

PRESS RELEASE – INCRPTION OF ŽATEC AND THE LANDSCAPE OF SAAZ HOPS ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

18th September 2023

On Monday, September 18, 2023, at a meeting of the World Heritage Committee held in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it was decided to inscribe the hop landscape and the town of Žatec, its center, on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The Czech delegation, led by Jirina Valentová, the permanent representative of the Czech Republic at UNESCO, included Dita Limova, head of the Unit for Relations with UNESCO from the Ministry of Culture, Monika Eretová from the Ministry of Culture and representatives of the Directorate General of the National Heritage Institute, Director General Nadezda Goryczkova and Vera Kucova from the Unit of Heritage with International Status. The Steering Group of the nominated property was represented by Zdenka Hamousova and Zdenek Rosa from CHMELARSTVI, cooperative Zatec, who is also the vice-chair of the Hop Growers Union of the Czech Republic, and Olga Bukovicova for the Town of Žatec, where she works as a coordinator for the World Heritage.

For the Czech Republic, this means the seventeenth consecutive successful inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. At the same time, it is the first hop growing landscape in the world to receive this prestigious status.

Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is situated in the north-western part of the Czech Republic in a location that provides ideal conditions for growing hops, a central aroma ingredient in beer brewing. It consists of two component parts that together illustrate the entire cycle of cultivating, processing and trading the world's most renowned variety of hops.

The Saaz Hop Landscape consists of rural hop fields and the small villages of Stekník and Trnovany. The second component part is Žatec that consists of the historic urban centre of the town of Žatec and its industrial part "Pražské předměstí" - the Prague Suburb from 19th century.

This evolved and continuing cultural landscape and its built heritage associated with hop growing and processing is testimony to a tradition that has been practiced here for more than 700 years and still continues to this day, despite tremendous demographic changes at various points in its history. The features of this striking landscape range from traditional hop fields, to buildings used for drying, packing, certifying and storing hops, to parts of the historic transportation network of roads, railway, the river Ohře and other watercourses. These also include supporting administrative, cultural and religious buildings, as well as cultural practices.

This landscape, with specific buildings and structures linked to hop production, demonstrates close interactions between the rural hop growing landscape and its urban base.

The works on the nomination dossier were distinguished by a long and thorny process. The original nomination called Žatec – the Town of Hops, which was taken on the national Tentative List, went back in 2007, and which was evaluated in 2017, was recommended by the Committee to be revised in such a way as to sufficiently deepen the research on the topic of hop growing and processing, as well as to expand the areas and territories that would still contain production landscapes. Therefore, according to the recommendation, the Town of Žatec underwent the ICOMOS advisory process in 2019 and revised the nomination dossier. The nomination text was

expanded to include the growing aspect, namely the Saaz Hop Landscape in the vicinity of Stekník area managed by the Research Farm of Hop Research Institute with the support and in cooperation with representatives of the Hop Growers Union of the Czech Republic, CHMELARSTVI, cooperative Zatec and Hop Research Institute in Žatec.

At the same time, over the years, a Steering Group has been firmly established, which, in addition to representatives from the town and village of Zálužice and the above-mentioned hop institutions, includes a number of world heritage experts from the National Heritage Institute and the Ministry of Culture. All of the experts significantly participated in the processing of the text of the nomination dossier and in the processing of arguments for questions in the framework of the evaluation. This Steering Group will continue to oversee the administration and management of the World Heritage Site in the future.

"The Town has already prepared several conceptual materials, such as the Management Plan or the Tourism Development Strategy, which will help the town and the rural area take the necessary steps to ensure trouble-free attendance and tourist services," said Jaroslav Špička, director of the Temple of Hops and Beer in Žatec and at the same time the site manager.

"In recent years, we have also implemented several successful promotional, scientific and educational projects, which was acknowledged by the ICOMOS advisory body, which evaluated the nomination. I would mention, for example, the Interactive Map of the nominated property or the educational game Journey of Hops," added Špička.

There are dozens of cultural agricultural landscapes on the World Heritage List, whether they are vineyards, olive or tea plantations, rice terraces or tobacco or coffee plantations. The hop landscape with its urban background has not yet appeared on the List, and its worldwide uniqueness was recognized by the inscription.

The inscription was also welcomed by representatives of hop growers. Lubos Hejda, Chairman of Board of the Hop Growers Union of the Czech Republic, spoke for all of them: *"We welcome the decision of the Committee, which appreciated the preserved heritage assets connected with the growing and processing of Saaz hop variety, the best quality fine aroma hop variety grown in the Czech Republic."*

"For the Town of Žatec and the Zálužice village, on whose territory there is a hop landscape, the inscription on the UNESCO List means, in addition to a prestigious brand, the potential for further development and a strong tourist position within the Ústecký Region and the Czech Republic. Already thanks to the nomination, Žatec was successful in obtaining subsidies for the restoration of heritage assets in the town from European funds, for example the town hall or the ongoing restoration of the monastery. In the coming years, we want to focus mainly on tourist infrastructure and parking solutions in both components," said the mayor of the town, Radim Laibl. *"Stekník, or rather Zálužice, under which the village administratively falls, received a subsidy from the Ústecký Region for a study of the revitalization of the village this year, so the first steps have already begun,"* added Danuse Cilcová, mayor of Zálužice.

Olga Bukovicova,
coordinator for the World Heritage, the Town of Žatec.

INSCRIPTED CRITERIA OF ŽATEC AND THE LANDSCAPE OF SAAZ HOPS

The Property gives an evidence to the uniqueness of Saaz Hops the world quality of which is one of the reasons for the Outstanding Universal Value, which was able to be justified in all three proposed criteria:

- Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is an extraordinary testimony of a strong centuries-old cultural tradition of growing and processing the world's most famous hop variety.
- Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is an excellent example of a monoculture landscape. The heritage has been associated with the growing and processing of hops in both rural and urban areas for over 700 years and includes outstanding examples of agricultural landscapes, buildings, architectural and technological ensembles.
- And also that Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is an exceptional example of a traditional agricultural landscape and traditional human settlements associated with the cultivation of crops with very specific requirements for climate, cultivation and processing.

Photogallery:

- Attributes of Property <https://www.zatec-and-the-landscape-of-saaz-hops.com/cs/stranka/atributy>
- till September 21, 2023 available on the uschovna.cz - <https://www.uschovna.cz/zasilka/MMG7XGCFHF8CECTI-25X>

Further information – FAQ/Press manual on - <https://www.zatec-and-the-landscape-of-saaz-hops.com/upload/files/1.TISKOVY-MANUAL-NOMINACE-FIN.pdf>

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