

To
UNESCO – World Heritage Centre
Director Mechtild Rössler
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ZVR 255345915

Subject:
**Austria - Großglockner-Hochalpenstraße/Grossglockner High Alpine Road -
Concerns about ecologically negative consequences of World Heritage Nomination and
suggestion of measures to be taken**

Dear Ms. Director, dear ladies and gentlemen at UNESCO!

CIPRA Österreich has been formed in 1975 as the Austrian national representation of CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps.

CIPRA Österreich advocates for integrated coexistence between sustainable development (i.e. development that respects nature, resources, health, people and climate) and protection of the Alpine region.

According to informations by the road operator and Alliance for Nature and to several media reports and press releases in Austria the Großglockner-Hochalpenstraße has been nominated as potential UNESCO World Heritage Site in Spring 2017.

These media reports have also shed some light on the – obviously mainly economic - motives behind the nomination and the expectations of the road operators.

CIPRA Österreich has discussed the issue in detail during its 35th Committee Meeting (Salzburg, Nov.16, 2018) with its members and was commissioned to bring the following critical position and urgent recommendation to UNESCO and ICOMOS:

CIPRA Österreich is concerned about the intention publicly announced by the road operator to massively increase the number of visitors and thus the number of motor vehicles on this road by means of the 2017 World Heritage nomination of the Grossglockner High Alpine Road, which is currently under evaluation and decision by UNESCO and ICOMOS International.

For many kilometres the Grossglockner High Alpine Road runs only a few meters away from the strictly protected “Core Zone” of the Hohe Tauern National Park. Motor traffic frequency and

therefore noise and pollution from exhaust and resuspension are already very high and are negatively influencing the National Park core area. Therefore any further increase of frequency and emissions would be in strong conflict with IUCN National Park criteria and with provisions of the Alpine Convention and would also be in contradiction to UNESCO's own documents on the consequences of climate change for the World Heritage and "Appropriate Management Responses" ("Predicting and Managing the Effects of Climate Change on World Heritage", "Strategy to Assist States Parties to the Convention on Implement Appropriate Management Responses").

Not only not solving this problem, but deliberately trying to worsen it is all the more incomprehensible, as under an earlier management of road operator GROHAG (CEO DDr. Karl Gollegger) there were already far advanced plans to significantly reduce motor vehicle traffic.


CIPRA Österreich underlines that World Heritage awarding of one site (here: Grossglockner High Alpine Road) must not lead to an additional ecological burden on a neighboring ecologically sensitive and therefore strictly protected area that is, in addition, also on the Austrian World Heritage Tentative List since many years (here: Nationalpark Hohe Tauern)!

Therefore CIPRA Österreich urges UNESCO and ICOMOS, in assessing the World Heritage nomination of the Grossglockner High Alpine Road and deciding on this nomination, to impose a significant reduction in motor vehicle traffic by restricting and reducing the number of motor vehicles in combination with detailed reporting obligations on number of trips and type of vehicles and their engine technology, similar to the regulations already set and implemented in other ecologically sensitive World Heritage sites.

The suggestion to UNESCO World Heritage Centre and UNESCO World Heritage Committee is not to finalize the nomination procedure of the Grossglockner High Alpine Road as long as no significant motor traffic and emission reduction measures are fixed and guaranteed.

We invite UNESCO World Heritage Centre to submit this position and suggestion also to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and are looking forward to hear from you soon about steps, measures and decisions taken in the suggested sense.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Haßlacher

Chairman CIPRA Österreich



Reinhard Gschöpf

Director CIPRA Österreich