed current legal situation and design status, the mission concludes that there is only a tentative (conflicting) idea but **there is no legal possibility** and therefore **there are no preliminary plans to construct a suspension bridge from Klaipėda across the Lagoon to the Spit.**

Concerning various ideas which, in a democratic country might also arise any time in the future, the relevant regulation stipulates that *“The strategy’s, the plans and the programs, the documents of territorial planning are subject to SEIA procedure where state and local authorities as well as the public will be involved.”* Representatives of Lithuanian Authorities added that, in the unlikely case that this issue would ever come about again, it would be reported in due time (after having the results of the above mentioned mandatory SEIA but before a decision is taken) to the WH Committee through the WH Centre, in accordance with article 172 of the “Operational Guidelines. **The main conclusion of this mission**, based on the on-site visit,(even if under a time constraint) **is that the construction of any bridge anywhere across the Curonian Lagoon would have a serious effect, which would irreparably damage the integrity (and therefore the OUV) of the property both visually and physically.**

In contrast, the current situation, namely the absence of any bridge, operates as an “automatic regulatory filter” and contributes significantly to avoiding the overloading of the site with traffic (inclusive of transit traffic and parking plots). Therefore, **the Management Plan for the World Heritage property** – currently in the process of being prepared – **should declare clearly and explicitly that the present situation (without any bridge across the lagoon) should be sustained.**

3.2.2 “Construction of a liquefied gas terminal outside Klaipėda”

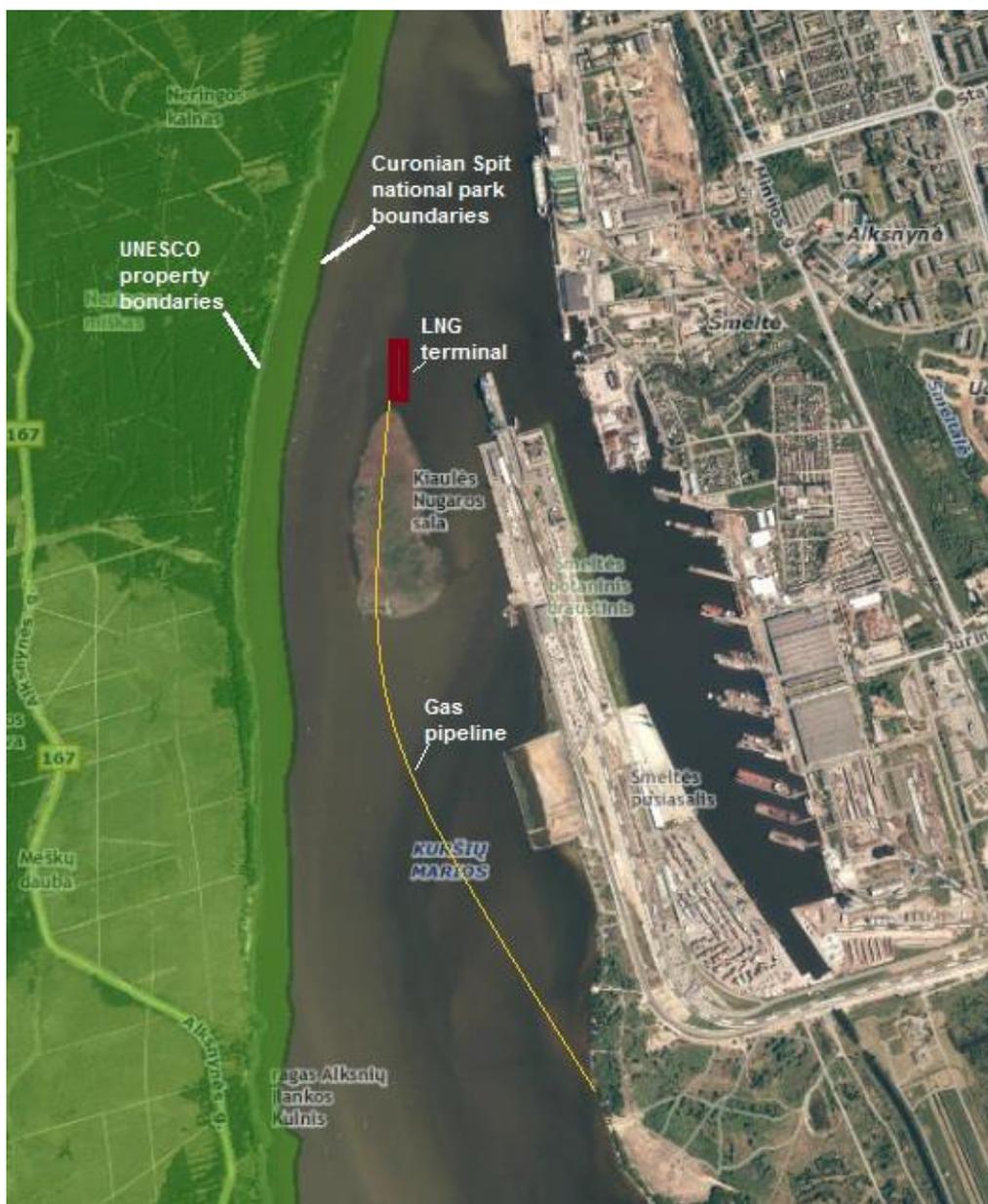
At the time of the mission, the Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal Project was already operational however, and during the meeting held in Klaipėda (in the headquarters of Klaipėda State Seaport Authority) the whole process of preparation and execution was discussed.

As an introduction, the necessity to have an alternative energy supply source for the Lithuanian republic was largely justified and the process of preparation and realization was presented in detail, as follows:

The main phases of the process:

- In July of 2010, the Government of Lithuania appointed “Klaipedosnafta” by a resolution to implement the LNGT project;
- In November of 2010 the Interdepartmental Working group, formed by the order of Minister of Energy, issued the concept of the LNGT.
- In May of 2011, “Klaipedosnafta” started a “Feasibility study” and a Strategic environmental impact assessment (SEIA) of the LNGT project:
- In September of 2011 the SEIA report and Feasibility study were issued
- In October of 2011 a public consultation was held;
- In November of 2011 coordination of the Feasibility study and SEIA report with 18 authorities and institutions. In the SEIA
 - o 3 alternative locations of the LNGT had been investigated;

- Environmental and social economic aspects were investigated (air, water, coastal issues, flora, fauna, soil, geology, landscape, protected areas, public health, cultural heritages sites, land usage);
- Navigation study and Concept risk assessment reports were prepared;
- Preliminary pipeline routes were defined;
- 2 locations of the LNGT for further investigation were recommended.
- Terminal location near Pig back island shall be within the Klaipeda port area, (outside Curonian Spit National Park and the navigation channel of pleasure boats boundaries);
- Detail visual impact assessment for UNESCO property must be performed during the EIA stage;



(Map from the presentation of Mr. Rolandas ZUKAS, Director-LNG Terminal at AB Klaipėdos Nafta received at Klaipėda-meeting during the mission)

- The State service for protected areas and the Heritage protection department accepted the SEIA report; In December of 2011 the “Feasibility study” was approved by the Ministry of Energy;

During the preparation of this mission, the ICOMOS expert **had the possibility to study the content of the Environmental impact assessment** (EIA, prepared by SWECO), **however, in search of a better understanding, the whole process was shown during a presentation, as follows:**

Publicity measures for the EIA program, December 2011; Notification submission to the Republic of Latvia, January 2012; The EIA program was approved by the competent authority, February 2012; A pre-project study of the pipeline was prepared, March 2012; A pre-project study of the Jetty was prepared, March 2012; Detailed parameters of the FSRU were defined, March 2012; A Quantitative Risk assessment was prepared, April 2012; Publicity of the EIA report and submission to the Republic of Latvia, June 2012; EIA report public hearings in Lithuania and Latvia, June - July 2012. Coordination and acceptance of the EIA report with 14 authorities, August – September 2012; Trans-boundary consultations with the Republic of Latvia under the Espoo Convention, September 2012; The EIA report was approved by the competent authority, October 2012;

In the EIA document

- o 2 alternative locations of the LNGT had been investigated;
- o Detailed pipeline routes were defined.
- o Environmental and social economic aspects were investigated and compared: Ambient air; Water; Coastal issues; Biodiversity (flora and fauna); Top soil; Geology and Hydrogeology; Landscape; Protected areas; Public health; Cultural heritage sites (UNESCO world heritage site – Curonian Spit); Land usage, tangible assets, other economical objects development; Civil protection;

Possible impact to UNESCO property assessment was studied:

- The LNGT location is within Klaipeda port territory and outside the UNESCO property boundaries and of approximately 200 m to the east from the boundary of the Curonian Spit National Park;
- The boundaries of Curonian Spit National park are larger than UNESCO property boundaries and it serves as a buffer zone of the UNESCO property
- The visual quality of the landscape as assessed from the CSNP embankment would be reduced by more than 4 points, however, this would not change the category of the visual value of the landscape. As viewed from the CSNP embankment, the LNGT situated at the northern end of the “Pig back” Island would merge with the facilities of the Sea Ferry Terminal and the Klaipeda State Seaport as well as the urban environment as a whole;

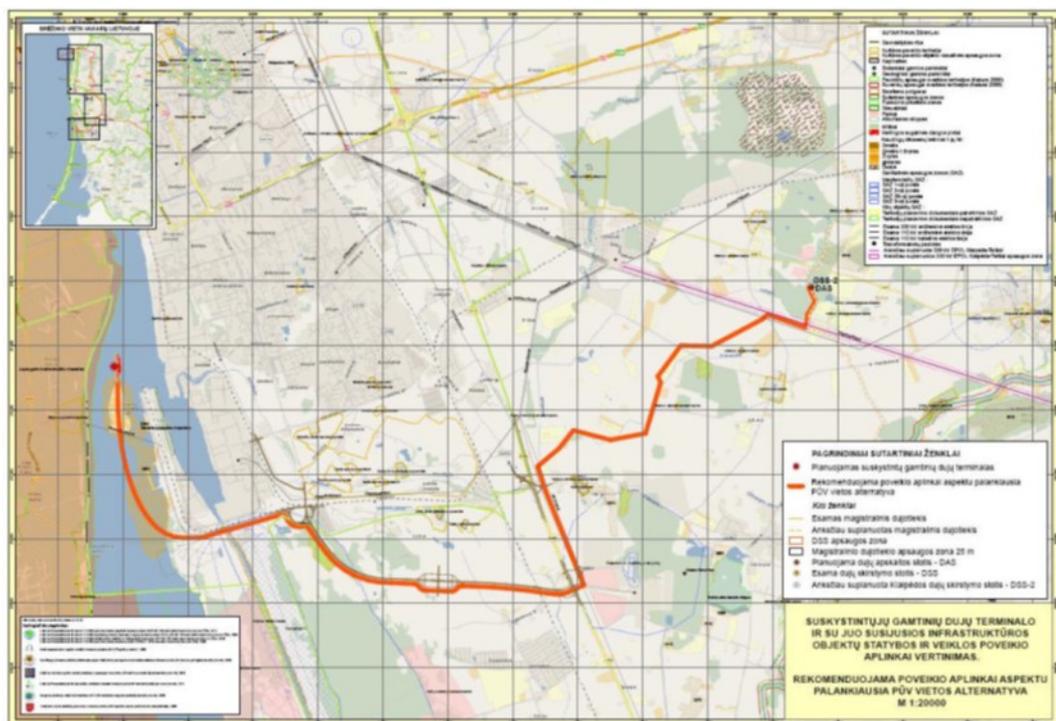
- A set of environmental measures has been proposed; the implementation of the measures would reduce the impact of the construction and operation of the LNGT on the CSNP value parameters from low or medium to insignificant or low;

Environmental measures:

- The design height of the FSRU must be minimized;
- in order to reduce visual pollution, paint the FSRU in grey or greyish blue;
- in order to reduce seawater flow into the Curonian lagoon, the time necessary for the FSRU to leave its permanent mooring place must be minimized;
- the sub water gas pipeline installed by the HDD method would pose lower threat to the CSNP if its route extends toward the land facilities of the Sea Ferry Terminal rather than along the western near shore area of the Klaipeda Strait;
- Environmental measures were determined by State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment during the EIA process and implemented by Klaipedosnafta and Klaipeda State Port Authority during the project implementation.

Territory planning, Special Plan - final Gas pipeline route:

Report of the special plan was issued, December 2012; financial offers for land owners were issued, January 2013; Public consultations of the special plan report were held, March 2013. Obtaining agreement on the Special plan report from 25 authorities (Curonian Spit National Park Directorate was involved), April – May 2013; Negotiation with land owners, February – agreement on right of the way, June 2013; Approval of the special plan by the Ministry of Energy, June of 2013; Administration Act for the right of the way, July 2013;



(from the presentation: Territory planning, Special plan - final Gas pipeline route)

Permit of construction and State acceptance act:

Preparation of the pipeline detail design and approval of the technical project by the authorities, issuing of the construction permit, June – December 2013; Preparation of the jetty detail design and approval of the technical project by the authorities, issuing of the construction permit, June – December 2013; Submission of as-built documentation for 20 authorities, September 2014; State acceptance act for the jetty was issued, October 2014; State acceptance act for the pipeline was issued, November 2014.

During the approval of the detail design, issuing of the construction permit and the final check of the as-built documentation 20 authorities including the Curonian Spit National Park Directorate were involved and ensured that EIA requirements had been implemented during the design and construction phase.

During the Lithuanian LNGT implementation both the Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the LNGT and other permits had been carried out *according to Lithuanian law and international requirements* to ensure that the LNGT - **during both construction and operation phases - does not cause any negative impact on the environment as well as on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.**

- Accordingly, alternatives of the placement of the LNGT and related infrastructure had been considered by the feasibility study and SEIA. There were 3 territory alternatives investigated and 2 of them recommended for further investigation;
- The EIA of the LNGT was carried out in 2011-2012. The EIA report was approved by the national authorized institution and the appropriate environmental decision was issued. The decision provides specific environmental and safety requirements to be followed during the construction and operation of the LNGT and related infrastructure in Klaipeda port and onshore.
- **The LNGT was proposed to be constructed and realized in Klaipeda port, outside the UNESCO property and its buffer zone, within its vicinity.**
- The heritage impact assessment has been carried out in accordance with the Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties (ICOMOS) and comprises part of the EIA. The results of heritage impact assessment are included in the EIA report.
- **The EIA concluded that during LNGT construction and operation there would be no adverse significant impact on the protected areas, as well as on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property (see chapter 4.7 of the EIA report), as well as on landscape, cultural heritage objects, environmental air, surface water, underground water resources, soil and subsoil, fauna and flora, social environment and public health.**
- The approved territory planning document, the “Special plan” does not pose any conflicts with or provides modifications of the Management Plan of the Curonian Spit (National Park) approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.
- All substantial and procedural information has been published on the website of the project implementing company AB “Klaipėdosnafta”: www.sgd.lt



View of the Curonian Spit at the area of LNGT in the Klaipeda port



View of the LNGT at Klaipeda, near Pig Back Island



View of the port of Klaipeda in the vicinity of LNGT

On the basis of the EIA document, the detailed discussion held on the process and - for visual impact – on the basis of the site-visit, the main outcomes of the mission are as follows:

- the preparation, permission process and realization of the LNGT project followed all national level requirements and prescriptions of the Lithuanian republic, including the fulfillment of a number of international obligations accepted by the State Party (i.e. ESPO and other conventions),

- in specific phases of the process however all of the information was not shared – in accordance with article 172 of the “Operational Guidelines” – in due time with the WH Committee through the WH Centre (e.g. the EIA was only communicated after the decision had been already made by the State Party authorities); and there wasn’t sufficient information concerning information-sharing with the other State Party concerned (the Russian Federation) with regard to the EIA. This **situation highlights the importance of having a common World Heritage Management Plan in force between both relevant SPs and a consolidated, institutionalized cooperation system between them, assuring its efficient implementation.**

- **The main element of the mission’s conclusions**, also based on the on-site visit, **is that the LNGT does not create an adverse effect on visual integrity (and therefore the OUV) of the property**, because of the given context: the traditionally existing contrast between the humanized but natural-like landscape of the Curonian Spit and the highly industrial “port-scape” of the Klaipeda marine port. The “double identity” of the view does not seem to be disturbed by the new, added element of the LNGT which in its appearance fits into the port-scape and is located at a reasonable distance from the previously mentioned landscape. Some temporary constructions (e.g. large white tent) are to be removed from the site.

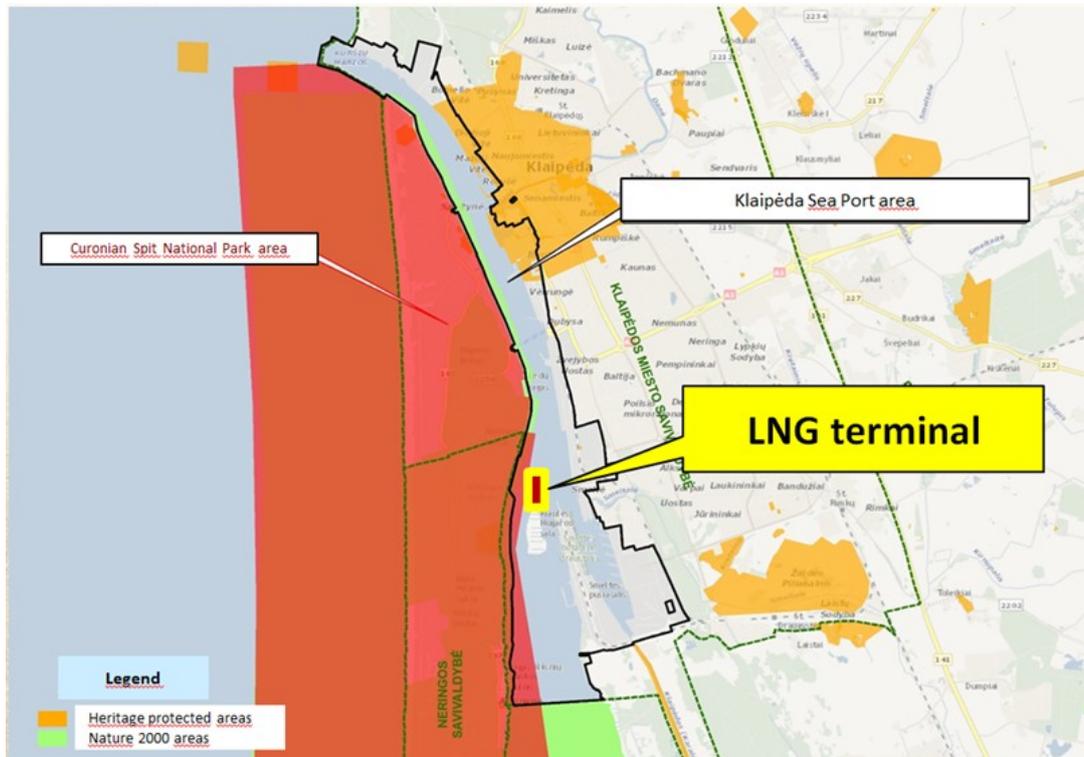
- As for **the other possible (non-visual) impacts which could perhaps emerge during the operation of the LNGT, the Management Plan for the World Heritage property** – currently in the process of being prepared – **should contain special monitoring prescriptions.**

3.2.3 “The proposed construction of a deep sea port at Klaipėda”

This issue had also been presented and discussed during the meeting held in Klaipėda, in the headquarters of Klaipėda State Seaport Authority; the following information was communicated in the presentation by Mr. Algirdas KAMARAUSKAS (Infrastructure Director at Klaipėda State Seaport Authority):

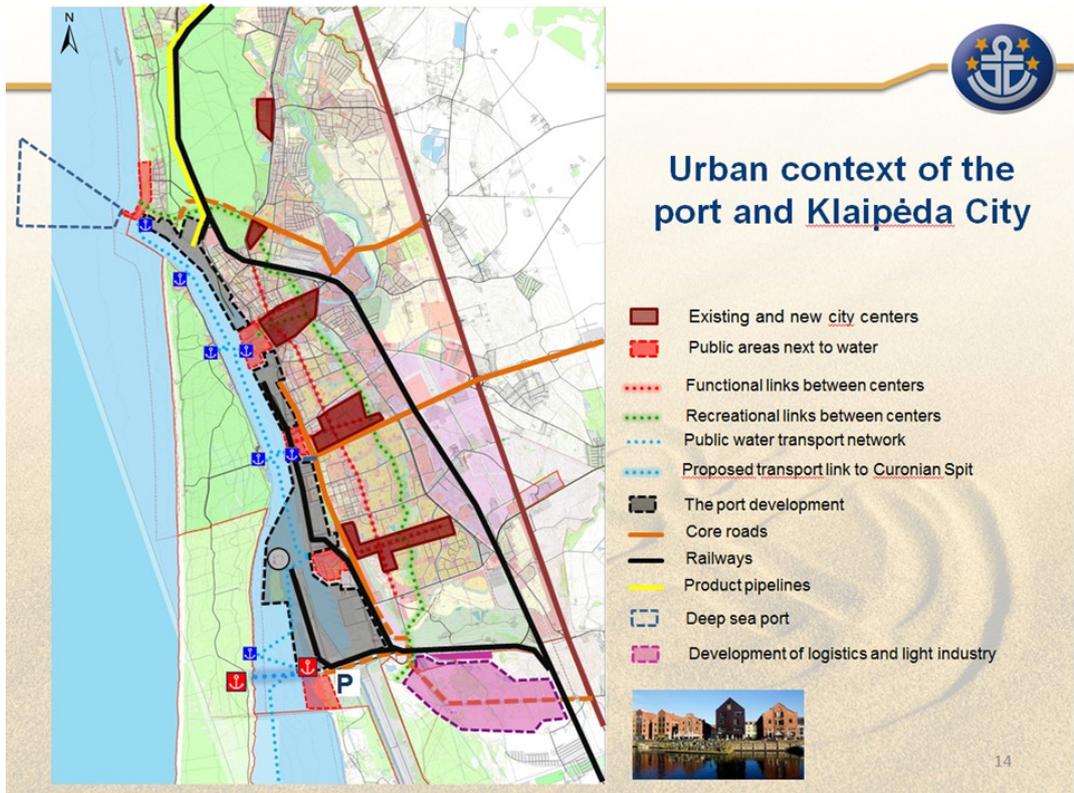
- Klaipeda State Sea Port is the North-East located, ice-free port in the Baltics, where there are well-developed cargo handling infrastructures as well as inland transport connections with other cities, transport nodes and industrial centers.
- The port is the only industrial port in Lithuania and has extreme importance to the state economy, as approx. 4,5 percent of the national GDP is directly generated here. Indirect input to the national GDP (including related services and business) comprises approx. 11,5 percent.
- Klaipeda Sea Port is located in a very sensitive environment: A unique natural masterpiece created by man – the Curonian Spit, a World Heritage Property - is located West from the port, the Curonian Lagoon, a NATURA 2000 area, located in the South, and Klaipeda City – in the immediate vicinity in the East. Environmental concerns and sustainable development of the port infrastructure is an absolute priority of the port and national authorities. Each and every project is

carefully treated from the environmental perspective and carefully discussed with stakeholders, including the public, before decision on investment is made.

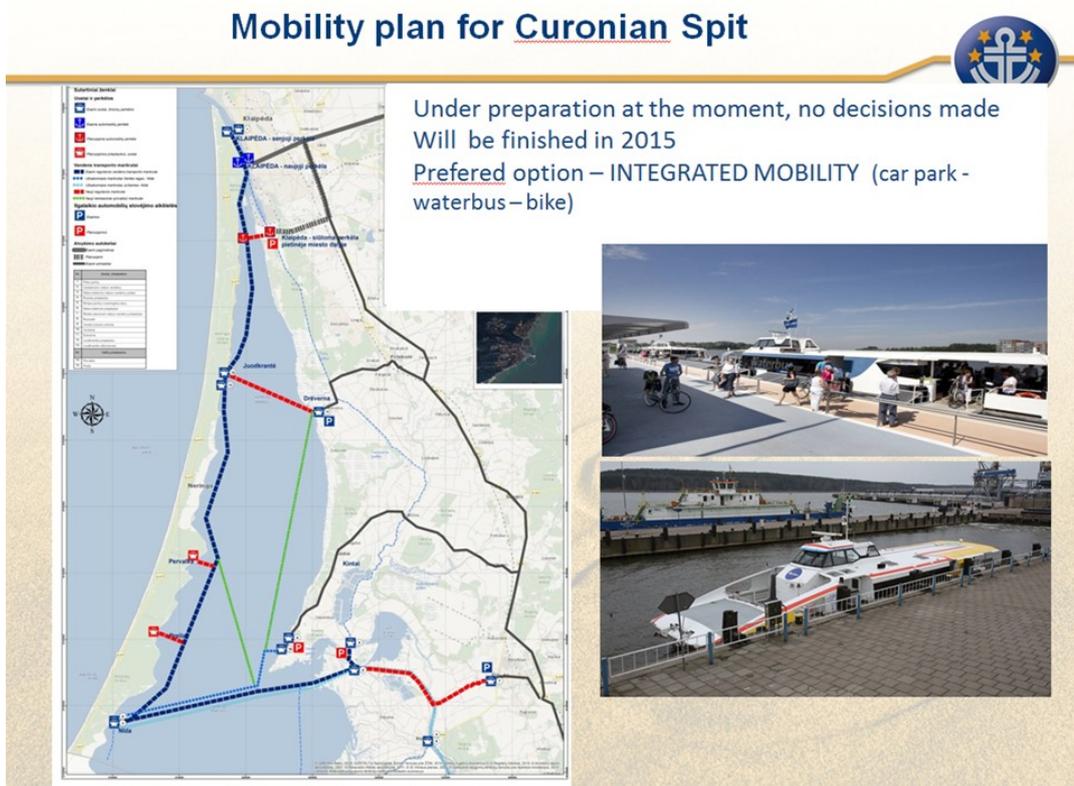


Klaipėda City, the Seaport and Curonian Spit (from the presentation)

- The long-term Lithuanian transport development strategy (till the year 2025) provides for the following tasks and guidelines for the development of Klaipėda seaport: permanent increase of competitiveness and capacities of Klaipėda port in handling of transit and local cargo, positioning of Klaipėda port as the key transport node in the North Baltics; and development of regional and transcontinental marine interconnections, highways of the seas, multimodal and intermodal transport.
- **No final decisions regarding the construction of a deep sea port are taken for the moment. The deep sea outer port will be one of the subjects for treatment and assessment in the Master Plan.** The Master Plan of Klaipėda port was initiated by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in July 2014 (order No 720). - The Master Plan of Klaipėda port will be prepared as provided for by the Law on Territory Planning of the Republic of Lithuania, and supported by appropriate environmental assessment procedures, public hearings and consultations.



Urban context of the port and Klaipėda City (from the presentation) indicating possible development areas



Mobility plan for Curonian Spit Under preparation at the moment, no decisions made, it will be finished in 2015. Preferred option is the INTEGRATED MOBILITY (car park - waterbus – bike) (source: the presentation)

- The shipping channel development is proposed to be implemented in the following phases:
 - o Phase I – implementation of a partial development alternative B2b. An important component of this phase shall be implementation of the Southern Gates to ensure environmentally balanced hydraulic properties in Klaipeda strait. Coastal management measures will be implemented along the Eastern coast of Curonian Spit in parallel.
 - o Phase II – in case the hydraulic properties are ensured and the coast line of Curonian Spit is fully stabilized and protected, and depending on economic needs, alternative A2 might be considered for further treatment and implementation

The discussion which took place after the presentation summarized above, provided more information on the status of the proposed construction of a deep sea port at Klaipėda and made it clear that although the preparation is currently in its initial phase, and no decisions were made as yet, one of the options is foreseen to be realized (at least the first phase) during the next few years.

On the basis of information received during the presentation and discussions, the main outcomes of the mission are as follows:

- in order to meet the requirements of the “Deep Sea Port” characteristics, one of the proposed options - in which the widening and deepening of the existing “channel area” is foreseen, but the intervention does not exceed the external borders of the current territory of the port,- may comply with the requirements for the protection and conservation of the adjacent World Heritage property, if the EIA and HIA certify that there will be no adverse impacts on the OUV.

The overall environmental impact study to be completed for the main fairway in 2015-2017 must be submitted however to the World Heritage Centre for evaluation by the Advisory Bodies before any irreversible decision is made.

This option, connected with the proposed enhanced mobility system connecting Klaipeda city with the Curonian Spit and taking the burden (of traffic, parking etc.) off of the WH property itself, might lead to a sustainable situation respecting the carrying capacity of all areas, namely of the WH property, the south-western part of the city of Klaipeda (the lagoon shore) and also of the port area of Klaipeda.

- the option of a deep sea OUTER port at Klaipėda - which has also been mentioned as a possible alternative (or the 2nd phase) of the development project - raises serious questions and undoubtedly needs an even more in-depth and detailed EIA and a special HIA concerning the visual impact and other environmental questions linked to the possible changes in sea currents and the stability of the dunes on the Spit. It is therefore strongly recommended that the State Party look in parallel for an alternative location.

- Based on the presentation and the on-site visit, the mission considers **that the Deep Sea Outer Port development might have an adverse effect on the OUV of the property, beyond visual impacts**. Information on any further preparation activity and results of forthcoming EIAs and HIAs should to be communicated – in accordance with article 172 of the “Operational Guidelines” – in due time (before decisions are made) to the WH Committee through the WH Centre, in order to avoid a similar situation as is the case with the LNGT project. **The Management Plan for the World Heritage property** – currently in the process of being prepared – **should contain special conditions and guidelines concerning this development project**.

3.3 Positive or negative developments in the conservation of the property since the last report to the World Heritage Committee

Concerning this issue, and on the basis of given circumstances, the mission can only focus on the Lithuanian part of the property. The results of measures to slow down the dynamism or even stop “illegal construction” activity can be considered a positive development. Some of these constructions were removed already, and a number of cases are still in the legal process (prosecution phase). There are also some achievements concerning the (re)use of buildings from the Soviet times, e.g. the redevelopment of the Nida Art Colony complex.

As for natural challenges, in the Lithuanian part of the Curonian Spit, forest-fires were mentioned as a risk-factor to be dealt with more intensively. During the mission, at the meeting held in Nida, the (natural) erosion of the dunes was mentioned by the representatives of the National Park of "Kurshskaja Kosa" (Russian federation) as an intensified risk.

Delaying the preparation, adoption and implementation of the World Heritage Management Plan should also be seen as a negative and missing “development” in many fields of conservation; among other issues regarding inter-institutional and international (trans-boundary) cooperation. The management plan would also have the vocation to harmonize several existing plans and documents (National park management plan, community-municipality development plans etc.); during the discussions it became apparent that there is a need for the harmonization and the clear establishment of which body is responsible for which action towards the implementation of these documents.

3.4 Information on degradations or possible threats concerning OUV, integrity and authenticity

There are overall challenges (see also under point 3.1.):

Natural changes: strong storms, the fore-dune erosion; natural changes of habitats - the loss of open dunes.

Threats, development pressures: forest fires, impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation, housing; identity, social cohesion questions (changes in local population and communities); changes in traditional ways of life and knowledge system.

These challenges are not only made known but also responded to - as much as possible - by the management activity of the relevant management bodies e.g. the two National Parks; the effectiveness of these activities however could be considerably enhanced once the World Heritage Management Plan of the property is adopted and implemented.

3.5 Findings and Observations

Besides the above-detailed issues and comments, there are some other elements to be mentioned. In order to enhance tourism management infrastructure, it is foreseen to establish a new and complex visitor-center in the Lithuanian part of the property, in the settlement of Juodkrantė. This proposal is in a very early stage as yet; only its concept was outlined during the mission. The idea is to place this ensemble in the “Amber bay” on the spot of a former (currently non-existing) industrial (amber-mining) ensemble; further development should be reported, in accordance with article 172 of the “Operational Guidelines” in due time to the WH Committee through the WH Centre, and before any irreversible decisions are made.

The necessity to have a World Heritage Management Plan for the property has already been mentioned in this report several times, this can be considered as the most important observation of the mission.

Another observation is that any future mission concerning this particular property would be more efficient if in each and every case both the Lithuanian and the Russian parts were visited and evaluated. During this mission for example, the necessity of a more appropriate buffer zone was touched upon but without real opportunity to assess and or to discuss the issue.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

Elements regarding the assessment of the state of conservation have already been mentioned above, summarizing the overall state of conservation of the property which has not yet reached a reassuring stability. In other words, the property (and the attributes supporting the OUV) is vulnerable, explaining why this property is one of the ones most reported on to the Committee. However, in spite of the existing challenges and probably also as a result of previous, repeated recommendations and requirements outlined in the decisions of the WH Committee, the efficiency of the management seems to be improved.

4.1 A review of whether the attributes of OUV are being maintained, on the basis of the set of attributes (from the SOUV):

- Concerning the **characteristic panoramas and the silhouette** from the Curonian Lagoon: there is no essential loss or encroachment found. Amongst the realized projects, the LNGT did not result in any significant adverse impact; whilst the Deep Sea *Outer* Port development is suspected to have some potential impact, therefore it should to be carefully evaluated by EIAs and by way of a special HIA,

to be reported on before any decision-making. In this context, the construction of any bridge over the lagoon should be rejected.

- Concerning **the spatial-planned structure and village architecture** (wooden fishermen houses and professionally-designed buildings of the 19th century) and elements of the marine cultural heritage: the fight against inadequate transformations and illegal construction has not yet concluded, however positive changes could be detected in this field (during this mission only the Lithuanian area was examined however). Development pressure should to be mitigated, amongst other issues, through a better mutual understanding and cooperation between NP authorities and local communities.
- Concerning the **natural dunes, and the man-made protective coastal dune ridge, forests with unique sand flora and fauna**: as was reported broadly during the mission by representatives of both NPs, thanks to repeated and continued efforts, these values have been kept until now without losses questioning the integrity, yet there is a need for even more additional measures and coordinated input in the future.
- The social-cultural traditions, the spirituality and the social perception of the area are some of the more vulnerable values because of overall changes within society; safeguarding these values is a fundamental task for management with a number of remarkable results (especially taking into account the historic background of the area), however to keep traditions organically alive shall require a special approach both in the physical and human-community environments.

In conclusion the attributes of OUV are being maintained under the continued challenges and with a need for sustained management efforts.

4.2 Review any follow-up measures to previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the property and measures which the State Party plans to take to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property

The mission is targeted towards the follow up of WH Committee decisions; therefore under this point only one issue should be highlighted: the “necessity of a joint Management Plan of the property” is still not yet answered. It must be recorded that steps were taken to produce this document but it exists only in a form of a “preliminary draft”, which takes into account the advice received during the previous Advisory Mission (ICOMOS 2013, Susan Denyer).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

The Curonian Spit is a unique and highly vulnerable cultural landscape created by the nature formed and sustained by constant human activity. The OUV and its attributes, on the basis of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and the conditions of integrity and authenticity remain, but are effected by continual changes and challenges both of natural origin (e.g. erosion, fire, etc.) and manmade (e.g.

development and traffic pressures, social changes etc.). The trans-boundary character of the property also could be seen as a kind of additional challenge.

The initiatives, planning and realization process for particular development projects in close proximity (i.e. in Klaipeda Port area) or in connection with the Curonian Spit (across the lagoon or in the seashore) were not in every case appropriately shared between the two SPs or with WH Centre and the Advisory Bodies .

The preparation, adoption and strict implementation by both SPs of an overall WH Management Plan could be the main tool for solving the emerging challenges. This document also has the vocation to establish an efficient system for inter-institutional (domestic) and international (trans-boundary) cooperation.

5.2 Recommendations for any additional action to be taken by the State Party, including draft recommendations to the World Heritage Committee

General recommendations concerning management needs:

- the World Heritage Management Plan (for the whole property, inclusive of the Lithuanian and the Russian parts) containing a system of inter-institutional and international (trans-boundary) cooperation should be finalized urgently in order to strengthen the management efficiency of the Curonian Spit property.
- The WH Management Plan should also contain a capacity development strategy for national parks administrations and municipalities' staff (considering the management need of the WH property).
- The detailed recommendations of the 2013 ICOMOS Advisory Mission on the Management plan remain valid

A number of recommendations made by the Reactive Monitoring Mission of 2010 remain still valid. Without repeating them "*in extenso*", they are the following:

- **Construction policy on the shores or on the fore-dunes:** "It is the landscape of the dunes and the water features, the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon, that make the unique landscapes of OUV. They must be preserved intact. The Curonian Spit is a priori a National Park conserved for the enjoyment of visitors interested in its specific values. These values are fragile and vulnerable, the property is small, and therefore it cannot and it must not attempt to cater for every wish of every holiday maker."
- **Actions for resolving conflicts of interest between the National Parks and the Municipalities:** It was still possible to attest that "the National Parks are accused of standing in the way of the economic development of the area, of being restrictive, negative, even hostile to the holiday makers and the local inhabitants. Consequently they tend to be lax in the rules and prohibitions put in place to conserve the different zones of the National Parks, which is not in the interest of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property."
- **Creation of Buffer Zones:** "The buffer zones may be necessary for a variety of reasons including the intrusive visibility of buildings in the settlements, at the shoreline, and also outside the settlements, e.g. next to the nature reservations or dunes in general. Another type of buffer zones may be necessary because of the sinking of the water tables and the noise pollution. The matter needs to be carefully considered."

- **Mitigation of the housing problem in the Lithuanian part of the Curonian Spit:** the effort already made in this regard should be continued; the WH Management plan should contain clear policies and efficient tools for this purpose.
- **Education and information strategy oriented to local community and other stakeholders:** “In order to help a more effective work process, seminars / conferences are to be organized on a regular, yearly basis on various themes, with the goal to educate the inhabitants about the Outstanding Universal Value of the Curonian Spit, their fragility, the importance of the National Parks personnel in safeguarding them etc. in order to lessen the friction and help to better preserve the property.”

Special recommendations concerning issues examined by the mission:

- Concerning **the LNGT**, the continued monitoring of possible (non-visual) impacts is recommended,
- Concerning the proposal for the construction of a “**suspended bridge over the lagoon**”: it is recommended that the SP of Lithuania declare that no bridge construction is allowed in the context of the Curonian Spit World Heritage property, and to insert this decision in all relevant regulatory or legal documents as well as in the (forthcoming) WH Management Plan;
- Concerning the **project of the construction of Deep Sea Port and/or a Deep Sea Outer Port in the Klaipeda Port area**: all information connected with the Deep Sea Port project, including EIAs and HIAs should be reported, in accordance with article 172 of the “Operational Guidelines”, in due time (after receiving the results but before a decision is made) to the WH Committee through the WH Centre and before irreversible decisions are made.

5.3 Whenever further action is needed, clear benchmarks should be set indicating the corrective measures to be taken in order to achieve the significant improvement of the state of conservation and a timeframe within which the benchmarks should be met.

5.4 Recommendation as to whether the level of threats to the property warrants the property being placed on or removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger

If the above-mentioned development projects remain within the recommended framework and measures, established in order to mitigate natural challenges (detailed in the upcoming Management Plan) and which prove to be sufficient, there should not be any factors or impacts which threaten the property on that level, therefore the property should not be placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The adoption of the World Heritage Management Plan by both States Parties however is an extremely urgent matter, because without this tool there is no guaranty of avoiding the future possibility of serious threats or damage to the OUV of the property, and thus the necessity of danger-listing.

6. ANNEXES

6.1 Terms of reference for the ICOMOS mission to Curonian Spit, (Lithuania and Russian Federation) 19 - 22 January 2015)

1. Undertake an ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission, as requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session, in order to consider:

- **The preliminary plans to construct a suspension bridge from Klaipėda across the Lagoon to the Spit,**
- **Construction of a liquefied gas terminal outside Klaipėda,**
- **The proposed construction of a deep sea port at Klaipėda**

with regard to the state of conservation of the site, its integrity and authenticity, and how the proposed construction projects within the property and in its setting may have an adverse impact on its Outstanding Universal Value.;

2. Hold consultations with national and local authorities and other relevant stakeholders, including from the non-governmental sector, in order to:

- a. understand the context for the proposed developments, their relationship to planning constraints and agreed plans, including the Management Plan,
- b. assess the potential and / or ascertained impacts of these projects in relation to the area around Klaipėda and also to the wider landscape and seascape of the Spit;
- c. address other issues in working document WHC-14/38.COM/7B, the state of conservation reports submitted by the two States Parties, and the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee (Decision 38 COM 7B.28).

3. Prepare a detailed report by **the end of January 2015** for review by the World Heritage Committee considering Operational Guidelines paragraphs 178-186 and 192-198, and outlining recommendations for consideration by the World Heritage Committee on the requirements for ensuring the protection of the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

6.2 Composition of the mission team:

Dr. Tamás FEJÉRDY, ICOMOS

6.3 Itinerary and programme:

January 19, Monday

Flight Warsaw – Vilnius, landing at Vilnius Airport 18.25 (flight LO 536)

18.25 Transportation to hotel “Artis Centrum”**** in the old town (Totorių str. 23, miniluxe booked for 2 nights). Website of the Hotel:
<http://www.artis.centrumhotels.com/en/>

20.00 Dinner with Ambassador Ina Marčiulionytė
(Venue - Restaurant “Adelia”, hotel “Artis Centrum”)

January 20, Tuesday

8.05 Departure to Klaipėda

12.00 Lunch in Klaipėda - (Venue - Restaurant “Skandalas”, I.Kanto street 44)

13.00–17.00 Meeting with experts and presentation of the projects and preliminary plans: (Venue – Klaipėda State Seaport Authority, J. Janonios street 24)

- A brief introduction about Curonian Spit: protection, management, development. Lina DIKŠAITĖ, Directorate of Kuršių Nerija National Park
- Construction of a liquefied gas terminal outside Klaipėda. Presentation, questions/answers session. Rolandas ZUKAS, Director-LNG Terminal at AB Klaipėdos Nafta

Coffee break;

- The proposed construction of a deep sea port at Klaipėda. Presentation, questions/answers session. Algirdas KAMARAUSKAS, Infrastructure Director at Klaipėda State Seaport Authority
- Coffee break;
- Discussions on the preliminary plans to construct a suspension bridge from Klaipėda across the Lagoon to the Spit. Vidmantas Bezaras, Director of Protected Areas and Landscape Department (Ministry of Environment);

Participating: Mr. Vidmantas Bezaras, Director of Protected Areas and Landscape Department (Ministry of Environment); Ms. Dalia Gudaitienė, Holiman Landscape Division (Ministry of Environment); Ms. Dalia Tamošiūnienė, Deputy Director of Economic Security Policy Department (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Ms. Daiva Rimašauskaitė, Counsellor (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Ms. Renata Jasilionytė, Head of Division (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Mr. Karolis Švaikauskas, Oil and Gas Division (Ministry of Energy);

Ms. Eglė Vyšniauskaitė, Deputy Director of Water and Railways Transport Policy Department (Ministry of Transport and Communications); Ms. Lina Dikšaitė, Directorate of Kuršių Nerija National Park; Ms. Rugilė Balkaitė, Heritage Programme Coordinator, Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO

Mr. Andrius Kairys, Director of Klaipėda Regional Environmental Protection Department; Mr. Rolandas Zukas, Director-LNG Terminal at AB Klaipėdos Nafta; Mr. Marius Mažeikis, AB Klaipėdos Nafta; Ms. Jurgita Lengvytė, AB Klaipėdos Nafta; Mr. Algirdas Kamarauskas, Infrastructure Director at Klaipėda State Seaport Authority; Mr. Vidmantas Paukštė Port Waters Supervision and Development Department Director at Klaipėda State Seaport Authority; Mr. Aidas Vaišnoras, Vice-president, SWECO

18.00 Transportation to hotel "AmbertonKlaipėda**** Naujojosodo str.1 Website of the Hotel: <http://www.ambertonhotels.com/klaipeda>

20.00 Dinner ((Venue - Restaurant "VIVA LAVITA", hotel "AmbertonKlaipėda").

January 21, Wednesday

9.00–11.00 LNG terminal and Klaipėda Port site inspection (seeing also by boat).

13.30–14.30 Meeting with municipal representatives, civil society and a representative from the Russian Federation in Nida (Art Colony, Taikos str. 43, Nida).

15.00 – 16.30 – Site visit to Curonian Spit.

18.00 Dinner in Klaipėda and departure to Vilnius.

January 22, Thursday

Free time

12.00 Departure to Vilnius airport

6.4 List and contact details of people met

Name	Position	Contact information
Mr. Vidmantas Bezaras	Director of Protected Areas and Landscape Department (Ministry of Environment)	v.bezaras@am.lt
H.E. Ina Marčiulionytė	Ambassador (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	Ina.marciulionyte@urm.lt
Ms. Dalia Gudaitienė-Holiman	Landscape Division (Ministry of Environment)	d.gudaitiene@am.lt
Ms. Dalia Tamošiūnienė	Deputy Director of Economic Security Policy Department (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	dalia.tamosiunene@urm.lt
Ms. Daiva Rimašauskaitė	Counsellor, Economic Security Policy Department (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	daiva.rimasauskaite@urm.lt
Ms. Renata Jasilionytė	Head of Division, Economic Security Policy Department (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	renata.jasilionyte@urm.lt
Mr. Karolis Švaikauskas	Oil and Gas Division (Ministry of Energy)	Karolis.svaikauskas@enmin.lt
Ms. Eglė Vyšniauskaitė	Deputy Director of Water and Railways Transport Policy Department (Ministry of Transport and Communications)	egle.vysniauskaite@sumin.lt
Ms. Lina Dikšaitė	Deputy Director of Kuršių Nerija National Park (Lithuania), site manager	lina.diksaite@nerija.lt
Ms. Rugilė Balkaitė	Heritage Programme Coordinator, Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO/National Focal Point	r.balkaite@lrkm.lt
Mr. Andrius Kairys	Director of Klaipėda Regional Environmental Protection Department	a.kairys@klrd.am.lt
Mr. Rolandas Zukas	Director-LNG Terminal at AB Klaipėdos Nafta	r.zukas@oil.lt
Mr. Marius Mažeikis	AB Klaipėdos Nafta	m.mazeikis@oil.lt
Ms. Jurgita Lengvytė	AB Klaipėdos Nafta	j.lengvyte@oil.lt
Mr. Algirdas Kamarauskas	Infrastructure Director at Klaipėda State Seaport Authority	a.kamarauskas@port.lt

Mr. Vidmantas Paukštė	Port Waters Supervision and Development Department Director at Klaipėda State Seaport Authority	v.paukste@port.lt
Ms. Kristina Gontier	Marketing Department Director at Klaipėda State Seaport Authority	k.gontier@port.lt
Mr. Aidas Vaišnoras	Vice-president, SWECO LIETUVA, UAB	aidas.vaisnora@sweco.lt
Mr. Mindaugas Pakalnis	UAB "SWECO LIEUTUVA"	mindaugas.pakalnis@sweco.lt

For the meeting at Nida (only those who are not listed above)

Ms. Aušra Feser	Director of Kuršių Nerija National Park (Lithuania)	ausra.feser@nerija.lt
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Dr. Romas Pakalnis	Chairman, Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO	r.pakalnis@vstt.lt
Ms. Rūta Baskyte	The State Service for Protected Areas	r.baskyte@vstt.lt
Ms. Ludmila Poplavskaja	Deputy Director of the National Park Curonian Spit, Russia	poplavskaya.l.79@mail.ru
Mr. Anatoly Kalina	Director of the National Park Curonian Spit, Russia	kalina-anatoliy@rambler.ru
Mr. Jonas Marozas	Tourism Information Centre of Nida, IT specialist	admin@visitneringa.lt
Mr. Darius Jasaitis	Neringa Municipality, Mayor	meras@neringa.lt
Mr. Šarūnas Knizikevičius	Kuršių Nerija National Park administration (Lithuania), Landscape department, senior specialist	sarunas.knizikevicius@nerija.lt
Ms. Kornelija Jurgutavičiūtė	Kuršių Nerija National Park administration (Lithuania), Tourism and information department, senior specialist	kornelija.jurgutaviciute@nerija.lt
Ms. Nijolė Piekienė	Kuršių Nerija National Park administration (Lithuania), Head of Landscape department	nijole.piekiene@nerija.lt

Ms. Jolita Gedžiuvienė	Kuršių Nerija National Park administration (Lithuania), Head of Tourism and information department	jolita.gedziuviene@nerija.lt
Linas Ramanauskas	Nida Art Colony	linas@nidacolony.lt
Mr. Gediminas Rutkauskas	Vilnius old Town Renewal Agency, Director	g.rutkauskas@vsaa.lt

6.5 Maps (more recent, showing delimitation of the property)

There are no new maps

6.6 Photos and other visual/graphic documentations (showing challenges concerning integrity)



Outside view from the entrance of the Curonian lagoon



Entering into the Curonian Lagoon: left side: the Port – right: the Curonian Spit



Landscape at Nida area





Reconstructed “resort-buildings” in Joudkrante



New constructions in Joudkrante (under revision)



Conservation measures (forced demolition of an illegal construction) are not always positively accepted by the community...



One of the cases under legal measures (Joudkrante)

6.7 Decisions of the World Heritage Committee

38 COM 7B.28Curonian Spit (Lithuania / Russian Federation) (C 994)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-14/38.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **36 COM 7B.78** adopted at its 36th session (Saint-Petersburg, 2012),
3. Welcomes the continuing collaboration between the two national parks and the commitment to produce a transnational Management Plan for the property, as well as the recently strengthened regulations within the Russian National Park that should support sustainable development within the property;
4. Also welcomes the significant progress made within Lithuania to contain and reverse illegal development;
5. Expresses its concern however that work on the liquefied gas terminal outside Klaipėda has been approved and commenced although no impact assessments were provided, despite its earlier requests and reiterates its request to the State Party of Lithuania to undertake full impact assessments (Strategic Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessments) in order to consider the potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property; these assessments should be provided to the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* ;
6. Expresses its strong concern that approval in principle has apparently been given for the construction of a large suspension bridge from Klaipėda across the lagoon to the Spit, as this structure could have severe adverse visual impacts and affect traffic management along the Spit;
7. Understands that the bridge could be part of a larger project to develop a deep sea port at Klaipėda, which could have an impact on the stability of the dunes, and notes with regret that no details of either project have been submitted to the World Heritage Centre, as required by Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* ;
8. Requests the State Party of Lithuania to halt further development of both projects until full details have been provided, including detailed impact assessments (Strategic Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessments), in order to allow an evaluation of potential impact on the property;
9. Also requests the State Party of Lithuania to invite an ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property in 2014 to consider the proposed bridge and port projects as well as the liquefied gas terminal project;
10. Further requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2015**, a progress report on the implementation of the above and, by **1 December 2015**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016, both reports including a 1-page executive summary.

6.8 Retrospective Statement of OUV

Brief synthesis

The Curonian Spit is a unique and vulnerable, sandy and wooded cultural landscape on a coastal spit which features small Curonian lagoon settlements. The Spit was formed by the sea, wind and human activity and continues to be shaped by them. Rich with an abundance of unique natural and cultural features, it has retained its social and cultural importance. Local communities adapted to the changes in the natural environment in order to survive. This interaction between humans and nature shaped the Curonian Spit cultural landscape.

The history of the Curonian Spit is dramatic: 5,000 years ago, a narrow peninsula (98 km in length and 0.4-3.8 km in width), the Great Dune Ridge separating the Baltic Sea from the Curonian Lagoon, was formed on moraine islands from sand transported by currents, and later covered by forest. After intensive logging in the 17th and 18th centuries, the dunes began moving towards the Curonian Lagoon, burying the oldest settlements. At the turn of the 19th century, it became evident that human habitation would no longer be possible in the area without immediate action. Dune stabilisation work began, and has continued ever since. By the end of the 19th century, a protective dune ridge was formed along the seashore to prevent inland sand migration, and the Great Dune Ridge was reinforced using trees and brushwood hedges.

Currently, forests and sands dominate the Curonian Spit. Urbanised areas (eight small settlements) cover just about 6% of the land. The most valuable elements and qualities of the Curonian Spit cultural landscape are its unique size and general spatial structure, demonstrating the harmonious coexistence between humans and nature; the characteristic panoramas and the silhouette of the Curonian lagoon; cultural elements including the remains of postal tracks, trade villages from the 10th and 11th centuries, traditional fishermen villages and other archaeological heritage covered by sand; the spatial-planned structure and architecture of ancient fishermen villages turned into resort settlements (ancient wooden fishermen houses, professionally designed buildings of the 19th century, including lighthouses, piers, churches, schools, villas); and elements of marine cultural heritage; natural and human-made elements including the distinctive Great Dune Ridge and individual dunes, relics of ancient parabolic dunes; a human-made protective coastal dune ridge; relics of moraine islands, seacoast and littoral forests and littoral capes; ancient forests, mountain pine forests and other unique sand flora and fauna including a bird migration path; and the social-cultural traditions, spirituality, and the social perception of the area, which reflect the local lifestyle formerly centred on fishermen, artists, scientists, yachtsmen and gliders, travellers and other visitors.

Criterion (v): The Curonian Spit is an outstanding example of a landscape of sand dunes that is under constant threat from natural forces (wind and tide). After disastrous human

interventions that menaced its survival, the Spit was reclaimed by massive protection and stabilization works that began in the 19th century and are still continuing to the present day.

Integrity

The entire area of the Curonian Spit cultural landscape reflects valuable qualities and underlying processes, retains historical functions and specific sustainable land use methods related to the peculiarities of the natural environment, and reflects the unique spiritual bond between humans and nature. The boundaries of the World Heritage property are sufficient to express all the attributes of its Outstanding Universal Value. Some of these attributes, such as the fishermen houses, need careful maintenance. In general, these attributes are particularly sensitive to pressures such as climate change, severe weather events, fire, excessive development and tourism. Because of the continuous evolution and development of the cultural landscape, it is very important to regulate the number of visitors to the property. New developments and other economic activities must be regulated to avoid any irreversible changes that may threaten the Outstanding Universal Value. The most vulnerable elements of the Curonian Spit cultural landscape are the oldest wooden fishermen's houses, the wooden decor of professionally designed buildings, and the human-made protective coastal dune ridge, which is influenced by the natural coastal processes under the influence of global climate change.

Authenticity

The Curonian Spit showcases high landscape values. It is an example of a special landform subjected to human intervention and natural phenomena such as climatic variations. The former has been both catastrophic, as with the drastic deforestation in the 16th century, and beneficial, as demonstrated in the 19th century with the creation of artificial barriers against further incursions by the sea. The cultural, natural and human-made elements of the Curonian Spit cultural landscape illustrate the most important features of its formation through their shapes, volumes, materials, and functions. The authenticity of the landscape is reflected by the tangible and spiritual values of the different historical periods that shaped its identity. The vitality, spirituality and special mood of the cultural landscape and its unique characteristics is further highlighted by authentic forms of local intangible heritage. These include the marine cultural heritage; traditional trades, folklore and artistic traditions; the ethnographic elements of the fishermen's lifestyles; unique methods of protective coast and dune ridge management and forest maintenance; sustainable recreational activities and a cultural leisure tradition dating back to the 19th century.

Protection and management requirements

The Curonian Spit is situated in the Curonian Spit National Park in Lithuania and the Kurshskaya National Park of the Russian Federation. The status of these National Parks guarantees the protection of the cultural landscape. Both National Parks have the common

goal of preserving the natural and cultural attributes that express the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. A very important prerequisite for the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value is state land ownership by the National Parks. The governments of both states are responsible for the conservation of the Curonian Spit: in the Republic of Lithuania through the Ministry of Environment and authorised agencies, and in the Russian Federation through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. The protection of immovable cultural heritage is the responsibility of the cultural Heritage Department under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and the State Service for Protection of cultural Heritage of the Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation. The Governments have created the National Parks authorities, who play a key role in the conservation of the property, forest and coastal management. The territory of the Curonian Spit is administered by Neringa and Klaipėda City municipalities of the Republic of Lithuania and by the Federal State corporation National Park Kurshskaja kosa, along with the municipal unit of Kurshskaja kosa of the Zelenogradsk area of the Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation. The local authorities in the Republic of Lithuania determine the main trends of socio-economic development, manage and plan settlements, and generally take care of the protection and management of the territory by implementing territorial planning documents in the Lithuanian part of the Curonian Spit. The local community is directly involved in the conservation of the property's tangible heritage and also carries the region's intangible heritage. For the effective management and protection of the property's Outstanding Universal Value, closer collaboration of all institutions and stakeholders is needed within and between States. In the Republic of Lithuania, any activity posing a threat to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Curonian Spit is prohibited by the Law on Protected Areas (2001), and Protection Regulation of the Curonian Spit National Park (2002). In the Russian Federation, the relevant laws are the Federal Law of Specially Protected Nature Territories of the Russian Federation (1995) and the Law on Federal State Enterprise (FSBA, 2012), implemented through territorial planning documents. Different attributes of the property require different protection regimes and management activities. Therefore, different zones have been established in the National Parks for various specific purposes, such as strict reserves, reserves, recreational, residential and other zones. All these measures are outlined in the territorial planning documents. The main territorial planning documents in the Republic of Lithuania are the Special Management Plan of the Curonian Spit (a territorial planning document adopted by the government in 2012), and the National Park Borders Plan (adopted by Parliament in 2010). Klaipėda's municipal General Plan has been in place since 2007, while Neringa's General Plan was adopted by the municipality in 2012. The preparation of a single territorial planning document for the management of the area, aiming to ensure the preservation of the property's Outstanding Universal Value in Lithuania is foreseen. The main territorial planning document in the Russian Federation is the Development Plan for the National Park Kurshskaja Kosa for 2009- 2013. The coordination of actions between the States is necessary to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Once finalised and agreed upon, an integrated Curonian Spit Management Plan covering the whole Adoption of

retrospective Statements WHC-14/38.COM/8E, p. 98 of Outstanding Universal Value property will be implemented in order to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value, to improve cooperation between all institutions in both States, and to reach joint agreements on future activities. The preparation of this Management Plan is an essential step in the appropriate management of the property and particular attention should be paid to including a Tourism Management Plan and addressing the other major pressures potentially affecting the property. The implementation of territorial planning documents and the safeguarding of the implementation of existing legislation are high priorities.