

PRESS RELEASE

“UNESCO Committee grants World Heritage status to Erfurt’s Jewish-Medieval Heritage”

Erfurt’s Jewish-Medieval Heritage joins ranks of UNESCO World Heritage

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Erfurt is now officially part of mankind’s universal heritage. That was the outcome of a decision taken on the 17th of September by the World Heritage Committee in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. ‘The Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt’ comprises the Old Synagogue, the Mikveh ritual bath and the Stone House. The designation of UNESCO World Heritage is granted only to outstanding testimonies to the history of mankind and nature. Following the addition of Erfurt to the list, 52 sites in Germany have now been granted UNESCO World Heritage status. This designation is enormously valuable to Erfurt as a tourist destination and will open new doors in international marketing.

“We are delighted that the Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. For many years, we have been publicising these treasures and getting journalists and other people with an interest in our history to visit them,” says Dr Carmen Hildebrandt, Managing Director of Erfurt Tourism and Marketing Board.

“The prestigious UNESCO title will undoubtedly help raise the profile of the city of Erfurt. International travellers and tour operators, in particular, use UNESCO World Heritage sites as a reason to travel and often include them as part of a multi-destination tour around Germany or Europe,” adds Hildebrandt.

Erfurt Tourism and Marketing Board has been showcasing the city’s unique Jewish-Medieval Heritage and its work on the application for UNESCO status at national and international trade fairs for a number of years now. In doing so, they generated lots of tourism interest even before UNESCO status was awarded. Visitors to Erfurt are already able to participate in popular Jewish history tours that are run in English, French and Spanish. Brochures on the city’s Jewish-Medieval Heritage are also available in various languages. The city is therefore well prepared to cater for a growing interest in its history.

It is now the job of all stakeholders to communicate the extraordinary value and unique nature of Erfurt’s Jewish-Medieval Heritage while also protecting these characteristics and ensuring they are preserved for the future.

“Thuringia has more World Heritage than almost any other region of Germany, with five entries on the UNESCO list. They are Wartburg Castle in Eisenach, symbol of the Reformation, the Classical Weimar ensemble and the Bauhaus buildings in Weimar, which span the arc from the Middle Ages to the modern age, Hainich National Park, and now Erfurt with its Jewish-Medieval heritage. Each one represents a different facet of our uniquely diverse natural and

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cultural heritage. These UNESCO designations not only preserve our history, but also act as a focal point for tourism by promoting the visibility and development of this living heritage and passing on our knowledge of it to future generations. Erfurt's inclusion in this group underlines the importance of Jewish history for Thuringia and will help to broaden the understanding of our rich cultural heritage," says Christoph Gösel, Managing Director of Thüringer Tourismus GmbH.

Further information on UNESCO World Heritage in Erfurt and Thuringia can be found at www.juedisches-leben.erfurt.de/jl/en or www.erfurt-tourismus.de/en/unesco and unesco.thueringen-entdecken.de/en.

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