



From July 28, 2010 No. EW-218/1-10

*To 34-th Session
of the World Heritage Committee*

WESTERN CAUCASUS PROPERTY IN DANGER

Dear colleagues!

Having studied the draft decision of the 34th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee on Western Caucasus property, our organization supports these recommendations and considers them very important. However believes it necessary to inform session delegates that these recommendations do not touch upon all of the acute problems and do not reflect the full threat to the said property. This is especially concerning the threats from construction of Olympic objects around Sochi, and the construction of «Lunnaya Polyana» resort.

We bring to your attention the fact that most of the previous threats to World Heritage site «Western Caucasus» have remained, while most of the recommendations of the 32nd session of the Committee have not been met, and meanwhile new threats have appeared:

1) The constructed road segment to Lunnaya Polyana has been kept in working state and is used for recreation. Further construction of this road all the way to Lunnaya Polyana has been planned, and relevant land plots have been taken out of the Kavkazsky Reserve for this construction.

2) The protected zone of World Heritage has not been allocated and has not been given legal protective status.

3) Logging in the protected zone of the Kavkazsky Reserve in the Adygeya Republic and in nature monument «“The Rivers Pshekha and Pshekhaskha Headwaters”” are continuing. There is no monitoring or restoration work in the forests.

4) Construction of infrastructure (the road from Guzeripl to Lagonaki and powerlines) is going on within World Heritage territory for the purpose of creating the «Oshten» ski resort complex.

5) Development of the ski resort on Lunnaya Polyana is continuing on the territory of the so-called «Biosfera» scientific center. For example, last year a motocross track was constructed on the premises, while this year a new ski lift is being built. The center is not used for scientific purposes or monitoring.

6) Construction of an Olympic object (a VIP complex) is going on one kilometer away from the World Heritage boundary on the Psekhako ridge, with an asphalt road connecting to the complex.

7) Land necessary for construction of a road to the Gazprom ski resort and several Olympic object on its territory has been illegally taken out of the Kavkazsky Reserve and the World Heritage territory (near Laura cordon).

8) A ski resort “Lagonaki” is planned by the Krasnodar region administration as part of the



“Altitude 5642” resort development plan. This resort is to be located in a large part on World Heritage Territory. The project has been supported by Russia’s President Dmitry Medvedev.

9) Destruction of a valuable landmark “Porog Kisha-1” on the Belaya River is planned by the Federal Road Agency on the territory of Adygeya Republic.

Since the situation around “Western Caucasus” is critical, and that Russian authorities has systematically failed to meet the recommendations of the World Heritage Center, we ask to take decisive and effective measures to save the property, including to consider possible inclusion of the property on the list of World Heritage under threat.

We also ask that the following points are included in the draft decision of the session along with other things the Committee is asking the State Party:

- Ensure that the construction of Olympic objects near Krasnaya Polyana settlement does not impact World Heritage territory or its protected zone.

- Halt development of the Lunnaya Polyana resort on the territory of World Heritage and construction of new recreational objects. Ensure that the complex becomes a true scientific center as its official name implies.

We also ask to include an additional point regarding sending a monitoring mission of the World Heritage Center to Russia in the period before the 35th session of the Committee, to study the situation regarding protection of “Western Caucasus” property.

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