



This project has received seed funding from Una Europa.

CALL FOR PAPERS

WHC@50 – Forever Young: Celebrating 50 Years of the World Heritage Convention

Theme and goals of the Seed Funding Project

In 2022 the **World Heritage Convention (WHC)** celebrates 50 years. Thanks to its 194 State Parties, the WHC represents a major tool for International (Cultural Heritage) Law, a powerful promotor of cultural identity, and a formidable boost for national economies.

The **Una Europa Seed Funding Project “WHC@50”** aims to retrace how the WHC was conceived, to present its current formulation and application in practice, to illustrate its meaning for the preservation and enhancement of world heritage governance, to analyse its strengths and weaknesses, and to indicate its needs for reviews and reforms.

By combining the **insights of jurists, political scientists, historians, architects and economists**, WHC@50 embarks on a multi-perspective analysis that will result in a high-quality **open access publication**.

Call for papers

The WHC@50 research team welcomes original proposals, analysing the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and its 50 years of application. The call is open to PhD candidates, post-doc and young researchers of all Una Europa Universities.

Abstracts should be submitted in English (max. 800 words) before **midnight 18 February 2022 (CET)**. The selected papers are due on 16 May 2022, and will be subject to blind peer review. The papers (max. 10.000 words) should be finalized by 1 October 2022 to be presented during the WHC@50 Conference in December 2022.

For detailed information, we invite you to consult the attached **WHC@50 Information Sheet**.

Convenors

Elisa Baroncini, Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna (WHC@50 Coordinator)
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Seed Funding

CALL FOR PAPERS – INFORMATION SHEET

WHC@50 – Forever Young: Celebrating 50 Years of the World Heritage Convention

Abstract submission deadline: midnight 18 February 2022 (CET)

Una Europa, one of the 17 European alliances selected by the European Commission, brings together 9 major European Universities: Freie Universität Berlin, *Alma Mater Studiorum* - Università di Bologna, Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie, University of Edinburgh, University of Helsinki, KU Leuven, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Leiden University.

The Seed Funding Project “**WHC@50 – Forever Young: Celebrating 50 Years of the World Heritage Convention**” involves four Una Europa Universities (University of Edinburgh, KU Leuven, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, *Alma Mater Studiorum* – Università di Bologna as project coordinator) and aims at bringing together PhD candidates, post-doc and young researchers from all Una Europa Universities having proposals of investigation on the 1972 UNESCO Convention on World Heritage. WHC@50 intends to set up an interdisciplinary analysis considering the high relevance of the World Heritage Convention from a legal, cultural, artistic, architectural, historical, social, and economic scientific perspective. Furthermore, through WHC@50 research activities, this Seed Funding Project sets the basis for future collaborations, and offers the participants the possibility of developing and sharing ideas for the joint formulation of proposals for new international, European, and national research projects.

Theme and goals of the Seed Funding Project

In 2022 the **World Heritage Convention (WHC)** celebrates 50 years. Open to signature in November 1972, the WHC represents a major tool for International (Cultural Heritage) Law and the International and thus National Communities, thanks to its **194 State Parties**, which make it a truly universal treaty for the protection of cultural heritage. The Convention has contributed to the reconceptualization of “cultural property”, paving the way for its dynamic evolution into the more comprehensive concept of “cultural heritage”. In this respect, it shaped the **notion of world heritage**, considering cultural

property and landscapes of **Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)** as a legacy for the humankind and a responsibility for all the States and relevant actors. It is also the only treaty that **brings together the preservation of cultural properties and natural sites of exceptional importance**, both subject to the same system of international cooperation for their identification and protection. UNESCO sites represent a powerful element of cultural identity, and a formidable asset for national economies. The WHC is a legal instrument constantly invoked, interpreted and applied by national administrations and judges, economic operators, international organizations and stakeholders, together with diplomats and international adjudicators.

The **Una Europa Seed Funding Project “WHC@50”** retraces how the WHC was conceived, presents its current formulation and application in practice, illustrating its greatest achievement for the preservation and enhancement of world heritage governance, underlining its lights and shadows, and indicating the needs for reviews and reforms, also considering the EU approach to it. Combining the **knowledge of jurists, political scientists, historians, architects and economists** of the Una Europa Universities, WHC@50 aims to present the scientific community, and, more generally, to civil society as a whole, with the wide and articulated impact that the WHC has. The WHC impact will be analysed at the level of culture, politics and economies of national communities, and for the definition of the system of inalienable values for a global governance capable of achieving the SDGs of the UN 2030 Agenda. The purpose of this project is to gather all the different perspectives and the research results in an **open access volume**, focusing on the following major topics indicated below:

- Trace **the origins of the World Heritage Convention**, exploring the **political, legal and historical motivations** behind it. This reconstruction is essential to understand the progressive international concern about cultural heritage, based on the principle that every cultural and natural property is part of an **inherited patrimony** belonging to all humanity, and must be protected from deterioration and loss.
- The impact of the WHC on the **evolution of the UNESCO system** and the development of a concrete cooperation between States for the protection of culture. The Convention gave impetus to the **international cooperation** in this field, opening several UNESCO campaigns around the world for the protection of cultural properties at risk (for instance, Borobodur Temple in Indonesia, 1972; Angkor Wat in Cambodia, 1993; *Stari Most* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1995; Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan, 2003). The contribution of the WHC brought to a new level the expanding body of International Cultural Heritage Law in the following years, with the adoption of other relevant cultural Conventions (in particular, the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions).
- The notion of **cultural heritage**. The WHC breaks with the past and tradition, by redefining the basic concept of “cultural property”, used in previous Conventions (1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and

Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property). The WHC introduced the more dynamic and comprehensive concept of “cultural heritage”, inclusive of the intangible heritage and living culture of relevant human communities, as well as its link to the physical dimension of the natural environment. The term “heritage” implies the need to preserve this patrimony for future generations. In this way it extends the scope of the concept of “**protection**” to the human dimension of cultural objects, overcoming the traditional physical and tangible conception of cultural goods, identifying, at the same time, a general interest of humanity to their protection.

- The concept of “**Outstanding Universal Value**” (OUV), which constitutes the major requirement for the inscription of cultural and natural property in the **World Heritage List**, representing a fine balance between the respect of State sovereignty and the international concern for the protection of cultural and natural heritage.

The “silent evolution” of the WHC

In its fifty years of life, the WHC expressed a **double evolution**: *internally*, as a treaty regime within the UNESCO system; and *externally*, influencing the progressive development of International Cultural Heritage Law, as well as of other branches of International Law. The life cycle of the Convention has been characterized by an expansive interpretation of its text, without introducing any formal revision or amendment, through a constant revision of the **Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention**. Since their adoption in 1977 (the last version is dated 2019), the Operational Guidelines have been systematically adapted by the **World Heritage Committee**, an intergovernmental body set up under Article 8 of the Convention, to the changing technical and political needs of world heritage conservation and management.

This “silent evolution” of WHC brought to a remarkable expansion of its scope and operativity, as indicated hereafter:

- The introduction, in the early 1990s, of new categories of World Heritage sites, through the inclusion in the definition of “world cultural heritage”, according to Article 1 of the WHC, of the important category of “**cultural landscapes**”, originally not contemplated by the Convention. Cultural landscapes are “illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal” (Operational Guidelines, para. 47). The significance of “cultural landscapes” goes beyond their aesthetic significance, and lies in their historical, social and spiritual values, often expression of the connection between a human community and the territory.
- The dynamic reinterpretation of the concept of “heritage” has always been (and still is) the heartbeat of the evolution of the WHC, impacting its scope and implementation. This constant redefinition of “heritage” has especially

influenced what constitutes “**Outstanding Universal Value**”, based on the evolutive interpretation provided by the World Heritage Convention and the continuous adaptation of the Operational Guidelines. These latter provide, at paragraph 77, **ten criteria for the assessment of OUV** (six for cultural elements, four for natural elements), which gradually shifted from a monumental approach to what is exceptional and universal, to a more comprehensive vision that emphasises the **diversity** of world cultures, taking into account the anthropological dimension of heritage, reflecting the human values, the living cultures and the relation between culture and nature.

- The main feature of the WHC is represented by the **World Heritage List** (WHL), a list of properties forming part of the cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value, administered by the World Heritage Committee, which is assisted by two advisory bodies in the selection of the properties candidated by the States, **ICOMOS** (International Council for Monuments and Sites) and **IUCN** (International Union for the Conservation of Nature). State Parties are required to protect the properties inscribed in the List and located in their territory (Article 4 WHC), with the possibility to ask for the **international assistance** provided by the Convention (Article 19) and financed with the resources of the **World Heritage Fund** (Articles 15-16). This cooperation mechanism embodied in the international assistance represents the core of the international commitment to the protection of cultural and natural heritage of outstanding value for humanity. Whenever a property included in the WHL is in need of safeguard measures, due to a variety of factors that put in danger the universal value of the property, the Committee can dispose its inscription in the **World Heritage List in Danger** (WHLD). The creation, in 1992, of the **World Heritage Centre**, also helped mobilizing experts in cultural and natural heritage, bringing the operational skills necessary to attract resources for world heritage conservation.

Today the WHL, with its 1154 inscriptions, is the result of the constant reinterpretation of “heritage” and the subsequent procedures to its identification and protection. This was possible thanks to a new approach developed in the early 1990s within the framework of the so-called “global strategy” (**Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List**), aimed to overcome the original monumental and aesthetic Western idea of culture, in order to render the WHL a truly inclusive mirror of the variety of human cultures, geographical areas and artistic styles of the world.

- The **State Parties obligations** consist, primarily, in “ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage, [...] to the utmost of its own resources” (Article 4). Besides this fundamental duty, State Parties have the obligation to present regular periodic reports on the state of conservation of their listed sites. This obligation is the result of the **creative interpretation** of Article 29 of the Convention, which has gradually been used as legal basis for the establishment of a true system of systematic monitoring by the International Community.

Call for papers

The research team of the Una Europa Seed Funding WHC@50 welcomes original proposals analysing the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the first 50 years of its application. The purpose is to reconstruct the historical, legal and political evolution of the Convention, assessing its contribution to the international protection of cultural heritage, identifying its **merits, critical issues** and **possible revisions**, in the light of the countless challenges to which cultural heritage, in all of its expressions, is constantly exposed.

This call is opened to all PhD candidates, post-doc and young researchers of all Una Europa Universities.

In addition to the several aspects already illustrated above, the proposals can consider one of the themes below, concerning a possible revision of the Convention, or also other themes closely connected to the present call:

- The potential identification and preservation of cultural and natural sites corresponding to conditions of Outstanding Universal Value, which are **not dependent on the sovereignty of State Parties**. According to Article 3 of the Convention, the initiative and the responsibility to “identify and delineate the different properties situated in its territory”, meeting the threshold of Outstanding Universal Value, lie on each State Party. The provision excludes the possibility to recognize a property as “world heritage” made *ex officio* by the World Heritage Committee, or a State different from the territorial State. The idea to include in the WHL marine sites **beyond national jurisdiction** has been already considered. However, for the time being, these potential developments concern only natural heritage, and no amendments of the Operational Guidelines have been introduced.
- The **increasing number of World Heritage properties** inscribed in the List, which makes the international monitoring of their state of conservation more difficult. This is one of the most critical aspects of the Convention, considering also the unbalanced content of the List, with States and territories over-represented (especially in Europe) and other State Parties with very few inscriptions.
- The **-increasing- politicization** of the process leading to the inscription of a property in the World Heritage List, which is possible only with the **consent of the territorial State** (Article 11, para. 3 of the Convention).
- The problem concerning the relationship between the process of nomination and inscription of World Heritage Sites and the respect for norms of International Law protecting **the rights of local and indigenous communities**, determined to maintain full control over the nominated site.
- Beside responding to at least one the criteria for Outstanding Universal Value provided by para. 77 of the Operational Guidelines, in order to be inscribed in the WHL, a property must satisfy the conditions of **authenticity** (only cultural properties) and **integrity** (both cultural and natural properties, according to paragraphs 79-95 of the Operational Guidelines). Among these requirements,

authenticity has been the most controversial, due to the rigorous approach, followed for years, to conservation and restoration of ancient monuments embodied in the **Venice Charter** (International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, 1964), based on the respect for the original status, materials and structure. However this approach has been gradually abandoned for practical necessities, as indicated by the inscriptions in the WHL of the Old Market Square in the historic centre of Warsaw (1980) and the medieval city of Rhodes (1988). The adoption of the **Nara Charter** in 1994 introduced an important reconceptualization of the requirement of “authenticity”, based on the fidelity to the social, economic and religious function of the building rather than its correspondence to the original materials. However, “authenticity” is still a problematic requirement, especially for the inscription of historic centres, given contemporary urban development needs.

- Another critical aspect of the Convention is the **absence of a sanctions regime** for those States which violate the obligation to protect the world heritages located in their territory. The only type of sanction provided by the Convention is the **deletion from the WHL**, disposed by the World Heritage Committee (paras. 192-198 Operational Guidelines), of those properties which have lost their OUV. This evident lack of effective sanctions could be tackled at institutional level, through the **enforcement of the World Heritage Committee**, which could intervene in substitution of the non-complying State, or providing it with the capacity to address the cultural policy of the State Parties.
- The **impact of the World Heritage Convention on the national legal systems** (e.g. on administrative law, private law, procedural law, IP law, on the relation between International Law and domestic law). WHC rules impose demanding national disciplines for the protection and respect of UNESCO sites: it is therefore important to consider States’ practices implementing UNESCO obligations, the place WHC law has in the national hierarchy of norms, and the relation between UNESCO law and domestic law. Also the role that local communities can play in supporting the function of protection and enhancement of UNESCO sites has to be considered, particularly in the light of the 1972 Convention provisions regarding the synergy between public institutions, individuals and associations (as, for instance, the participatory and collaborative processes like pacts for taking care of common goods). Furthermore, WHC rules have to be considered in the legal debate concerning the notions of “**property interests**” and “**common goods**”.
- “**Urban heritage**” can be understood as a type of cultural property that considers the city as heritage. Under this consideration, the urban fabric and its constitutive parts are an entity to be protected. In this context urban conservation is linked to the protection and modification of cities and urban areas considered of “outstanding value”. The WHC named those urban areas “groups of buildings”. We are looking for proposals also in this field.
- In recent years urban heritage has started to include current social, cultural, and economic elements in urban areas, together with the more traditional elements

of the built environment. **Communities** have become important for urban heritage, especially for **the protection of place identity and societal heritage values** that would usually be in conflict or under threat by the economic interests looking for the exploitation of the touristic potential of historical urban areas. In this context, **Internet** has become a massive source of data and information, when researching community heritage values and economic values around urban heritage. We are looking for proposals also in this field.

Paper submission procedure

Abstracts may be submitted in English by PhD candidates, post-doc and young researchers of all the eight Una Europa Universities.

Submissions must not exceed 800 words, and have to be submitted to the following mail addresses: elisa.baroncini@unibo.it; bert.demarsin@kuleuven.be ; anagama@der.ucm.es ; r.stoica@ed.ac.uk .

In addition to the abstract, each submission should contain a separate file containing information on:

- The author's name and affiliation, contact details, including email address and phone number;
- A short (one page) author's CV, including a list of relevant publications;

Timeline

The deadline for the submission of abstracts is midnight **18 February 2022** (CET).

We expect to be able to inform successful applicants by **25 February 2022**.

The selected papers will have to be submitted by the authors on 16 May 2022, and, subsequent to blind peer review, which has to be completed submitting the papers in the final version by 1 October 2022, will be presented in the final WHC@50 Conference in December 2022. They will be published in the WHC@50 open access volume. Each paper has a maximum length of 10.000 words. Editorial criteria will be provided to the selected authors. For proposals concerning architecture studies, the maximum number of pictures will be communicated together with the notice of the selection. The WHC@50 Conference will also be held in remote. The WHC@50 project does not cover travel expenses.

Convenors

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