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SCHWEIZERISCHE UNESCO-KOMMISSION  
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Press release

[www.worldheritage.ch](http://www.worldheritage.ch) - **Switzerland's World Heritage sites at a glance**

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**For the first time a multilingual Internet portal is available (in English, German, French and Italian) that presents all 9 Swiss sites included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, plus the country's 2 candidate sites. It draws attention to the exceptional universal value of each of these sites, and reminds us that it is the duty of mankind in its entirety to protect and preserve them.**

Switzerland currently has six cultural sites on the World Heritage list: the Old City of Berne, the Convent of St Gall, the Benedictine Convent of St John at Müstair, the Three Castles, Defensive Wall and Ramparts of the Market-Town of Bellinzona, the Vineyard Terraces of Lavaux and the Rhaetian Railway in the Albula/Bernina Landscapes. In addition, three natural regions have been listed as World Heritage sites: the Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch, Monte San Giorgio and the Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona. UNESCO is also currently considering two candidate sites: La Chaux-de-Fonds/Le Locle, Town Planning for Clock-Making and the Urban and Architectural Work of Le Corbusier. These candidates could be added to the list by the middle of the year.

Switzerland's sites have the same universal value as other famous World Heritage sites like the Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, the Galapagos Islands, Machu Pichu, the Pyramids of Giza, the Grand Canyon, Mont Saint-Michel, Timbuktu and the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. The World Heritage List currently includes 878 sites, of which 679 are cultural, 174 are natural and 25 are mixed. They are located in 145 countries.

The revolutionary idea on which the World Heritage List – which was created in the 1960s on the occasion of the relocation of the Abu Simbel temples – is based, is that certain natural and cultural sites are of such immense value that mankind in its entirety has a duty to ensure their protection and preservation. Today, this commitment is increasingly becoming an integral part of sustainable development aimed at reconciling environmental responsibility, economic effectiveness and social solidarity.

The new portal was conceived by the Swiss Commission for UNESCO, which is committed to bringing Switzerland's World Heritage sites to the attention of a wide public. Its intention is to promote Switzerland's sites and thus make them more widely known, as well as to describe the exact duties of the various bodies that are responsible for them.

Switzerland has been sharing its World heritage expertise at the international level for several decades, primarily through fieldwork. In order to more effectively pursue its commitment, Switzerland is running as a candidate for one of the twenty-one seats on the World Heritage Committee, which defines the policies relating to the protection of World Heritage and decides which sites are to be added to the list. The election will be held in October 2009 in Paris.

For further information:

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