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Reference

1471584

Your letter of

21 januari 2019

Date 21 januari 2019
Subject Nomination file of Dutch Water Defence Lines

Dear Ms Rössler,

On behalf of the Netherlands, I have the honour of submitting the dossier on the Dutch Water Defence Lines to UNESCO for inscription on the World Heritage List. Officially, this is not a new nomination, but a Significant Boundary Modification of the Defence Line of Amsterdam, which is already inscribed as a World Heritage Site. At the same time, it is a request to rename the new, enlarged site to Dutch Water Defence Lines.

The nomination takes into account the decision of the World Heritage Committee about the Minor Boundary Modification of the Defence Line of Amsterdam (Decision: 41 COM 8B.46 Defence Line of Amsterdam). Together, the discussion with and advice from ICOMOS formed a significant contribution to this nomination, especially with regard to the management plan.

The Dutch Water Defence Lines is a valuable cultural site, located in the urban heart of the Netherlands – geographically as well as metaphorically. Our age-old tradition of water management is enshrined in the Netherlands' cultural DNA, and the use of water canals and inundations is a tradition that goes back a long way in the Netherlands.

The Dutch Water Defence Lines form a comprehensive defence system that extends over 200 km along the edge of the Netherlands' administrative and economic heartland, consisting of the elongated New Dutch Waterline and the Defence Line of Amsterdam defensive ring. Built between 1815 and 1940, the system consists of an ingenious network of 96 fortresses, acting in concert with an intricate system of dykes, sluices, pumping stations, canals and inundation polders, and is a major example of a fortification based on the principle of temporary flooding of the land. The expansive system was designed to meet the needs of all the different landscapes it encompasses and to make use of the available natural elements as much as possible. Over time, the system has been updated to include new technological developments.

The Dutch Water Defence Lines were built to defend the economic and political centre of the Netherlands. With the advent of aerial warfare, the system lost its

value as a military line of defence, although a significant portion of the Defence Lines retained a military function until the end of the Cold War, after which it fell into disrepair due to neglect.

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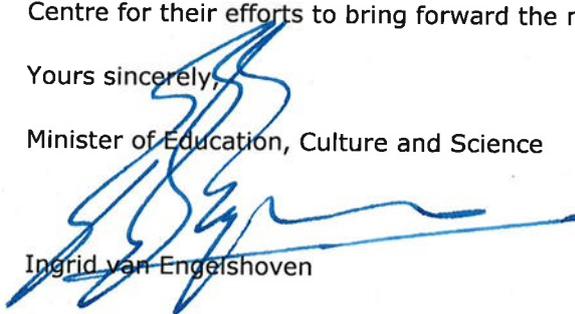
Since the last decade of the twentieth century, the system has been revitalized with all kinds of new functions by reappropriating former military objects. This has sparked renewed interest and created new perspectives for the old defence system, as well as a number of new challenges: How should the system be adapted to accommodate climate change and the growth of our cities? And how can it be used in our transition to sustainable energy?

The management of the Dutch Water Defence Lines is an example of the Dutch Landscape Approach in Heritage Management, in which we take into account the wider aspects of our landscapes and the challenges of dynamic urban areas we face to reach an integral solution which also strengthens the Dutch Water Defence Lines. We are constantly working to create living environments with a distinct character, that is also why we are fully committed to the preservation of the Dutch Water Defence Lines.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the World Heritage Centre for their efforts to bring forward the nomination.

Yours sincerely,

Minister of Education, Culture and Science



Ingrid van Engelshoven