

SAFEGUARDING THE WORLD'S UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE AND COMMEMORATIVE EVENT

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY OF WORLD WAR I

26-28 June 2014, Bruges, Belgium

General Information Note

UNESCO with the support of the Government of Flanders (Belgium) are pleased to invite you to the Scientific Conference and Commemorative Event on the Underwater Cultural Heritage from World War I on the occasion of the Centenary of this conflict. The conference will take place on 26 and 27 of June 2014 and the Commemorative Event is organized on 27/28 June 2014 in Bruges, Belgium.

I. Bruges

Bruges, Belgium, is the capital city of the Belgian Province of West Flanders. It was and is an important port on the North Sea. The direct contact to the sea has been lost, as the ocean receded leaving behind a canal giving the title "Venice of the North" to the city. The unique scenic historic city centre is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The Centenary of World War I is a special event for the region of Flanders. Flanders and Belgium as a whole saw some of the greatest loss of life on the Western Front of the First World War, in particular from the three battles of Ypres. In the Zeebrugge Raid the British Royal Navy attempted to block the submarine base Westdiep, Bruges, by scuttling several vessels in Zeebrugge in the canal leading from the sea to the base.

II. Conference - Date and Venue

Date: 26-27 June 2014

The Scientific Conference will be held in the prestigious rooms of the Provincial Court of Bruges. This outstanding Neo-Gothic-style building erected in the XIXth century used to be the seat of the West Flanders Provincial



Council. The Conference is open to selected scientific experts and State delegations.

Address: Provincial Courthouse, Markt 3, 8000 Bruges, Belgium

III. Commemoration Event

Date: 27/28 June 2014

28 June 1914 saw one of the most fateful events in history, the assassination of the heir of Austria, which triggered the begin of World War I. The centenary of this day provides a unique opportunity to remind of the importance of peace and to enhance our understanding of history through the research and preservation of heritage.

The commemorative evening reception and the commemoration day are the highlight of the Bruges events.

IV. Side-Events

A boat tour and a commemorative excursion will be organized. Participants have also time to explore the heart of the unique town of Bruges, giving them the opportunity to explore its medieval streets and experience its typical and charming atmosphere.



V. Accommodation

Participants are encouraged to organize their accommodation in the historic city center of Bruges well in advance of the events, as Bruges is a very touristic place and hotel rooms may become scarce in summer.

To book your accommodation,

- you may follow this link to selected conference hotels:
<https://secure.meetinginbrugge.be/extendedSearch?package=306&lang=en&start=25-06-2014&end=26-06-2014>, or
- consult web services, such as www.booking.com, which might have a better offer for small-size hotels.

We recommend booking a room in a hotel in the historic centre, to ensure you are in walking distance from the venue.

VI. Currency

The Belgian currency is the Euro (1USD = 0.735 euro). Should you not come from the Euro Zone it is recommended to exchange your native currency to Euro. You can withdraw cash from cash points at any time of the day or night, using your Visa, Eurocard or Mastercard.

VII. Visa

Citizens from the European Union have the right to enter Belgium by presenting an ID card or a valid national passport. Nationals of most other countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) are under an obligation to hold a visa for a proposed stay of a maximum duration of 3 months on the territory of the SCHENGEN States. To find out more, consult the [list](#) of countries whose nationals are placed under the obligation to hold a visa to cross the external borders of the SCHENGEN States and/or the [list](#) of third countries whose nationals are exempt from that obligation.

VIII. Public transport

In order to safeguard the attractiveness and accessibility of the historic city centre, car traffic is limited in Bruges. Local inner-town public transport is ensured by the De Lijn busses and taxis. Most places in the city centre are however easily reachable on foot.

IX. Weather

In June, the weather is usually warm in Bruges without being too hot. Rainfall may occur.

X. Time Schedule

■ DAY 1: Thursday, 26 June 2014

The conference day will be opened at 9.30 am in the Great Hall of the Provincial Court. Sandwich lunches are foreseen free of charge. A boat tour will be offered at the end of the day.

■ DAY 2: Friday, 27 June 2014

The conference day will start at 9 am and will be closed by a Commemorative Evening reception at the Townhouse of Bruges followed by an Illumination of the city center.

■ DAY 3: Saturday, 28 June 2014

The last day will be devoted to special cultural and commemorative events focusing on underwater cultural heritage from World War I. Participants are invited to visit Westdiep, to participate in a special reception as well as in a commemoration event

(see detailed agenda). The transport between the different venues will be ensured by the organizers.

The 28 June events do also include an international outreach, encompassing:

- The launch of a peace education initiative for children focusing on underwater cultural heritage;
- A worldwide Dive-for-Peace initiative inviting the public to responsible commemorative visits to WWI wreck sites;
- An international call for commemorative signalling at sea to all ships in commemoration of WWI.

XI. Costs

Travel, accommodation and living expenses have to be covered by participants. Meals during the conference as well as receptions are offered free of charge as well as cultural visits. There is no conference fee.

XII. Contact

For more information, please contact Ms Ulrike Guerin, Programme Specialist for the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage at u.guerin@unesco.org or +33.1.45.68.44.06.