

Resolution for a better legal protection of historic gardens and parks in Austria, to be sent to the Austrian government

**1. An den Herrn Bundeskanzler Dr. Alfred Gusenbauer
A-1010 Wien, Ballhausplatz**

**2. An den Herrn Vizekanzler und Finanzminister Dr. Wilhelm Molterer
A-1015 Wien, Himmelfortgasse 8**

**3. An die Frau Bundesministerin für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur Dr. Claudia Schmied
A-1014 Wien, Minoritenplatz 5**

**4. An den Herrn Bundesminister für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft Dr. Josef Pröll
A-1010 Wien, Stubenring 1**

Copies of the letter sent to:

M.me Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons. Chef de la Division du patrimoine culturel, du paysage et de l'aménagement du territoire du Conseil de l'Europe - Bruxelles

M.me Gaia Jungeblodt, Directeur Secrétariat International de l'ICOMOS - Paris

Mr Francesco Bandarin, Directeur du Centre de l'UNESCO pour le Patrimoine Mondial - Paris

Dear ...

May I present you with the following Resolution, passed on April 28, 2007 in Schlosshof and ask you to find an EU-worthy, satisfactory legal solution for the urgent issues listed herewith.

Every year the ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee for Cultural Landscapes visits different countries to discuss problems of preservation and protection of, and offer advice political support for an aspect of cultural heritage endangered from a number of perspectives, namely the world's cultural landscapes, of which the first category—according to the UNESCO definition is the so-called “designed landscapes,” *i.e. historic gardens and parks*. As is generally known, UNESCO has established a “World Heritage List”—which also includes the gardens of the palaces of Schönbrunn and the Belvedere in Vienna, the Mirabell Garden in Salzburg as well as the cultural landscapes of the Wachau, the Salzkammergut, Lake Neusiedl and the area surrounding the Semmering Railway.

In this year we had our meeting in Vienna (from 25th to 29th April 2007) and we could participate at the international conference “The House Habsburg and garden art”, organized by the Bundesdenkmalamt, the Bundesgärten and the Österreichische Gesellschaft für historische Gärten. At this occasion the ICOMOS – IFLA International Committee for Cultural Landscapes has assembled specialists from 16 countries of the world (Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Switzerland).

At Schlosshof our Committee could admire the Austrian governments great financial efforts for the felicitous restoration of Prince Eugene's Baroque complex is making excellent progress and setting a standard for similar projects throughout Europe. Therefore, our Committee was particularly astonished *that the historic gardens and parks are still not automatically considered for Monuments Protection in Austria, as is considered normal practice all over Europe since the 1980's*. Apparently a constitutional mistake in 1964 led to this curious situation, which over the last forty-plus years has become untenable.

The previous Austrian government also recognized the political aspect of this problem, because it concerned the division of responsibilities between the Federal government and the Provinces (protection of monuments in the former, protection of nature for the latter), and attempted to

place at least *only the 56* most important historic gardens and parks under a protective order from January 1, 2000. This had the support of the cultural public, f. e. the artist André Heller and the journalist Dr. Barbara Rett; she collected the signatures of one hundred prominent personalities for a renewal in the Monuments Protection Law. The change to the constitution—passed by a two-thirds majority in the Parliament—was *a laudable first step, but not, alas, followed by any subsequent action.*

In the meantime, an extensive survey undertaken by the Technical University in Vienna has revealed that *there are ca. 1,800 historic parks and gardens in Austria which are worthy of cultural conservancy.* Compared with other European countries the legal possibility for the protection of 56 historic gardens and parks in Austria is an absolutely low number (in Berlin alone there are 600 protected green spaces as cultural monuments!), and compared with the ca. 30,000 protection-worthy buildings which will be listed definitively by 2009 in Austria. Hundreds of gardens and parks (that had originally a high artistic quality) *are in danger in your country* to be destroyed or to be lost or to become only forest territories...

The ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee for Cultural Landscapes appeals to the Austrian Government to consider the most urgent safeguarding for an almost forgotten, extremely endangered part of your cultural heritage, i.e. for the historic gardens and parks which bear eloquent witness to past human confrontations with culture and nature, and to conform with the rest of the EU in providing them with adequate legal protection, indeed, protect them as monuments.

We very much hope that our concern will not be forgotten, and therefore we (representatives for 16 countries of the world) appeal to you as a member of the Austrian Federal Government to do everything in your power to continue the progress begun in 1999.

Schlosshof, 28th April 2007

Prof. Dr. Luigi Zangheri

President of the ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee for Cultural Landscapes
(former for Historic Gardens)

An den ...