

Western Caucasus (Russian Federation) (N 900)

Decision: 38.COM 7B.77

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-14/38.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision 37 COM 7B.23, adopted at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013),
3. Expresses its utmost concern about the adoption of amendments to Federal Law N°406-FZ, dated 28 December 2013, which make it possible to develop large scale tourism infrastructure in strict nature reserves, and could also impact other natural World Heritage properties in the Russian Federation, and reiterates its request to the State Party to ensure that no large scale ski or tourism infrastructure is built within the property;
4. Takes note of the intention of the State Party to submit a proposal for a boundary modification by excluding parts of the Lagonaki plateau from the property which are reported to be degraded and by including other parts, and recalls that such a proposal has to be clearly justified in terms of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) for which the property was inscribed, should be based on reliable scientific data and should be submitted as a major boundary modification, in accordance with Paragraph 165 of the Operational Guidelines;
5. Reiterates its position that the installation of capital construction on the Lagonaki Plateau, including Mount Fisht and Oshten, would constitute a case for inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines;
6. Notes with concern that development pressures on the property appear to increase continuously, as noted by reports that new construction works have been conducted inside the property without prior assessment of their potential impact on its OUV, including upgrade of Babuk Aul forest road, cable car construction at “Biosphere scientific centre” and other facilities nearby, and urges the State Party to ensure that the potential impacts of any proposed infrastructure upgrading inside the property on its OUV are carefully assessed and that an environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is sent to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before a decision is taken in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
7. Also reiterates its request to the State Party to implement all the recommendations of the 2012 joint World Heritage Centre / IUCN reactive monitoring mission;
8. Requests the State Party to report on the status of the proposed Persian leopard reintroduction project and provide the World Heritage Centre with detailed information and data on this project, in line with the 2013 IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations;
9. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2016, an updated report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016.