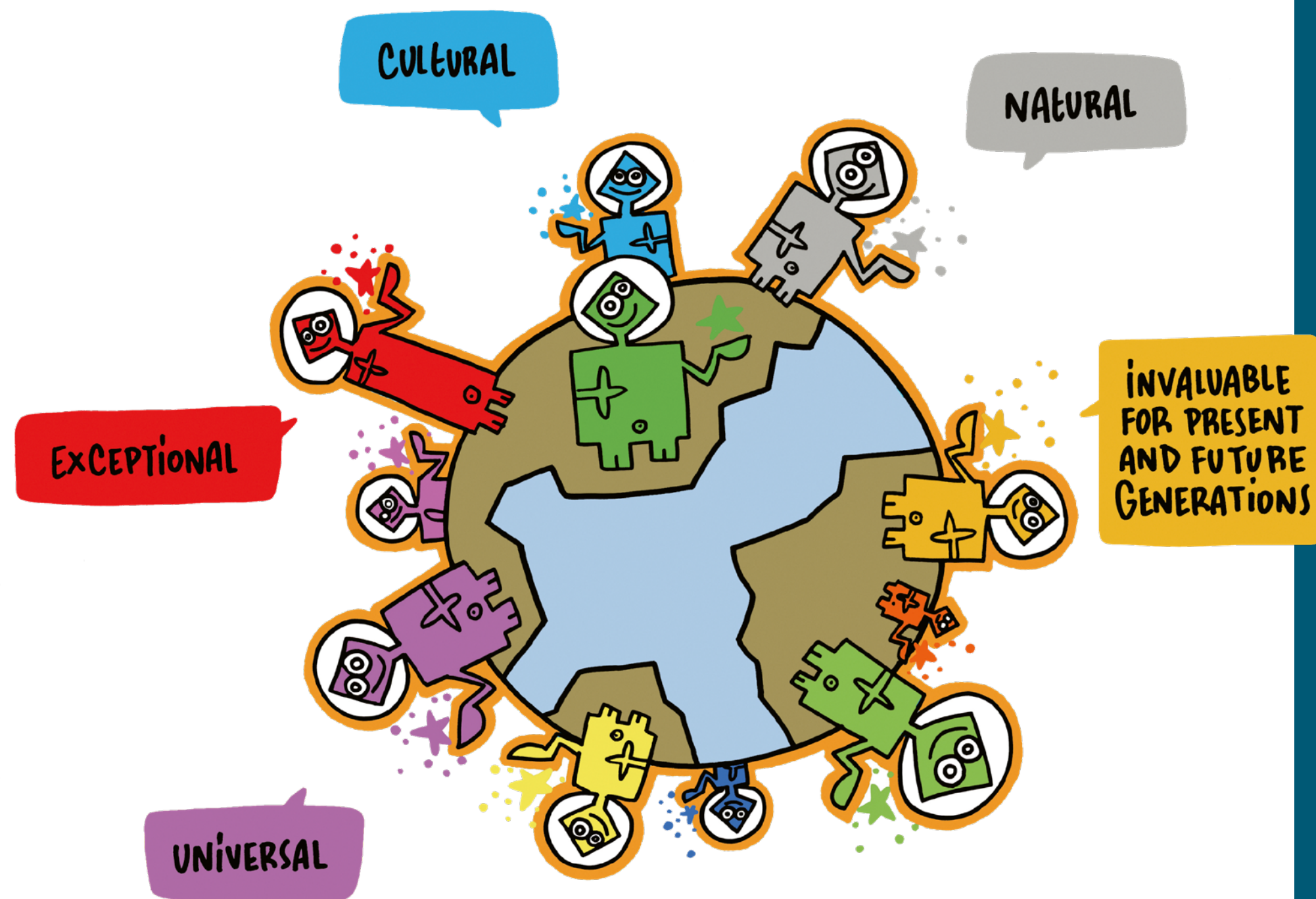


A brief illustrated guide to world heritage



association des
biens français
PATRIMOINE
MONDIAL



Edito

Since 2007, managers who are members of the French World Heritage Sites Association (Association des biens français du patrimoine mondial) have worked alongside the Ministries of Culture and of Ecological Transition, so that their sites can find that delicate balance between preservation and development, respecting their integrity and also opening up to visitors – whenever possible. Through their daily actions, they also ensure that their values of respect, tolerance and peace, which they share with UNESCO and the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, should be widely disseminated, understood and shared.

To date, we have not produced much in the way of mediation and communication tools aimed at the general public. We felt that it was time to provide a document that brought together all the key notions relating to world heritage and which could serve both as an introduction to the subject, an aide-mémoire and an incentive to gain further knowledge and expertise, for those who so wish.

We wanted to produce something that was entertaining and light-hearted, something that would invite discovery, aimed at site managers, local residents, visitors, students, and anyone interested in the subject. Yet our message is neither simplistic nor partisan. Understanding and education are the main levers for appropriating these notions, but especially education, without which we have no awareness of the fact that the protection and the promotion of our properties concerns us all.

Let us make no mistake, by promoting these sites, we are by no means retreating into our own exceptional heritage properties, but rather we are opening up to the rest of the world. We have only one planet to pass on to our future generations and this is the focus of the 1972 Convention. A planet with a wonderfully rich cultural and natural heritage that we must absolutely safeguard and protect from all the dangers that threaten it.

As you read this document, we hope that you will understand a little better what you have been entrusted with and that you will agree to share some of the responsibility for this incredible heritage which it is up to us all to defend.

Jean-François Caron

Entering the universe of World Heritage can be very daunting. Some of the concepts can appear impenetrable, the vocabulary can sometimes be very specialised, the processes very complex... all this can, unfortunately, have the effect of keeping the public at a distance and discouraging elected officials or technicians from embarking on the nomination process, even some who were determined to achieve a successful inscription.

When we set out to produce this document, our aim was twofold: first we wanted to give people an understanding and to inspire them, while being careful not to distort the message or the values behind the 1972 Convention. We don't aim to make a world heritage expert out of everyone who takes the time to delve into this short guide, but what we do want is to provide the key notions to offer the rare possibility of looking at the world with new eyes.

We decided to create a hybrid document aimed at several types of readership, from beginners to experts, from students to professionals. Everyone can find their own level of complexity or understanding since, as well as providing the first level of information in the simplest terms and as clearly as possible, all the pages – each one dealing with a different notion or concept– give readers the opportunity to go further for more in-depth knowledge, either through additional texts or via links to external resources.

In addition, we decided to use Olivier Sampson's wonderful illustrations. He is a draughtsman, a graphic facilitator, an artist whose sensitivity was able to perfectly match even our craziest ideas.

The best projects often spring out of a chance meeting and this was no exception. We met Olivier at a workshop organised a few years ago in Saint-Emilion by an association who were convinced that it is important for mediation to be done differently, doing away with top-down postures in favour of involving everyone. Since that day when we discovered that his "super power" was capturing dialogues and interactions in just a quick sketch, really bringing them to life with his pens, Olivier Sampson has worked with us on all of our "mediation – world heritage" courses.

This document was initially designed as an extension of the exhibition "The invention of World Heritage", produced by the Royal Saltworks at Arc-et-Senans, then it was adapted, through the work of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Mining Basin, to create a version that could be appropriate for all French World Heritage sites, and now it has finally come to fruition, entirely independently, around Olivier's drawings. He has been so good at interpreting all the messages that we wanted to convey. We have taken immense pleasure in working on this project, and we hope that you will be as delighted to discover it.

The Editorial Board

May 2021



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Editorial sources



Good to know



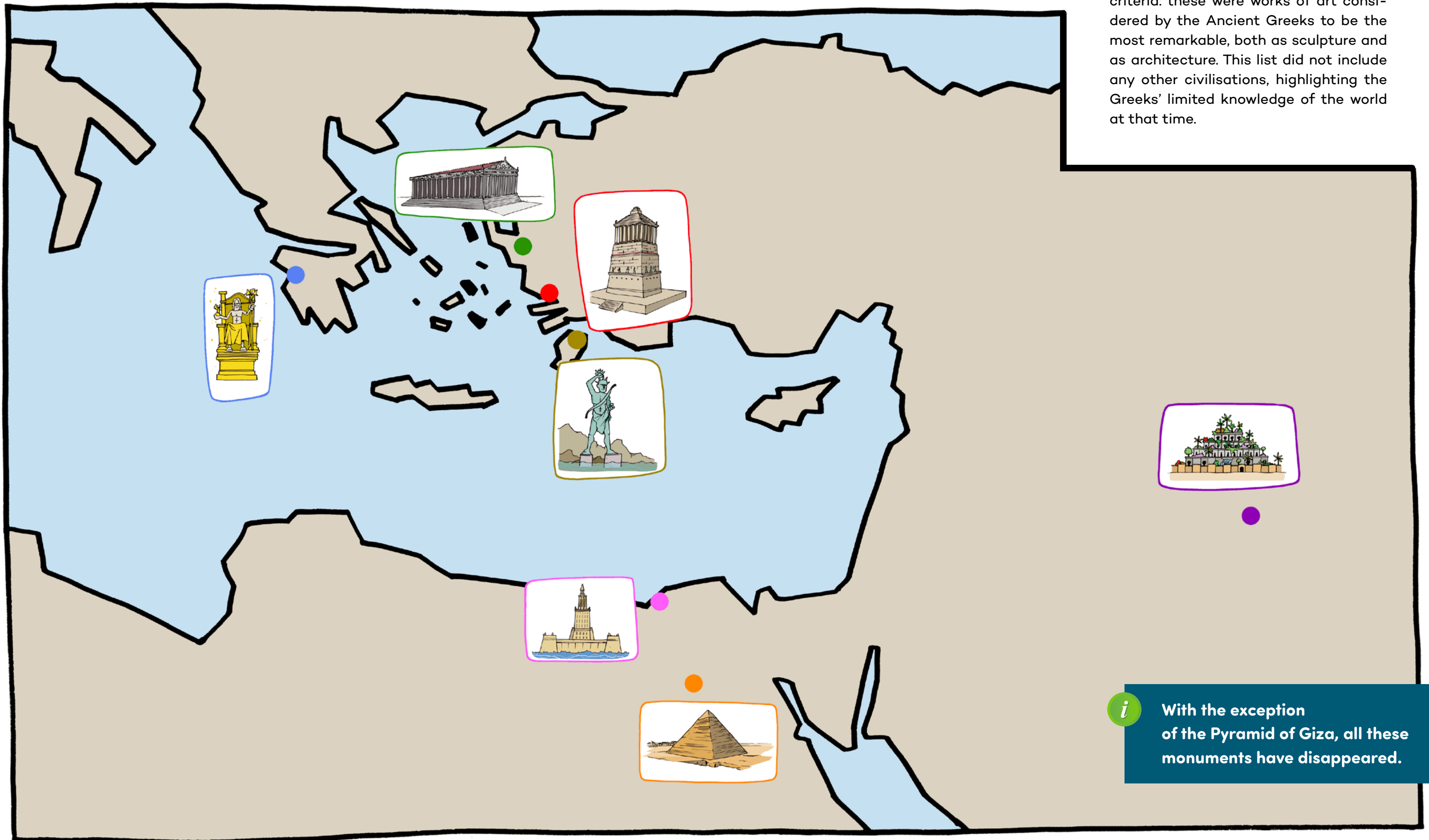
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01. The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

In the 5th century BC, a list was drawn up by Herodotus (*"the father of History"*) of seven wonders of the ancient world, chosen exclusively according to structural criteria: these were works of art considered by the Ancient Greeks to be the most remarkable, both as sculpture and as architecture. This list did not include any other civilisations, highlighting the Greeks' limited knowledge of the world at that time.



i With the exception of the Pyramid of Giza, all these monuments have disappeared.



SOURCES
• Passerelles BNF
• Encyclopedia Universalis

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Specialised United Nations institution, created in 1945, UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It seeks to establish peace through international cooperation in education, sciences and culture.

As early as 1942, in wartime, the governments of the European countries that were at that time facing Nazi Germany and its allies, met in the United Kingdom for the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME). World War Two was far from over, yet these countries were looking for ways to rebuild their education systems once peace was restored.

The project very quickly gained momentum, and then took on a universal dimension. Based on a proposal by CAME, a United Nations Conference for the establishment of an educational and cultural organization was convened in London from 1 to 16 November 1945 and scarcely had the war ended than it was created.

Representatives from 44 countries came together and decided to create an organization that would embody a genuine culture of peace.

1 : Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO

2 : Ibid.

In their eyes, the new organization would establish “the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind”¹ and thereby prevent the outbreak of another world war. Significantly, UNESCO was founded on the premise that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”².

The Constitution of UNESCO came into force on 4 November 1946, and charged it with the goal of “gradually achieving [...] the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations Organization was established...”³.

With this philosophy in mind, the Organization symbolically chose the Parthenon as a model for its logo. “That Greek temple, which Phidias describes as possessing proportions rather than dimensions, [...] is a fine symbol of the quest for balance and harmony which sums up one of the primary missions of our Organization in regard to relations with nations.” (Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow, former Director-General of UNESCO, 25 November 1982).

3 : Ibid.



To achieve its aims, UNESCO has set up many programmes in Education (right to education, literacy, etc.), Science (biodiversity, technologies, sustainable development, etc.) and Culture (museums, diversity of cultural expressions, armed conflict and heritage, world heritage, memory of the world, etc.).



SOURCE
Site web de l'UNESCO

UNESCO's values

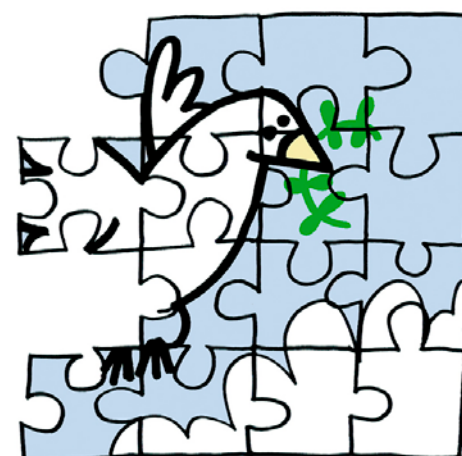
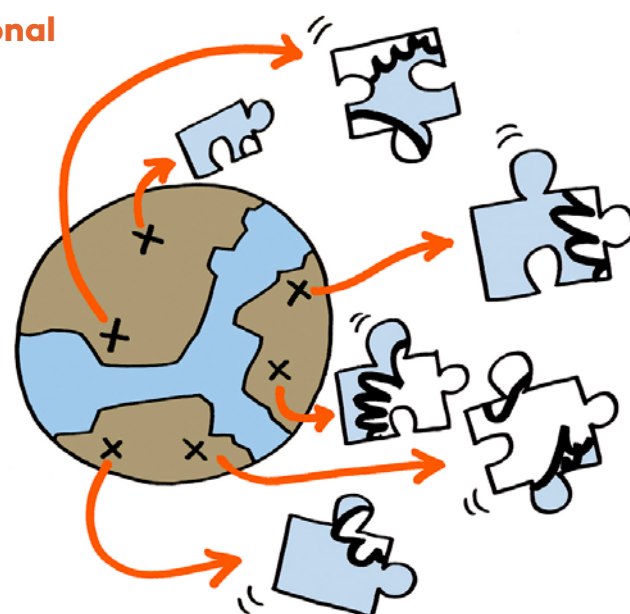
“To contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.

Article 1 of the
Constitution of UNESCO

These moral values are the keystone of the programmes implemented by UNESCO, whatever the field or the topic. As far as possible they guide the work of the Institution. International cooperation and solidarity, the maintenance of peace, respect for otherness and cultural diversity, tolerance, acceptance, recognition of a humanity that is both one in its destiny and many in its expression, a heritage shared by all, these too are the values on which the World Heritage Convention is founded.

It defends the idea that there is a heritage that is common to all and that this universal heritage is one possible contribution to the intercultural dialogue needed for peace to be maintained.

**Ensure international
cooperation
and solidarity
to build peace**



**Help to maintain peace
and security through
intercultural dialogue**



**Promote
universal
respect**



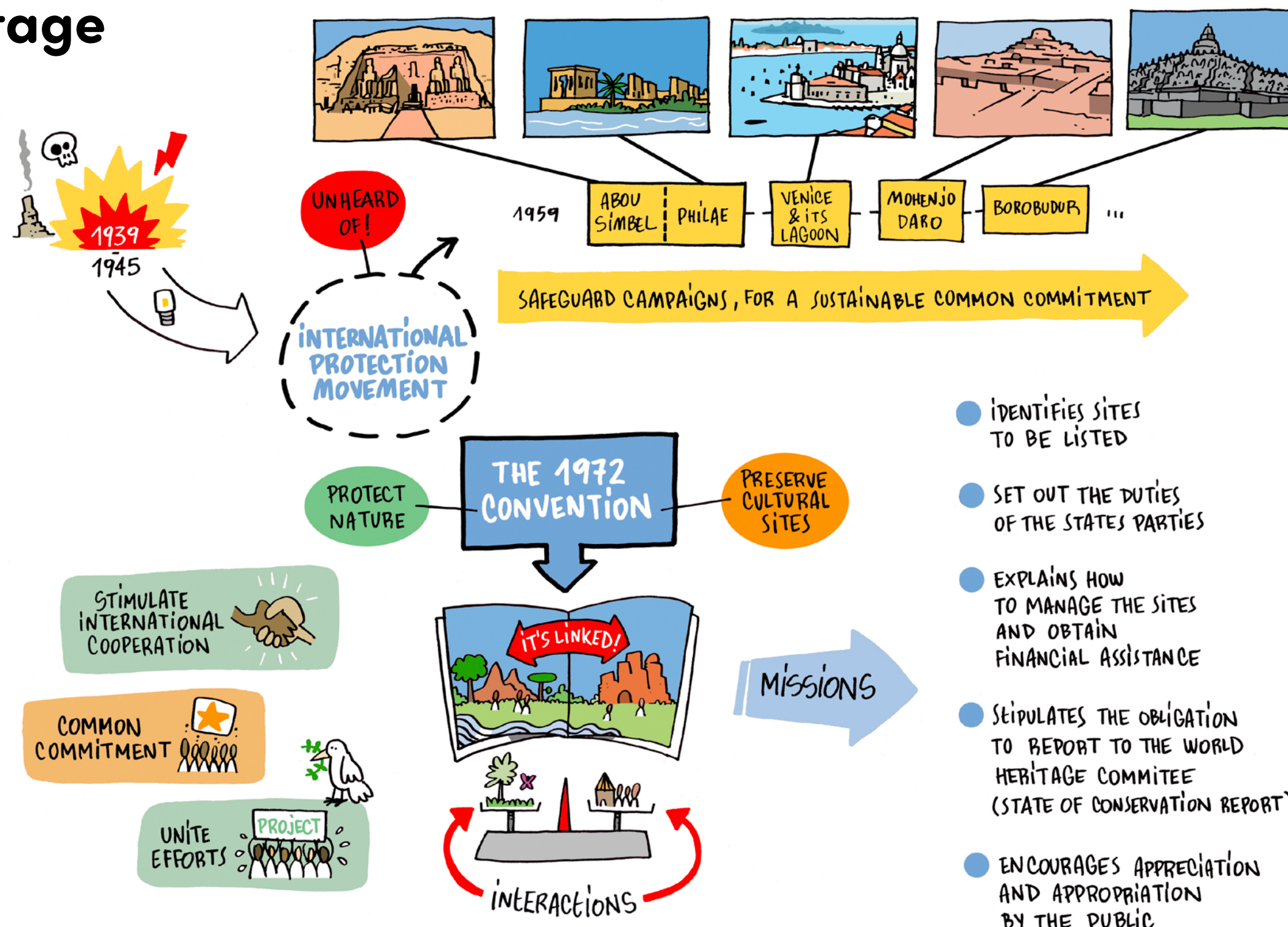
The World Heritage Convention

In 1959, the decision to build the Aswan dam in Egypt threatened to cause the Nubian monuments, including the temples of Abu Simbel, to disappear beneath the waters of the Nile.

The international community became aware, probably for the first time, of the irreparable loss that this would represent for all of humanity.

“Today, for the first time, all nations [...] have been summoned to save by a united effort the fruits of a civilisation on which none has a pre-emptive claim”

André Malraux, 8 March 1960
in response to UNESCO's call to save the monuments in Nubia



The idea of a common heritage -and its corollary, a common responsibility to protect it had just taken shape.

UNESCO launched a spectacular international campaign to safeguard the monuments: the temples were dismantled, relocated and reassembled in a risk-free area. Almost 50 countries contributed to raise the \$80 million needed for this operation. This success was followed by other protection campaigns, notably to save Venice (Italy) and Moenjodaro (Pakistan) and to restore Borobudur (Indonesia).

At the same time, voices were being heard in favour of defending the environment to protect the riches of nature that are inseparable from the history of humanity.

This movement of international solidarity in favour of heritage and this awareness of the combined importance of cultural and natural heritage give rise to the conviction that there is a heritage which, through its Outstanding Universal Value, transcends the principles of property and national boundaries.

To provide a tool for collective action, the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was born on 16 November 1972. It affirms that the works of man and of nature are one and the same heritage. And it identifies and protects sites of value such that their safeguarding concerns all of humanity.

“ *Considering that the deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world.* ”

“ *Considering that parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole.* ”

*Preamble to the World
Heritage Convention*



MISSIONS

- IDENTIFIES SITES TO BE LISTED
- SET OUT THE DUTIES OF THE STATES PARTIES
- EXPLAINS HOW TO MANAGE THE SITES AND OBTAIN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
- STIPULATES THE OBLIGATION TO REPORT TO THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE (STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT)
- ENCOURAGES APPRECIATION AND APPROPRIATION BY THE PUBLIC

Furthermore, the Convention:

- Sets out the duties of States Parties in identifying potential sites and their role in protecting and preserving them.
By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated on its territory, but also to protect its national heritage, by all the necessary means.
- Explains how the World Heritage Fund is to be used and managed and under what conditions international financial assistance may be provided.
- Stipulates the obligation of States Parties to report regularly to the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of their World Heritage properties. These reports are crucial to the work of the Committee as they enable it to assess the conditions of the sites, decide on specific programme needs and resolve recurrent problems.
- Encourages States Parties, finally, to strengthen the public's appreciation of World Heritage properties and to enhance their protection through educational and information programmes.

The first sites were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1978. Since that date, the implementation of the Convention and the increasing number of inscriptions highlight the many changes in the notion of heritage.

The List has continued to grow, and now ranges from simple monumental sites to increasingly vast and complex properties: serial inscriptions, transnational properties, cultural landscapes, etc. In addition to historic or natural sites, modern and industrial heritage sites have also appeared.



SOURCE
Site web de l'UNESCO



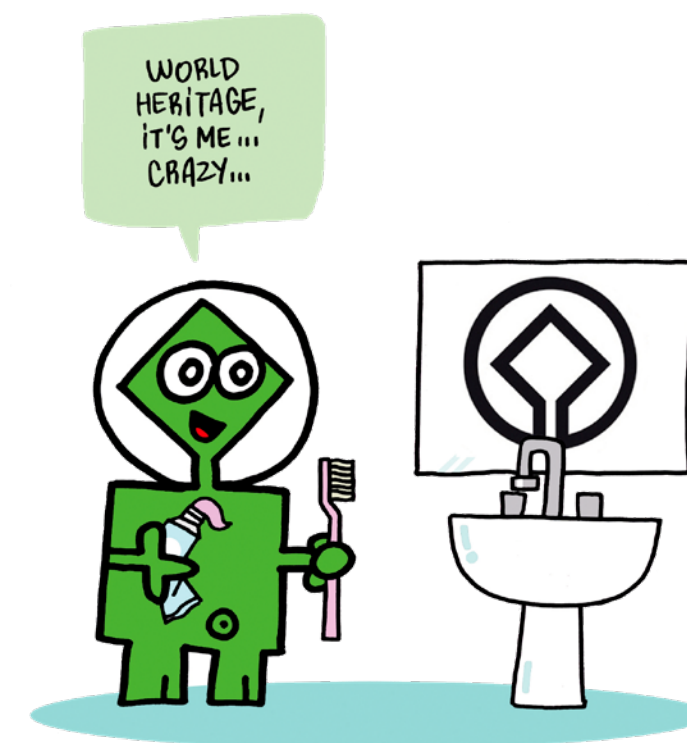
Combining cultural and natural heritage protection to preserve a common inheritance

The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was the first to link together in a single document the preservation of cultural sites and nature conservation and to consider that they were of equal importance.

This idea of combining the conservation of cultural sites and natural sites came from a White House Conference in Washington DC, in 1965, which suggested the creation of a “*World Heritage Trust*” that would stimulate international cooperation to protect “*the world’s most superb natural and scenic landscapes and historic sites for the present and the future for all of humanity*”.

In 1968, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) presented similar proposals to its members and these were put before the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm.

Eventually, a single text was agreed upon by the parties concerned, the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on 16 November 1972. By considering both the cultural and natural aspects of heritage, the Convention reminds us of the



interaction between human beings and nature and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.

The world heritage emblem expresses this interaction symbolically. The central square refers to Man’s know-how, to Culture, while the circle celebrates the gifts of Nature. The emblem is round, like the World, a symbol of global protection for the heritage of all mankind.



SOURCE
World Heritage Information Kit

The inscription process: a long and winding road!

The inscription process is a very rigorous one. Only countries that have signed the World Heritage Convention can submit nomination proposals for the inscription of properties on their territory.

In France, it is the Ministries for Culture and Ecology that are responsible for monitoring the Convention at national level, on behalf of the State. They also advise applicants, bearing in mind the spirit of the Convention and the priorities of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

In order to meet the growing requirements on the part of the World Heritage Committee and deal with the influx of applications for inclusion, in recent years France has applied a specific framework and procedure to guide and examine applications.

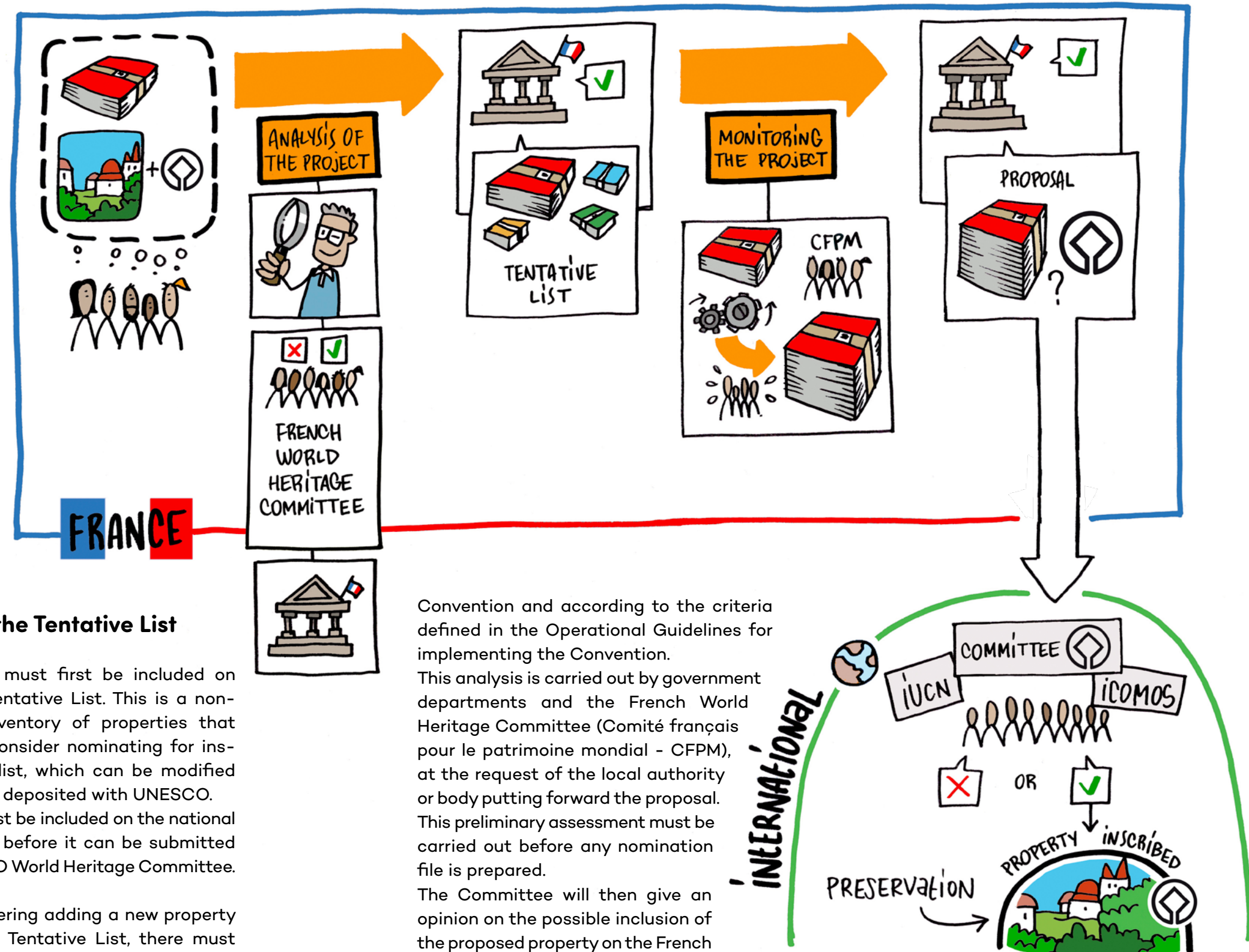
A national advisory body, the French World Heritage Committee (*Comité français pour le patrimoine mondial*), was therefore set up in 2004. It includes experts from various disciplines, also the French ambassador to UNESCO.

Its role is to advise the two ministers on selecting nominations for inscription and more broadly on the application of the World Heritage Convention.

First step: the Tentative List

Any property must first be included on its national Tentative List. This is a non-exhaustive inventory of properties that France may consider nominating for inscription. This list, which can be modified and revised, is deposited with UNESCO. A property must be included on the national Tentative List before it can be submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

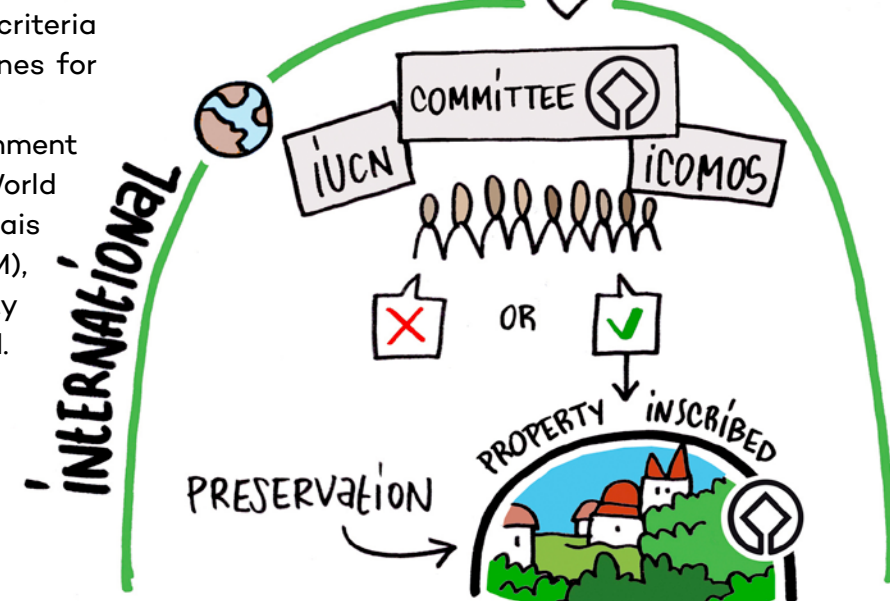
Before considering adding a new property to the French Tentative List, there must first be an analysis of the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the proposed property, as defined by the World Heritage



Convention and according to the criteria defined in the Operational Guidelines for implementing the Convention.

This analysis is carried out by government departments and the French World Heritage Committee (Comité français pour le patrimoine mondial - CFPM), at the request of the local authority or body putting forward the proposal. This preliminary assessment must be carried out before any nomination file is prepared.

The Committee will then give an opinion on the possible inclusion of the proposed property on the French Tentative List and on whether or not to continue with the nomination procedure.



Second step: preparing the nomination file and inscription

At national level

After the property is included on the French Tentative List, the French World Heritage Committee, based on proposals from the ministries, examines and approves nominations for inscription in at least three separate stages which take the form of a hearing:

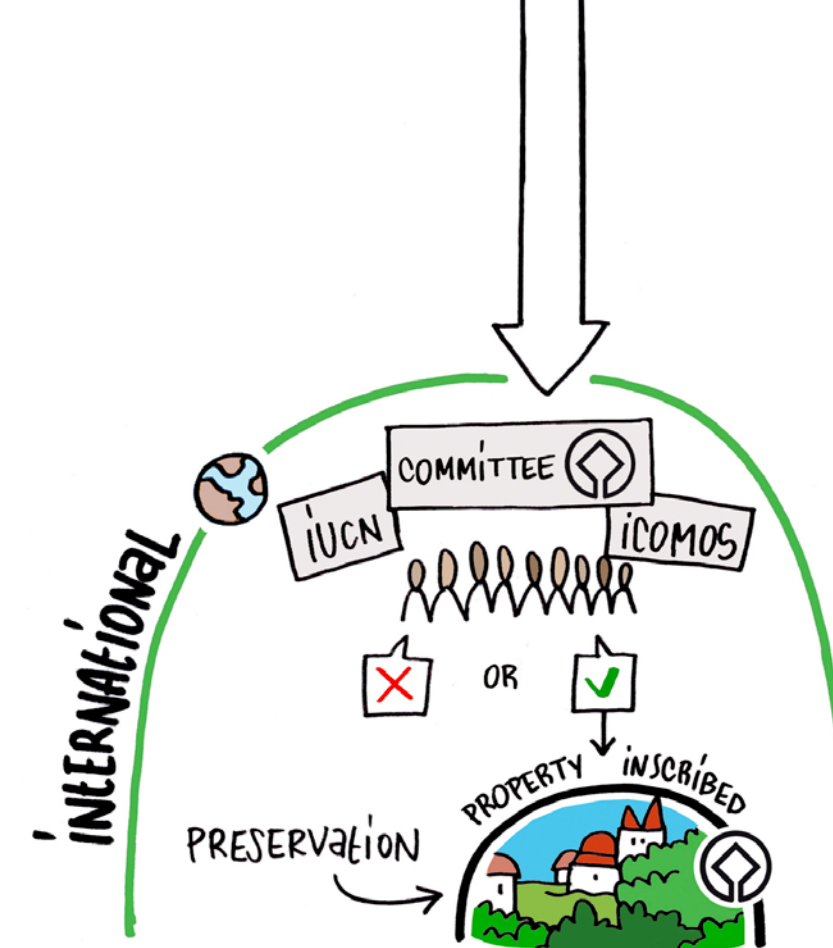
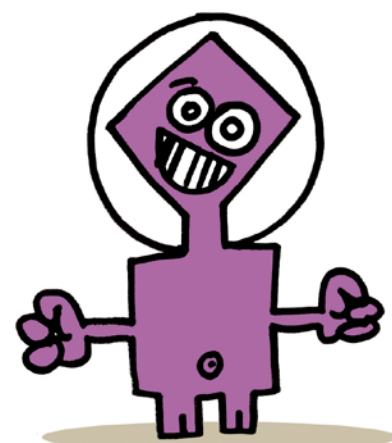
- First, the Committee examines the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, the criteria that are met to justify this, and the elements of comparative analysis that will be presented in the nomination file.
- Once this stage has been completed, in due time, the Committee examines the Statements of Authenticity and Integrity, also the description of the property, its boundaries and those of its buffer zone.
- Lastly, the Committee examines and validates the proposed management plan, then checks the entire file and advises the government whether or not it should be submitted to UNESCO.

On the basis of the hearing with those proposing the nomination and the report produced by a member designated by this Committee, the Committee gives its opinion at each stage with recommendations whether to continue the process or not. Each opinion is forwarded to the competent Minister.

Based on the Committee's judgements, the State Party selects the nomination file to be submitted each year for inscription. The Permanent Delegation of the French Republic to UNESCO (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs) then submits it formally to the World Heritage Centre.

A draft nomination file must be submitted to the World Heritage Centre before 30 September in the year preceding the year of consideration in order that the Centre can formally check that it is complete.

The final nomination dossier must then be submitted before 31 January.



At international level

After the nomination file is submitted, it is once again subject to a formal check by the World Heritage Centre, which ensures that it conforms to the format. It is then transmitted to the Convention's "Advisory Bodies" (ICOMOS, International Council on Monuments and Sites, and/or IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature), which carry out a scientific and technical assessment. They deliver their report to the World Heritage Committee accompanied by a proposal decision.

The definitive decision is taken by the members of the World Heritage Committee, which meets once a year (usually in June/July) to examine a maximum of one nomination per State Party (and a limit of 35 nominations in all for all States Parties). The property

may or may not be inscribed, it may be deferred or it may be referred back to the State Party for additional information. If the Committee decides not to inscribe, this decision is definitive. If a dossier is deferred, it may be resubmitted at a later date on a different basis.

If it is referred back, it can be considered again, subject to modifications or additions, within three years.

A nomination normally takes a year and a half between the time of submission and the decision from the World Heritage Committee.



SOURCES
• UNESCO website
• CFPM internal regulations

Outstanding Universal Value (O.U.V.)

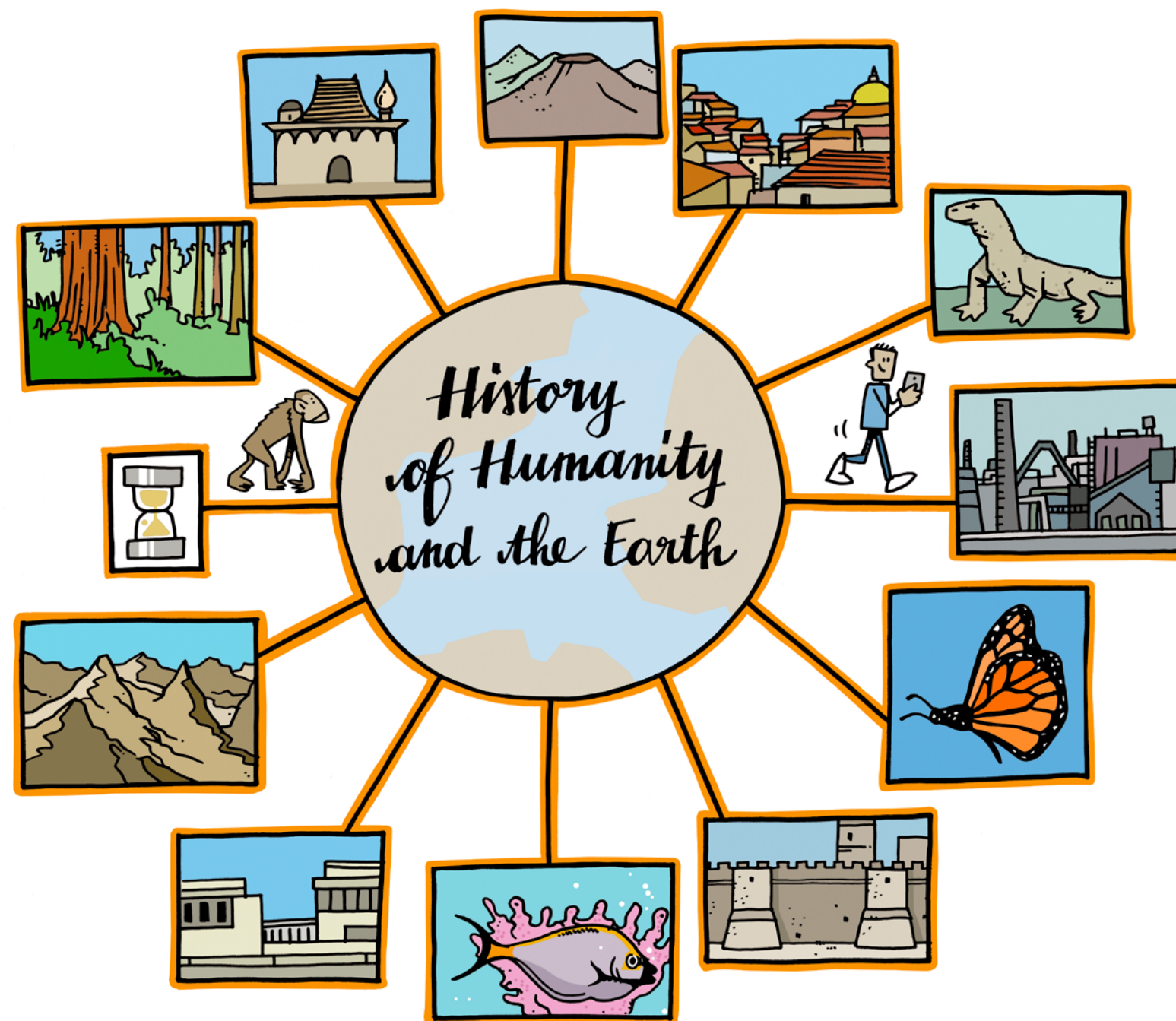
“ Outstanding Universal Value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole ”

§ 49 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention

Although having “Outstanding Universal Value” is an indispensable pre-condition for inscription on the World Heritage List, this philosophical concept and its official definition are complex and difficult to apply and may sometimes confuse those supporting the nomination or even the managers themselves.

And yet, “The fundamental part of the nomination dossier is demonstrating why a property should be considered to have potential Outstanding Universal Value.”¹ Many university dissertations and other scientific articles have examined the concepts of “universal heritage” and “Outstanding Universal Value”, emphasising the extent to which they are the source of many interpretations and applications, yet notably they raise many questions.

1 : Extrait de “ Établir une proposition d'inscription au patrimoine mondial ”



When and how does the value of a property cross a national boundary? Is it a question of influences? Of tourist notoriety? For a cultural site, how does it transcend its own territorial history to be significant enough in the History of Humanity?

What points does it have in common with other similar properties elsewhere? In what way, all together, do they create a common good for the benefit of all Humanity?

In addition to these issues related to the universal nature of a property, the Statement of O.U.V. must, at the same time, combine universality with exceptional features, i.e. the reasons why the nominated property stands out from other similar properties throughout the world.

A huge task that requires a great deal of specialist research and expert studies!

For an easier understanding

Whether you are making an application or you are the manager of a listed property, the desire to pass on the reasons for inclusion on the List and to share them with as many people as possible requires mediation work and the translation of expert concepts into a version that is easily accessible for all. So to get away from all kinds of philosophical and conceptual ideas, here is an attempt to simplify the notion of an O.U.V., while still remaining as accurate as possible:

- **Universality:** Each property on the List contributes to one or more aspects of the history of Humanity and/or of the Earth which constitutes a common link with other properties throughout the world or, at least, in an appropriate geocultural area, “with no discrimination of culture, language, religion or country.” Because behind apparent diversity and differences from one culture to another, from one era to another, from one continent to another, there are first and foremost a form of solidarity, common elements of civilisation and humanity which, in the case of the World Heritage List, translate into cultural and/or natural common heritage.

- **Originality:** Under a common universal banner, each property nevertheless proposes a different and particular expression of heritage, in an area, a site or a specific place, depending on the country and the culture. Be careful, “uniqueness is not necessarily synonymous with Outstanding Universal Value”¹.

In order to establish a Declaration of Outstanding Universal Value, in their “Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention” the World Heritage Committee requires the State Party to base their application on a statement of integrity and authenticity (other concepts included in the Convention), criteria (see next chapter) and a comparative analysis.



1: Extract from “Preparing World Heritage Nominations”

An international viewpoint

“The Convention is not intended to ensure the protection of all properties of great interest, importance or value, but only for a select list of the most outstanding of these from an international viewpoint. It is not to be assumed that a property of national and/or regional importance will automatically be inscribed on the World Heritage List”

§ 52 of Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention

Justifying the proposed inscription “in terms of national or regional interest alone” and with a “lack of a comparative analysis established in relation to the appropriate global framework”² is a frequent pitfall which, if you are struggling to demonstrate an Outstanding Universal Value and hence an international value, can slow down the inscription process.

The comparative analysis at global level can ensure that the values of the property are assessed with regard to other similar properties, which may or may not already be inscribed, and determine its universality (points in common with others), while showing that it has one or more different and complementary characteristics.

In short, it shows that “there is room on the List” for the applying site (Operational Guidelines 3.2). The comparative analysis is probably one of the most demanding parts of the nomination process for applicants,

as it requires them on the one hand to focus beyond their own property, while not losing sight of it completely, but on the other hand, they must also call on experts (often academics) of international standing, with an excellent knowledge of the subject at global level. Although the advisory bodies, ICOMOS and IUCN, have prepared thematic studies, these are not always sufficient and they are not always available in all fields.

At the annual sessions of the World Heritage Committee and, more specifically, when the nomination dossiers are examined, the O.U.V. of a potential site can be the subject of many discussions, and can even lead to real battles between experts, on behalf of the nominating State Parties and the consultative bodies, for example. A State Party may consider that their property is of global and unique value, while the experts believe the opposite.

The concept of O.U.V. can be interpreted in many different ways, from one country to another, and from one culture to another, which makes it difficult to apply the Convention, as it is standardised globally. However, the concept of O.U.V. and the way it is applied is also a reflection of the breadth of cultural diversity throughout the world.



SOURCES

- Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention
- Preparing World Heritage Nominations, Resource Manual available on the UNESCO website

2: Ibid

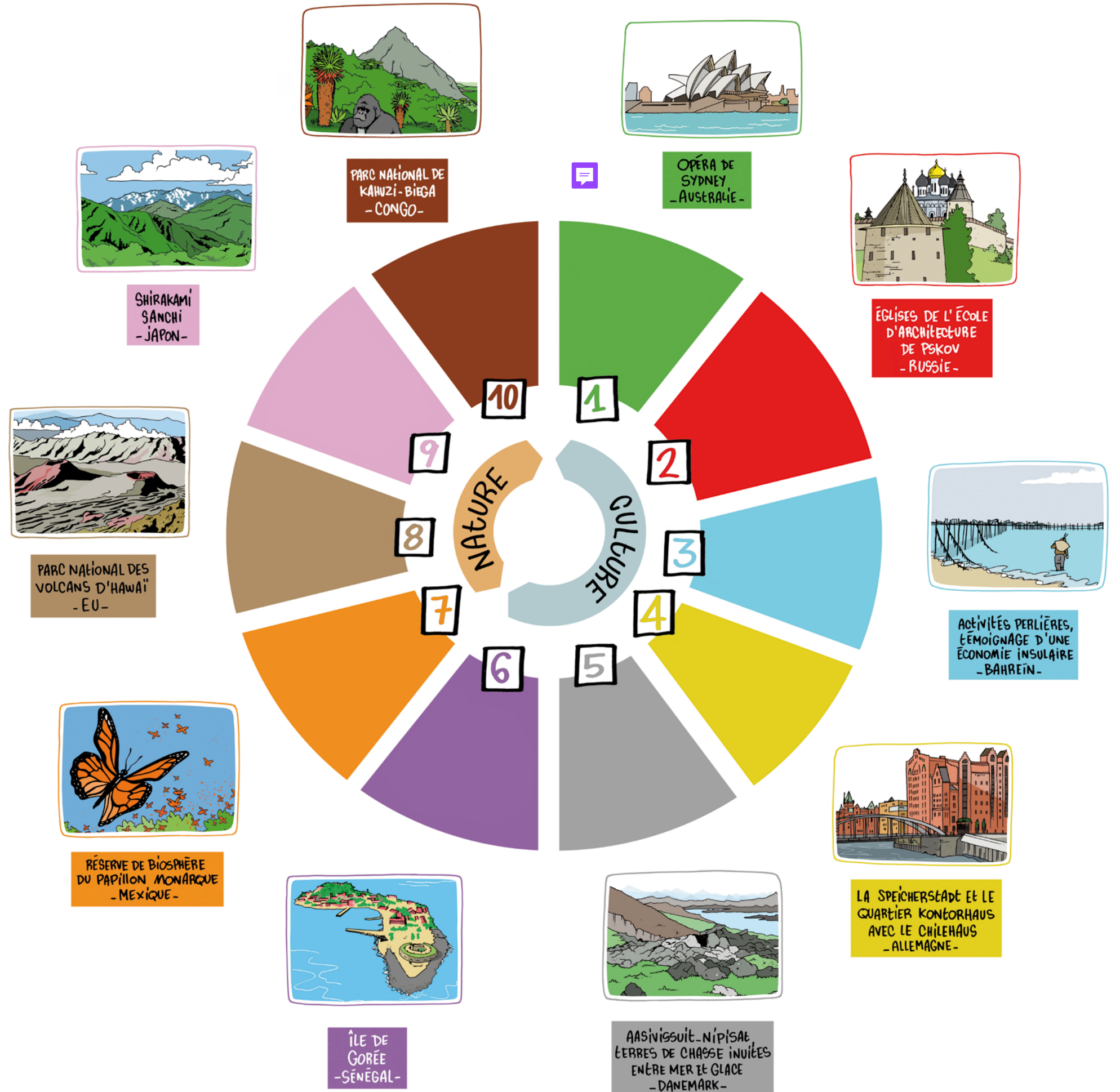


+ go further

Selection criteria

In order to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, a property must meet at least one of these criteria. They are explained in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention which, alongside the text of the Convention itself, is the main working tool on World Heritage.

The criteria are revised by the Committee from time to time to reflect the evolution of the World Heritage concept itself.



Preparing nomination files is becoming more and more complex

Since 1978, date of the first inscriptions, things have changed quite a lot! A detailed analysis of all the nomination files of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List was carried out at the end of the 1990s, and revealed a situation that could have jeopardised the credibility of the Convention: elements as essential as the boundaries of the inscribed property were often unknown or unclear; nominations usually consisted of a few pages containing fairly general information and not mentioning protection or management of the property.

The World Heritage Committee then decided to reinforce its requirements and from 1999 it put in place a process for the World Heritage Centre (the Secretariat of the Convention) to check that the nomination files were complete.

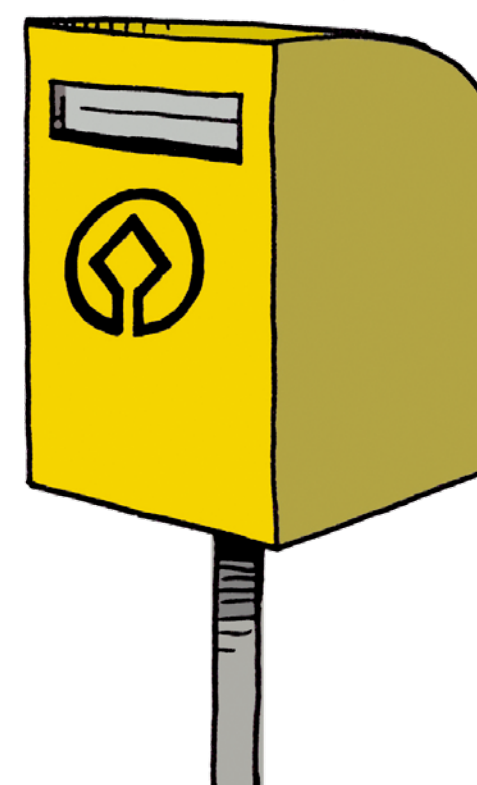
Over time, the information required has become increasingly comprehensive and processes more and more complex. The nomination file, along with the evaluation by the Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS and IUCN), forms the basis submitted for the Committee



i

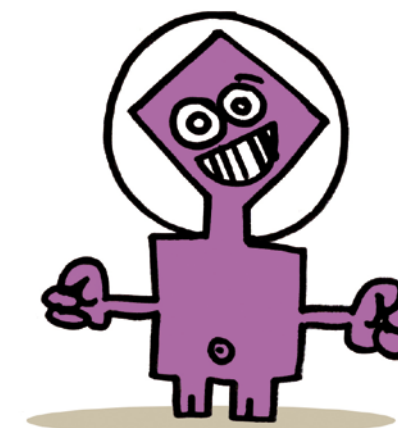
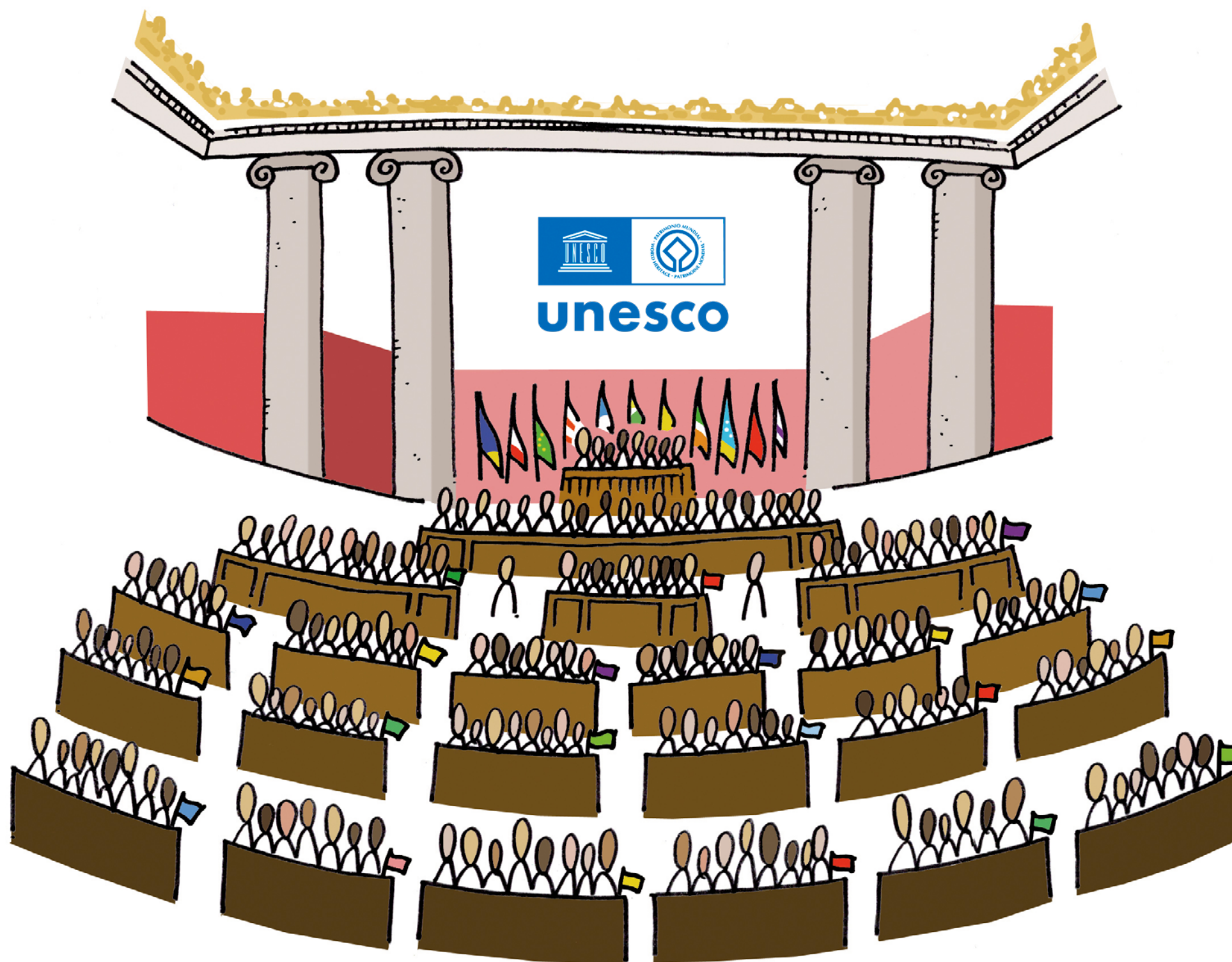
The nomination files of listed properties can be downloaded from the UNESCO website (in the "World Heritage List" menu) and can be consulted on demand at the ICOMOS international headquarters: International Secretariat, 11 rue du Séminaire de Conflans, 94220 Charenton-le-Pont

to consider the inscription of a property on the World Heritage List. This document may be likened to an agreement between the State Party concerned and the international community, in which the State Party agrees to protect and manage an identified property while the international community pledges support and assistance. The nomination file should therefore be accurate, informative and complete. In addition, today the World Heritage Committee pays a great deal of attention to the way in which local people are involved in this inscription process, in order to make them future stakeholders involved in the protection and presentation of the property. Some nomination files take up to 10 years to prepare, so a great deal of patience is needed and an awareness of what to expect when deciding to embark on this adventure!



SOURCE
UNESCO website

The World Heritage Committee



The World Heritage Committee is composed of representatives from 21 of the States Parties to the Convention elected by their General Assembly, for a period of 6 years. It meets once a year, at the invitation of one of its members, for about two weeks. The Committee's working sessions are conducted in UNESCO's official working languages and follow a very strict protocol.

The Committee is responsible for implementing the World Heritage Convention, it determines how the World Heritage Fund should be used and allocates financial assistance following requests from States Parties. It examines reports on the state of conservation of inscribed properties and asks States Parties to take action when properties are not correctly managed. It decides which properties are to be inscribed on or removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

It also decides whether a property is to be recommended for inscription on the World Heritage List. The Committee can also refer a nomination back to the State Party for additional information or defer their examination until after a more in-depth assessment of the file.

Heritage, a diplomatic issue

The World Heritage Convention is an international treaty that can be considered as almost universal, since the total number of States Parties to the Convention in 2024 was 196 (out of the 197 States recognised by the UN).

Thus, the Convention is in fact a tool for diplomacy... which can prove to be very difficult, so much so that occasionally, the values of peace and tolerance on which it was founded are forgotten.

We must be aware that heritage can sometimes be the subject of conflicts and may even be confiscated to back claims over identity, religion or territory.

When the Committee decides to inscribe a property on the World Heritage List, it must take great care not to be swayed by these disagreements but to remain in its role as impartial guarantor to ensure the credibility and representativity of the List.

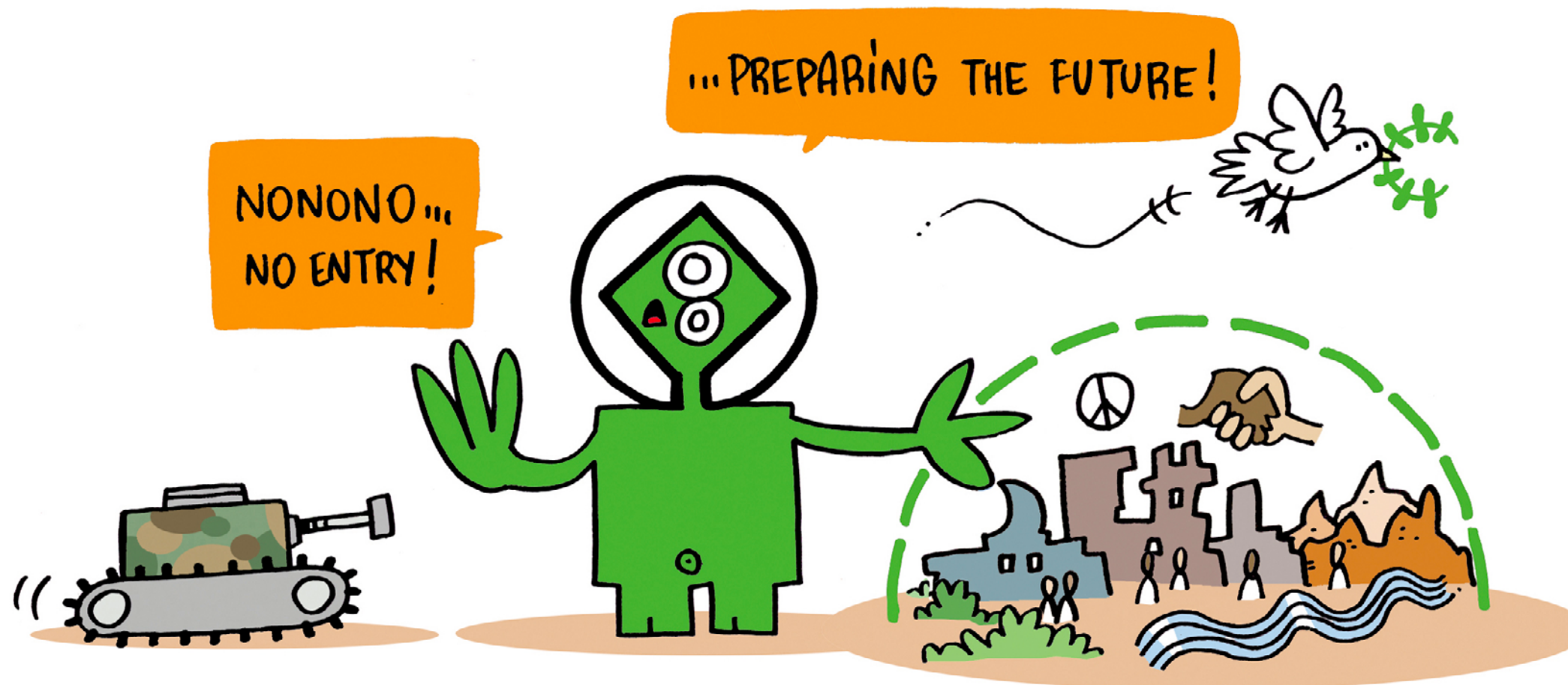


In recent years, many voices have been raised to criticise the growing share of negotiations and political arrangements that are taking place behind the scenes between State Parties and which appear to be counter to the primary objective of the Convention, which is to preserve properties of Outstanding Universal Value. This criticism is confirmed by the fact that recommendations by the Advisory Bodies, ICOMOS and IUCN, are followed less and less, thus casting doubt on Committee members' perfect objectivity.

While it would be naive to believe that sessions of the World Heritage Committee are free from diplomatic tensions, the fact remains that the Convention remains a formidable tool for openness towards others and an undeniable vector of peace.

When sites are destroyed, such as the Buddhas of Bamiyan, the Site of Palmyra in Syria, or Mosul in Iraq, it is all of humanity that is under attack, its memory, its otherness and its ability to rebuild its future.

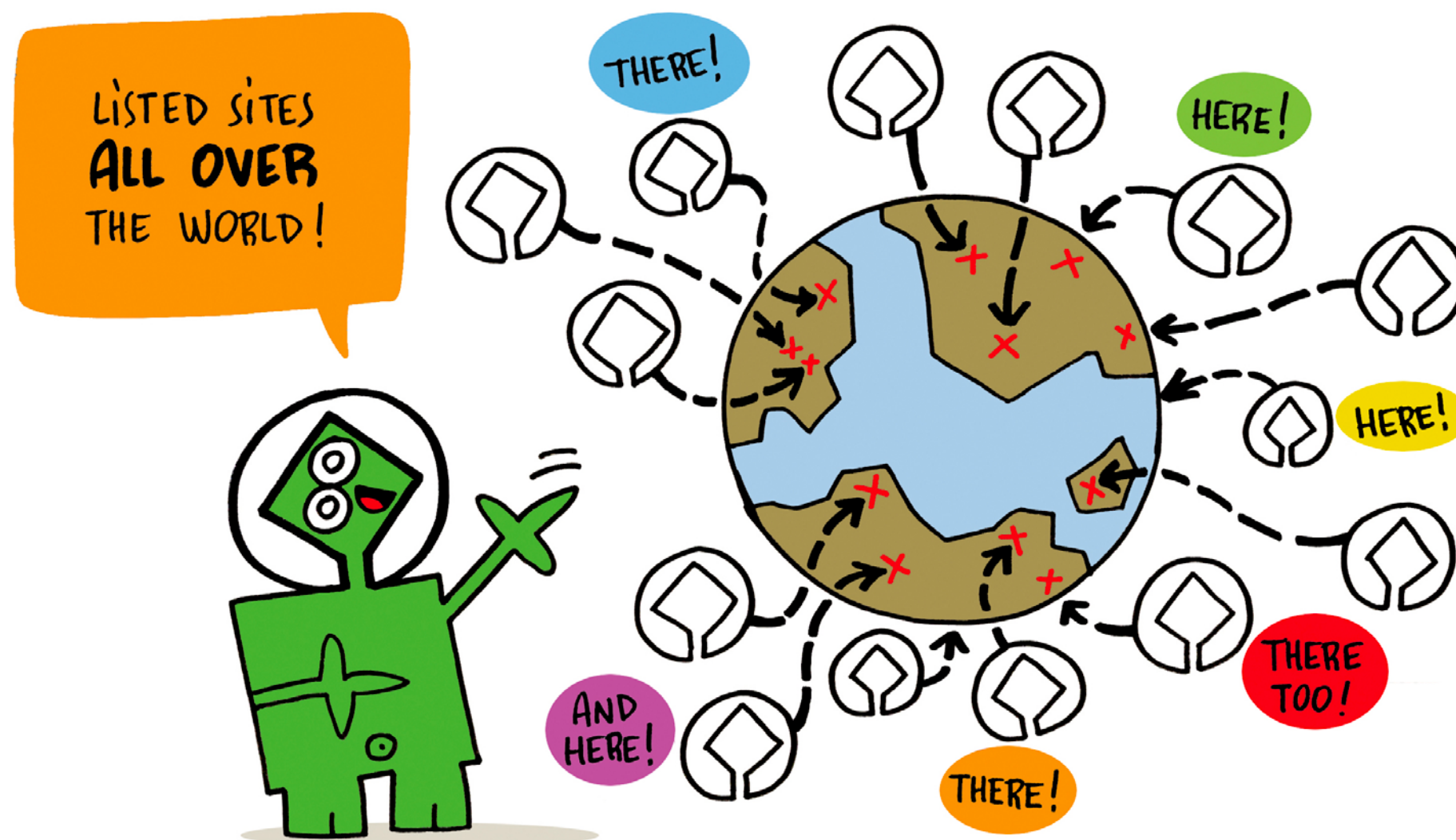
By preserving places that form the basis of our societies, we are protecting our future generations.



The World Heritage List

The World Heritage List is established as a recognition of status and is a representative inventory of the diversity of cultural and natural heritage throughout the world. Inscription on the list is often an important

driver for regional planning and cultural, social and economic development. However, it remains above all a commitment to ensure the preservation of listed properties for the benefit of humanity and future generations.



The List in figures in 2024



1 223
PROPERTIES



49
TRANSBOUNDARY PROPERTIES



3
DELISTED PROPERTIES



56
PROPERTIES IN DANGER



952
CULTURAL PROPERTIES



231
NATURAL PROPERTIES



40
MIXED PROPERTIES



World Heritage in France in 2024



53
PROPERTIES



18
MONUMENTS AND GROUPS OF BUILDINGS



11
CITIES AND HISTORIC CENTRES



8
CULTURAL LANDSCAPES
AND EXTENSIVE PROPERTIES



8
SERIAL PROPERTIES

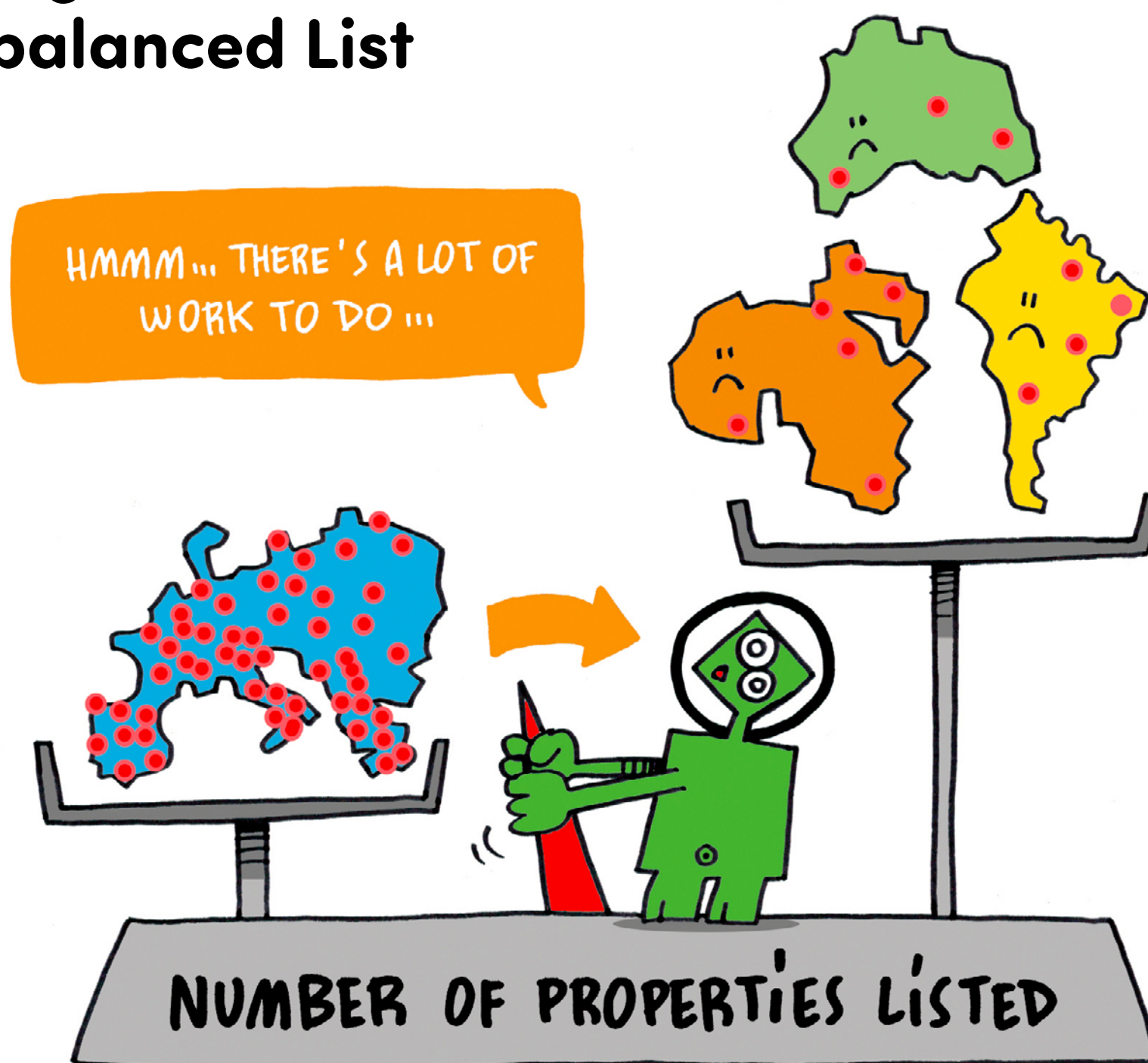


6
NATURAL PROPERTIES



2
MIXED PROPERTIES

A challenge for the World Heritage Committee: creating a balanced List



A global study carried out by ICOMOS from 1987 to 1993 revealed that Europe, historic towns and religious monuments, Christianity, historical periods and “elitist” architecture (as opposed to vernacular architecture) were all over-represented on the World Heritage List, whereas all living cultures, and especially “traditional cultures”, were under-represented.

Twenty-two years after the adoption of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the World Heritage List lacked balance in the type of inscribed properties and geographic regions: of the 410 properties inscribed, the vast majority of which were located in developed countries and mainly in Europe, there were 304 cultural sites, but only 90 natural sites and 16 mixed sites.

As a result of this observation, in 1994, the World Heritage Committee launched *their Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List*. Their aim is to broaden the definition of World Heritage to better reflect the full cultural and natural diversity of properties of Outstanding Universal Value and, in addition, to provide a comprehensive framework and operational methodology for implementing the World Heritage Convention.

This strategy is reviewed regularly.



SOURCE
UNESCO website

Inscription must not be taken for granted!

When a property is inscribed on the World Heritage List, it is not necessarily there for ever.

The World Heritage Committee pays a great deal of attention to the state of conservation of sites that appear on the List. This is why, at the beginning of the 2000s, they set up a system of Periodic Reporting, which takes place every 6 years.

When an inscribed property is threatened by a serious and specific danger, the Committee may decide to add it to the List of World Heritage in Danger. This was created to inform the international community of threats to certain inscribed sites and to encourage corrective measures.

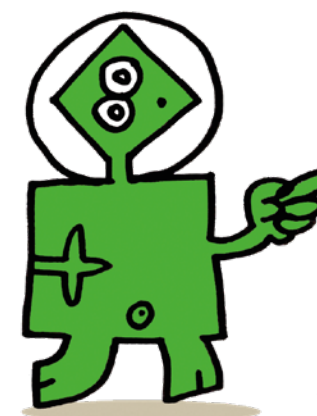
Major problems for properties are caused by wars and armed conflict, earthquakes and other natural disasters, pollution, poaching, unchecked urbanisation and uncontrolled tourist development. They can endanger the very features for which they were inscribed.

When a property is added to the List of World Heritage in Danger, the Committee can immediately provide assistance for the property under threat through the World Heritage Fund, when the situation requires it.

If a property loses the characteristics that justified its inclusion on the World Heritage List, the Committee may decide to delete it from both the List of World Heritage in Danger and the World Heritage List.

To date, it has applied this provision of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention only three times:

- In 2007, for the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary, a protected species in the Sultanate of Oman, where the size of the protected area was reduced by 90% to allow oil exploration to go ahead on the site.
- In 2009, for the Dresden Elbe Valley, in Germany, where a 4-lane bridge built in the heart of the city of Dresden spoiled the outstanding universal value of the site.
- In 2021, for Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City, in the United Kingdom, because of development projects that went ahead both inside the site and in its buffer zone, irreparably damaging the authenticity and integrity of the site.



Inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger is not perceived in the same way by all those concerned. Some countries request inscription of a site in order to focus international attention on their problems and obtain competent assistance to solve them.

Others, however, wish to avoid being added to the List as they perceive it as shameful. Inscription of a site on the List of World Heritage in Danger should by no means be seen as a sanction, but rather as a system in place to respond effectively to specific conservation needs.



SOURCE
UNESCO website

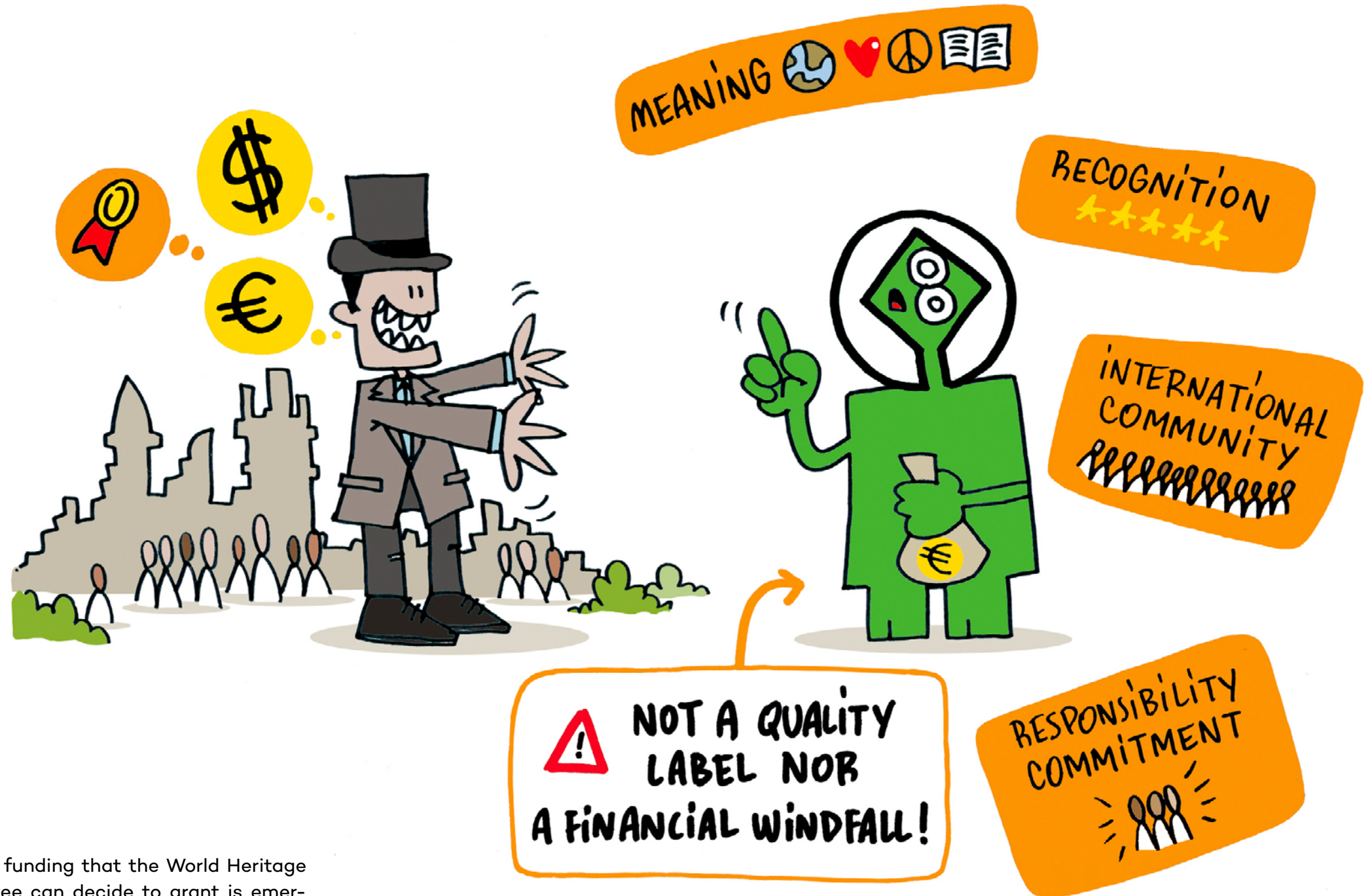
Beware of misconceptions!

It can happen that World Heritage is sometimes regrettably the subject of shortcuts. For some, inscription is like a quality label whose primary purpose is to attract tourists, and which also entitles them to receive funding from UNESCO.

First and foremost, it is essential to understand that inscription is not a certification; it represents international cultural recognition that comes after a long process requiring a lot of motivation, hard work, commitment, human and financial resources... and endurance on the part of the project leaders and the State Party.

Inscription is like a moral contract between property managers and the international community, by which the former undertake to protect and manage an identified property, in accordance with the values of UNESCO and the World Heritage Convention, while the latter agrees to provide support and assistance.

The only funding that the World Heritage Committee can decide to grant is emergency aid, via the World Heritage Fund, which consists of contributions from the State Parties and private donations. The World Heritage Committee allocates international assistance funding by prioritising the most threatened sites, whether they are on the World Heritage List or the List of World Heritage in Danger.



Managing a World Heritage property does not mean wrapping it in cotton wool



Some consider that inscribing a property on the World Heritage List means setting it in stone and not allowing the slightest change to take place. However, apart from a few properties described as “fossil sites” and some natural habitats that must be preserved as they are, the opposite is true and World Heritage properties must continue to live and to be promoted in order to be transmitted to future generations.

In particular, the World Heritage Committee’s wish to include cultural landscapes born out of the interaction between man and nature has led to distinguishing living landscapes, such as Val de Loire or the Mining Basin. They are the result of a long history and must continue to adapt so that the inha-

bitants can continue to live there and make their living. It is not a question of stopping all economic, urban or demographic development, but rather of ensuring that human development can continue while at the same time respecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the listed property.

Nor does managing a property mean simply protecting it in regulatory terms. It also means involving local residents and visitors, through appropriation, emotion, sharing and exchange.

This is why management must above all try to ensure that the values of the property are understood and shared, for everyone must be a stakeholder!



Please do not get confused!

World Heritage is probably the best known of UNESCO's programmes, but it is not the only one! This sometimes gives rise to confusion, especially when it comes to distinguishing between World Heritage and intangible heritage.

Intangible heritage is the subject of an international treaty adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 17 October 2003, the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, which came into force in 2006 after ratification by 30 States Parties. There is also a *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*, which is updated every year by the *Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

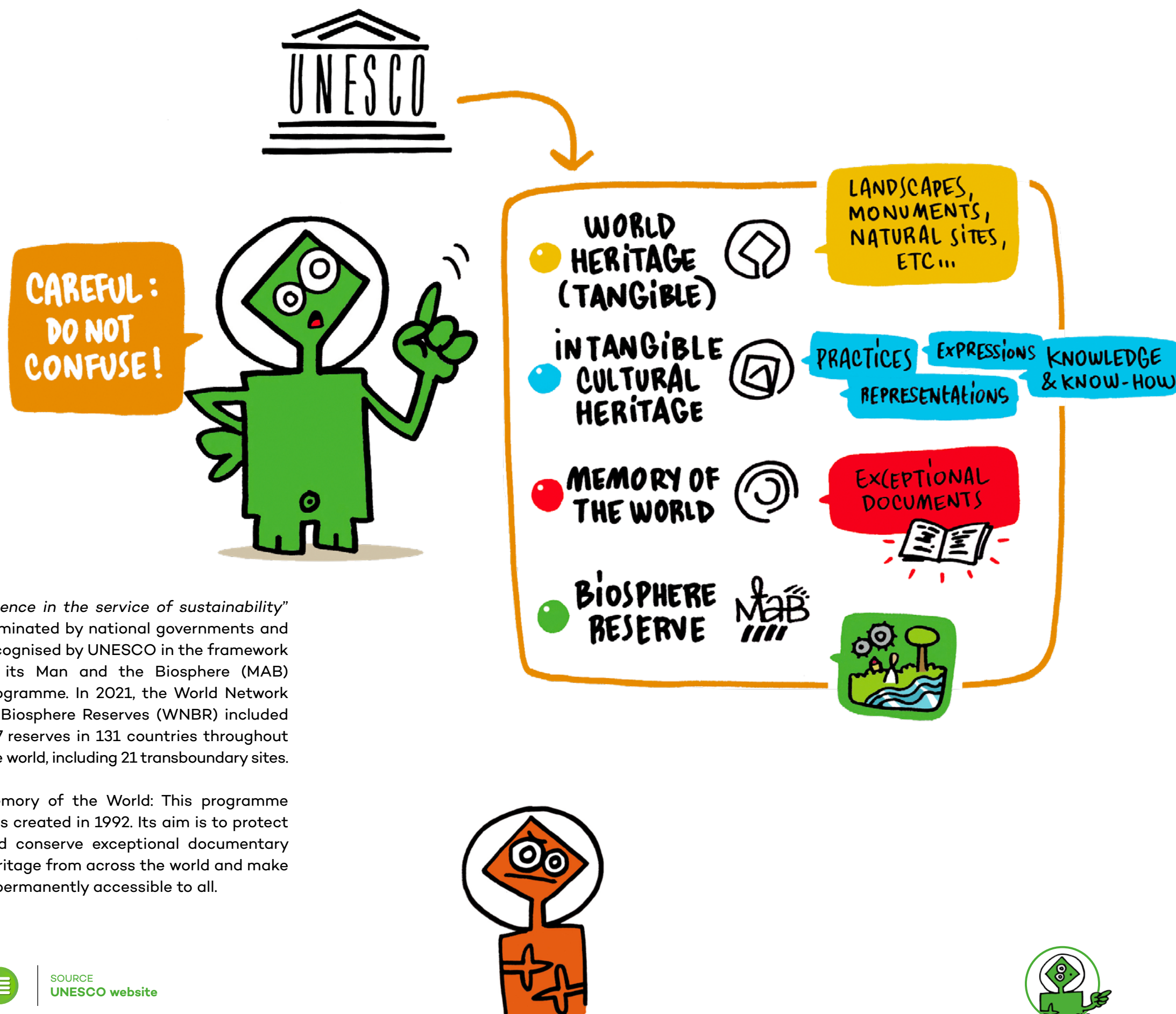
It lists those elements of "intangible cultural heritage", of "living" heritage, the melting pot of cultural diversity, that are expressed through traditions and oral expression, performing arts (music, dance, theatre, etc.), social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and skills linked to the production of traditional crafts, and transmitted from generation to generation.

There are also other programmes, such as:

- Biosphere Reserves are areas that include terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems. They are "places providing support for

science in the service of sustainability" nominated by national governments and recognised by UNESCO in the framework of its Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. In 2021, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) included 727 reserves in 131 countries throughout the world, including 21 transboundary sites.

- Memory of the World: This programme was created in 1992. Its aim is to protect and conserve exceptional documentary heritage from across the world and make it permanently accessible to all.

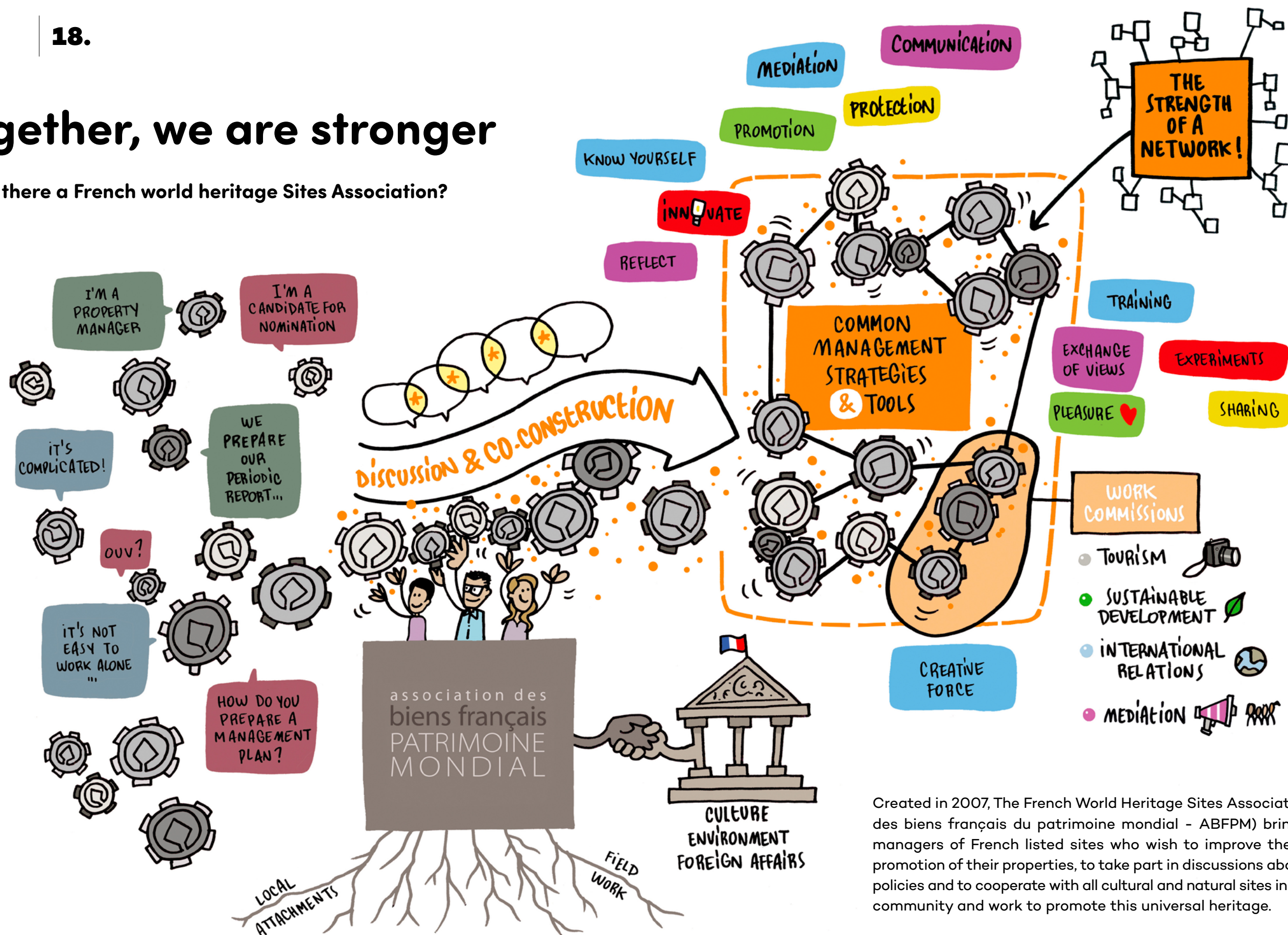


SOURCE
UNESCO website



Together, we are stronger

Why is there a French world heritage Sites Association?



Created in 2007, The French World Heritage Sites Association (Association des biens français du patrimoine mondial - ABFPM) brings together the managers of French listed sites who wish to improve the protection and promotion of their properties, to take part in discussions about French public policies and to cooperate with all cultural and natural sites in the international community and work to promote this universal heritage.

The Association works in close collaboration with the Ministries for Culture and the Environment which are responsible for monitoring and implementing the World Heritage Convention at national level.

Origins

Originally, the notion of world heritage was the domain of specialists, but it has now become the concern of everyone the world over. However, it also involves local interests, with occasional conflicts of interest between development and conservation. The number of categories of property has increased – outlying properties, serial properties, extended properties such as natural, cultural, urban or rural landscapes – and this has helped to make known the listed properties, to spread awareness of the concept of world heritage and to broaden the issues related to its implementation.

France was one of the first countries to ratify the World Heritage Convention. However, until the mid-2000s, with just a few rare exceptions, there was no attempt to create any formal link between the French properties. The preparation of the first periodic report on the application of the 1972 Convention and the state of conservation of the national world heritage properties brought about a change in the situation.

Encouraged by the State, some managers decided to join forces and create a network in order to discuss the management challenges and issues facing them on a daily basis.

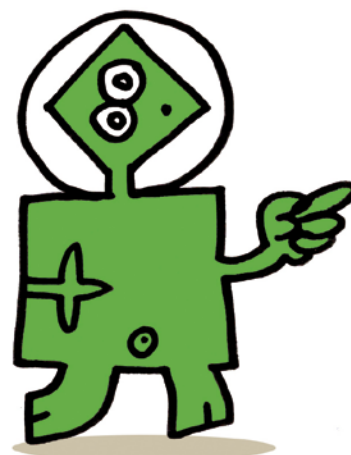
The Association was officially created in September 2007.

Members

Since the first inscriptions, new categories of properties have been introduced, some of which cover extensive areas, and this has led to changes in the scale of management required and to new challenges.

It has also led to a wider variety in the status of property managers: local authorities, public establishments, groups, associations or private individuals. All have their place in the Association, which also includes nominated properties on the French Tentative List, enabling them to benefit from the experience of their elders.

Institutional partners in charge of monitoring the 1972 Convention (State, French National Commission for UNESCO, ICOMOS, IUCN, etc.) also participate in the work of the Association.



Objectives

The main aims of the Association members are as follows:

- To foster discussion and the sharing of knowledge and experience at national and international levels in the areas of heritage conservation, protection, promotion, activity and management;
- To be a force for creativity and reflection in the areas mentioned above with heritage stakeholders in France and internationally;
- To promote the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List with the general public and tourist operators.

The main areas of intervention

To tackle the many issues facing the managers of listed properties, the Association has set up several working committees covering management, promotion, communication, culture, mediation, tourism and international relations.

And finally, a few rules about writing and formulation...

Inscription not classification

World Heritage properties are “inscribed” on the List and not “classified”. In addition to the possible confusion with French legislation, which classifies historic monuments or sites to ensure their protection, note that the notion of classification implies ranking, which is not the case for World Heritage properties. Their inscription is not part of a competition and there is no question of ranking them from best to worst, nor of organising them by criteria or in a specific order. They all appear on the List on an equal footing, all taken together and each one in its own right.

UNESCO World Heritage

As we have explained, World Heritage is probably UNESCO’s best known programme, but it is not the only one (see chapter 17). Shortened phrases or expressions such as “UNESCO heritage” or “inscribed with UNESCO” must therefore be avoided, they are incorrect and meaningless.

In the same way, talking about the “World Heritage of Humanity” is a regrettable tautology!

How to write “World Heritage”

In the case of World Heritage, when you are talking about the list, convention, committee or centre, these words take a capital letter. Thus you should write:

- “The World Heritage List”,
- “The World Heritage Convention”,
- “The World Heritage Committee”,
- “The World Heritage Centre”.

For the designation “World Heritage” when used alone, the use of capitals is left to the discretion of the writers, some of whom believe that, as a world-famous concept and institutional programme, “World Heritage” should have a capital letter for emphasis.



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