



Throughout the history of mankind, many legends have appeared about miraculous landscapes and works of man, that caught the breath of contemporaries by their perfection, splendour and uniqueness... But of most of these wonders, sadly, only faint traces now remain, or even just these legends.

Our age is somewhat better off in this regard: it has a precise database of the wonders of the world. There even exists an international instrument devoted to their preservation – the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The Convention lays down the criteria whereby cultural or natural heritage sites can be included among those inscribed in the coveted World Heritage List. The inscription of historical sites in the World Heritage List of Cultural and Natural Sites is decided by the international community associated in UNESCO. It means the member states have declared: "Yes, this is something outstanding and unique, something concerning our common heritage; it is something we believe should be preserved in the interests of all of us – the nations of the world."

Inscription in the World Heritage List is a guarantee of the values of a given site. This seal of approval is understood by all those who like travelling and learning about foreign lands. The sites are guaranteed on the basis of a strict assessment and in the name of the international community. Therefore,

people know if they visit such a site they are visiting a place definitely worth seeing.



However, sites inscribed in the World Heritage List are not only the elite amongst sites and a motive for travelling. They are a great textbook of the histories of culture and landscape, a proof of the wonderful variety of the world.

The Czech Republic is on the crossroad of Europe. It has been a meeting point not just for merchants and armies, but also for cultural influences from the whole world. This has given the cultural history of the Czech lands a special shape. The cultural heritage of the Czech Republic is a unique creative synthesis of concepts brought from the South, North, East and West. This may be the reason why the Czech Republic has so many outstanding historical sites and why it has been honoured by having twelve sites inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List by 2003. This exhibition has the pleasure of presenting these sites and inviting you to visit them.

The exhibition has been prepared by the Department of Cultural Relations and Czechs Living Abroad of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in cooperation with the FAJN Agency and the Czech Press Agency.