

## Stonehenge, UNESCO and the Spanish Amendments



by the [Stonehenge Alliance](#)



**Final Report on the joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS Advisory mission to Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites (c.373bis)**

For a third time, the UK Government has invited a joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission to Stonehenge to give specialist advice on the A303 project. Based on the 2018 Advisory Mission's findings [1] a Report and Draft Decision [2] were prepared for discussion at the annual World Heritage Committee meeting in Bahrain on 28 June 2018.

Echoing the two previous mission reports, the 2018 mission has made the following crucial findings:

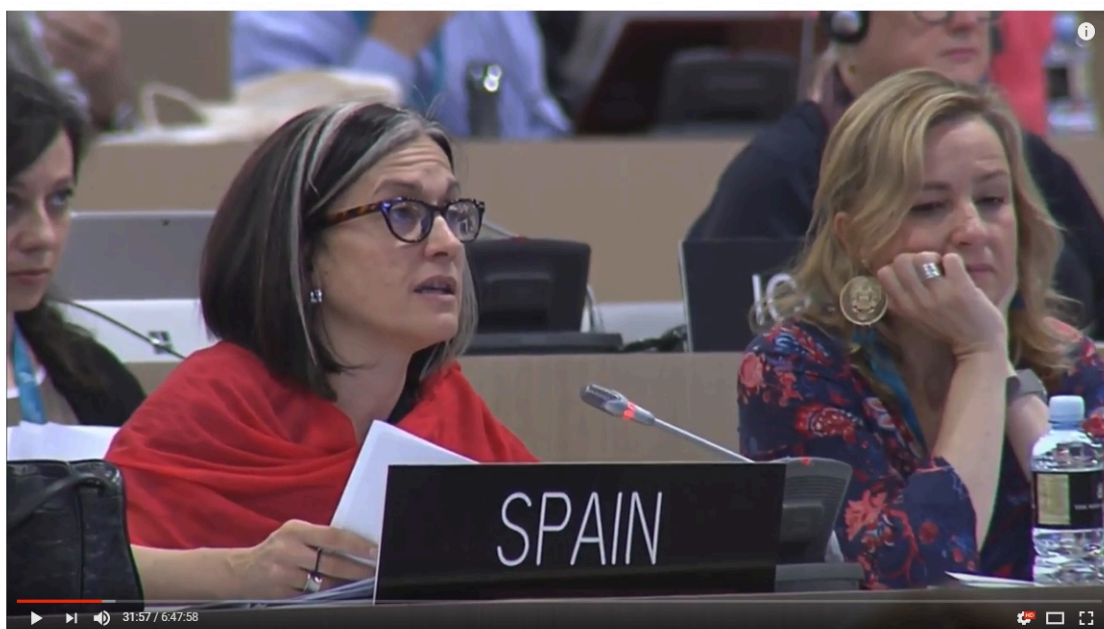
- “the construction of four-lane highways in cuttings at either end of the tunnel would adversely and irreversibly impact on the integrity, authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site;
- “the [tunnel] length of 3.0km would not be adequate to protect the integrity and conserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site; and
- “additional weight should be afforded to avoiding impact on the World Heritage Site, in view of its Outstanding Universal Value and the obligations of the State Party under the World Heritage Convention.”

Among the Mission Report's recommendations are:

- “the Proposed Scheme . . . should not proceed in its current form;
- “potential surface routes for the proposed dual carriageway sections of the A303 should be reconsidered outside the World Heritage Site; and
- “if a longer tunnel is further considered, the western portal should be relocated to the west of the western boundary of the WHS [and] the eastern portal . . . well to the east of the Countess roundabout.”

The Draft Decision published with the agenda papers for the World Heritage Committee’s meeting, noted the mission’s findings and urged the State Party to continue to explore by-pass and longer tunnel options that would not require dual carriageway cuttings within the property.

Two days before the discussion on Stonehenge, however, numerous amendments to the Draft Decision by Spain were circulated to all 21 Committee members [3].



42WHC English D5 28-06-2018

*Making the case for the Spanish amendments. Please click on image for bookmarked link to watch Spain's explanation on YouTube.*

These amendments would not only have substantially weakened the Decision, making it more acceptable to Highways England in terms of its A303 proposals, but also attempted to alter the Advisory Mission's actual advice.

The Stonehenge Alliance swiftly drafted a statement addressing our concerns about the amendments to be circulated to the Committee and read out on our behalf by Stephan Dömpke, Chairman of World Heritage Watch.



0:30 Friday, 29 June 2018 (UTC+3 Manama, Bahrain)

*Stephan Dömpke reads a statement on behalf of the Stonehenge Alliance at the World Heritage Committee. Please click on the image for bookmarked link to our watch statement on YouTube.*

In the event, despite the UK's full endorsement of the Spanish amendments, most of them were omitted from the final Decision. A request that the State Party should implement the recommendations of the 2018 Advisory Mission was included in the Decision which will be published shortly.

**The question remains: what prompted Spain to ask for these amendments?**



42WHC English D5 28-06-2018

*Keith Nichol, DDCMS, supports the Spanish amendments. Please click on the image for bookmarked link to watch UK's statement on YouTube.*

## Sources and references

1. World Heritage/ICOMOS, March 2018, [Third UNESCO World Heritage and ICOMOS Advisory Mission report](#)
2. World Heritage Centre, June 2018, [Report and Draft Decision for the World Heritage Committee](#) (See item 32 in contents, hyperlinked to the correct page)
3. [Amendment to Draft Decision proposed by Spain](#)
4. The [Stonehenge Alliance Statement](#) with [map](#) was circulated to all [21 WH Committee members](#)



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