

THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

With the international "Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage", signed in 1972, UNESCO committed to protecting and preserving the cultural and natural heritage of mankind that represents "outstanding universal value". Thus the responsibility for cultural heritage included in the World Heritage List is no longer in the hands of the individual state but is entrusted to all of mankind. The emblem signifying World Heritage depicts the interaction of cultural and natural heritage with the central rectangle representing the form created by man and the circle representing nature. The symbols are closely interlocked. The emblem is round like the globe and at the same time a symbol of protection.

THE CRITERIA FOR INSCRIPTION

Within the framework of the World Heritage Convention, ten criteria were established for the inscription of sites in the World Heritage List, four criteria for natural heritage and six for cultural heritage. Sites are considered to be of "outstanding universal value" if the World Heritage Committee is able to assess that they meet one or more of these criteria and that there is documented evidence of authenticity (historical genuineness in the case of cultural heritage sites) or integrity (in the case of natural heritage sites) The "Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar" meet two of the six criteria for cultural heritage:

CRITERION II The object has exhibited an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.

CRITERION IV The object is an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape, which illustrates one or several significant stage(s) in human history.

FACTS AND FIGURES

NAME Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar

LOCATION Both cities are located directly on the Baltic Sea in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, a federal state in the northeast of Germany.

SIZE OF THE NOMINATED AREA AND THE BUFFER ZONE (HECTARES)

Nomination area: 168 ha (Stralsund 80 ha + Wismar 88 ha)

Buffer zone: 448 ha (Stralsund 340 ha + Wismar 108 ha)



Museum House in Stralsund, "Wasserkunst" on Wismar's Market Square

CONTACT

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Complete information concerning this World Heritage Site can be found at: www.stralsund-wismar.de

TWO CITIES – ONE HERITAGE

Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar
A UNESCO World Heritage since 2002

HISTORIC CENTRES OF STRALSUND AND WISMAR

The Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar are prime examples of the developed Hanseatic city from the heyday of the Hanseatic League in the 14th century. As economically powerful and politically influential members of the Wendish region, the actual core and political centre of the Hanseatic League, the two cities played an important role in the European exchange of cultural achievements, technical knowledge and world views which took place on the basis of the varied com-

mercial links in the whole of the Baltic and North Sea region. To this day, in both historic centres, the structure of the medieval ground plan with street network, system of streets and squares, area and plot structure has been preserved nearly unchanged. Both cities are thus eloquent evidence of the founding of maritime trading towns under Lübeck law, the system of city rights adopted from Lübeck. The preserved architectural substance of Stralsund and Wismar is rich in examples of the Hanseatic era, which are vivid documents of the political and economic significance as well as the extraordinary wealth of medieval towns. In particular, the group of six monumental brick churches represents a unique cross-

section of Gothic religious architecture of the Hanseatic towns of the southern Baltic region. At the same time, it is evidence for a significant fusion of different cultural influences, that is, the combination of Italian brick building techniques with the representative cathedral pattern from Northern France. The two historic town centres complement each other, but also have their own characteristics of special importance: In Wismar the harbour basin has been largely preserved since the medieval period, conveying a picture of the actual backbone of a medieval maritime trading town in a rare state of authenticity.



Town Hall of Stralsund, Certificate of the "Peace of Stralsund", Gabled Houses of Stralsund

Heilgeist-Hospital of Stralsund, "Alter Schwede" in Wismar, Tomb by Wrangel in Wismar

St. Nicholas' church in Wismar, Gable of Wismar's St. Nicholas' church

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role in the military power system of Sweden as fortified towns of European rank and as central administrative headquarters. This is documented by some outstanding baroque buildings such as Wismar's Arsenal or Stralsund's Swedish "Regierungspalais" (government palace). The foundation of both cities represents an archaeological monument of great significance. Because of conditions especially favourable to preservation, the foundation maintained the material heritage of the Hanseatic as well as subsequent eras in an unusually complete state. Archaeological excavations provide a crucial impetus for researching the urban development of the entire Northern European region.

Also preserved is the "Grube" (canal) that flows straight through the city from the Mühlenteich in the east to the harbour. It is the last remaining artificially constructed medieval waterway to be preserved in an old town in Northern Germany. Due to its streetscapes with their almost fully intact rows of historical houses, Wismar is the only Hanseatic city in the Baltic region to have been preserved in this size and state of completeness. The unique island situation of Stralsund, between the Strelasund and the dammed ponds dating from the 13th century, emphasizes the medieval town structure, which is shown to full advantage in the unmistakable silhouette. During the

1997

Preparation of the individual application of the cities

1998

Decision concerning the mutual application

December 31, 2000

Submitting the application at UNESCO in Paris

June 27, 2002

Inscription in the UNESCO World Heritage List

May 24, 2003

Inscription ceremony in Wismar

May 25, 2003

Inscription ceremony in Stralsund