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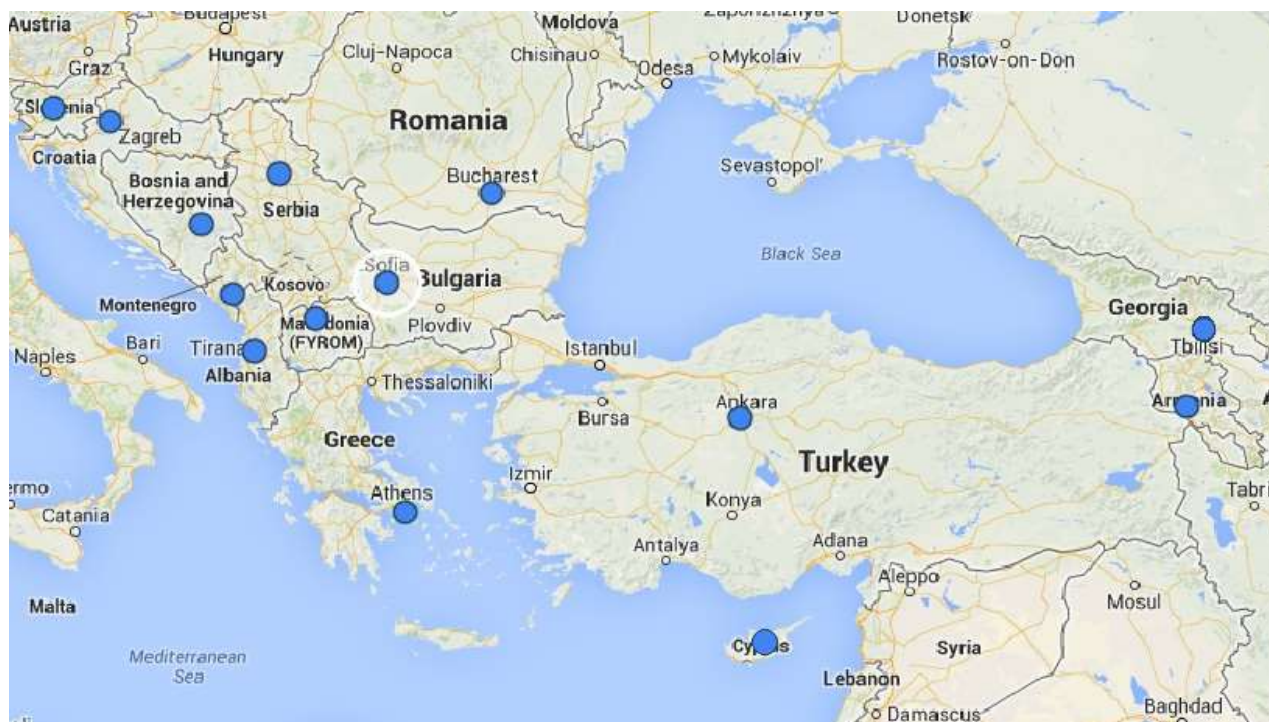
Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of
Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe
under the auspices of UNESCO

**РЕГИОНАЛЕН ЦЕНТЪР ЗА ОПАЗВАНЕ НА
НЕМАТЕРИАЛНОТО КУЛТУРНО НАСЛЕДСТВО
В ЮГОИЗТОЧНА ЕВРОПА ПОД ЕГИДАТА НА ЮНЕСКО**

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**REGIONAL CENTRE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SOUTH-
EASTERN EUROPE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
UNESCO**

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2014



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I. INTRODUCTION

2014 has been the third consecutive year of the operation of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO. All the activities included in the Centre's Work Plan adopted by the General Assembly held in Sofia (April 2014) have since been implemented successfully and the team of the Centre has managed to live up to its commitments and responsibilities undertaken before the General Assembly. In the course of the whole year, sustained efforts were made for the Centre to develop and establish itself as a regional institution. Through specific activities the Centre has also been trying to be an active partner of UNESCO in the realisation of the strategic goals and programmes of that Organisation in the field of the intangible cultural heritage. Those efforts have been well appreciated and have earned us the gratitude of Ms. Cécile Duvelle, Chief of the Intangible Heritage Section at UNESCO HQ, for the excellent partnership and the positive results attained in implementing the UNESCO global strategy for capacity building in the field of ICH, as well as of other partners of the Centre. In view of the need to synchronise the programmes of UNESCO, WIPO and the Regional Centre, the Conference on 'Intellectual Property, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Medicine in the Context of Policies for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Countries of South-Eastern Europe', originally scheduled to be held in the course of 2014, was postponed for April 23-24, 2015.

Recommendations of the General Assembly for 2014 and the results attained:

- In reference to the recommendations made by the General Assembly in 2014, the Regional Centre undertook the necessary action to expand the scope of the Centre by addressing membership invitations to the following countries: the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Thus far, only Georgia has sent a formal positive response confirming its willingness for full membership.
- Taking into account the need for constant feedback and communication with the member states throughout the year, the Regional Centre has sent a number of letters to members of the General Assembly, updating them on the implementation of the Work Plan and supplying details about upcoming initiatives. In addition, the Centre proposed some important administrative and technical issues for discussion, related to:
 - ❖ The possibility for the member states to cover the travel expenses of their delegates to the General Assembly, which would free funds from the Centre's budget to be channelled into more significant activities and events of a regional nature, or
 - ❖ The possibility for the member states to contribute a membership fee that would cover their travel and other expenses.

The Regional Centre has received an insufficient number of responses to the issues thus raised, which necessitates that they be discussed further at the 2015 General Assembly meeting.



- The Regional Centre successfully fulfilled the recommendation made by the General Assembly for the creation of a new official website that would combine modern design and functionality. The website features an interactive calendar of the intangible cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe, a functionality that had been included in the Work Plan for 2014, as well as an online forum for communication between various partners of the Centre. The website is programmed in such a way as to provide a direct link and enable remote participation in meetings of the Centre, thus facilitating communication while helping cut travel costs.
- In reference to the proposal for periodic updating and improvement of the wording of the Statutes of the Association, during the course of the year the team of the Centre researched the structure and functioning of other category 2 centres and their respective constituent documents. Further amendments were made to the Statutes in harmony with Bulgarian law and the Agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and UNESCO regarding the establishment of category 2 centre in Sofia, as would enable the independent, trouble-free and positive operation of the Regional centre as an independent structure under UNESCO auspices, with its own goals and objectives shared by the Organisation.

II. KEY ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ATTAINED:

A. IN FULFILMENT OF THE 2014 WORK PLAN.

1. **Organisation and convention of a meeting of the General Assembly of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO (Apr. 1, 2014 in Sofia, Bulgaria);**

The annual meeting of the General Assembly of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO was held on April 1, 2014, in the City of Sofia. It was attended by a total of 10 national delegations from member states of the Centre: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey, as well as by the remaining full members of the General Assembly.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Frank Proschan, the Chairman of the General Assembly and personal envoy of the Director General of UNESCO. The programme for the meeting was successfully implemented in three working sessions, held in accordance with meeting's agenda. All participants expressed their high appreciation of the accomplishments of the Centre in the course of 2013, and of the work plan for 2014.

Major results:

- Two new members admitted: Cyprus and Slovenia;



Once the proposed representatives of Cyprus and Slovenia joined the Centre and its General Assembly as full members, the total membership of the Centre increased to 13 member states.

- The updated membership of the Governing Board presented;
- The new Executive Director presented.

Comments and recommendations:

- The members of the General Assembly shared their positive impressions with regard to the 2013 Activity Report of the Centre and the implementation of its work programme. They expressed their high appreciation of the rich and varied activities performed by the Centre, which encompass international cooperation, publicity of local activities, as well as the high quality of the information supplied and the printed materials.
- The members of the General Assembly made recommendations for the Centre to take part in all major events in the countries of the region (such as, e.g., expert meetings, the compilation of national registers, multinational applications), which would ensure its proper visibility throughout the region.

Other proposals:

- To enable the Centre to stay abreast of important international events and initiatives and to undertake to disseminate information about them;
- To streamline its work and facilitate coordination with the countries of the region by means of online communication;
- To formulate a procedure involving clear eligibility criteria as to what activities proposed by the member states can be supported by the Centre and in what manner;
- To encourage other member states to join in activities carried out by the Centre, i.e. for such activities to increase in scope.

2. Eighth Annual Expert Meeting on Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, Cyprus (May 15-16, 2014 in Limassol, Cyprus);

On May 15-16, 2014, the Cypriot city of Limassol hosted the Eighth Annual Meeting of the South East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage on the subject of *'Intangible Cultural Heritage and Education: Experiences, Good Practices, Lessons Learned'*. It was organised jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus and the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with the European Regional Bureau of UNESCO for Sciences and Culture based in Venice (Italy).

The meeting has established a name for itself as a regional platform for the sharing of knowledge, experience and good practices, as well as the promotion and exchange of ideas for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage as a distinguishing feature of the cultural diversity in South-Eastern Europe. It has become traditional and is held on an annual basis. The first such meeting was held in June 2007 in the town of Arbanassi, Bulgaria. It was followed by



meetings in Safranbolu, Turkey (May 2008); Zagreb, Croatia (April 2009); Râmnicu Vâlcea, Romania (May 2010); Belgrade, Serbia (May 2011); Athens, Greece (May 2012). In 2013, the meeting was once again held by Bulgaria, and was hosted in Sofia by the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO. At that meeting, the experts made a recommendation for the topics on the agenda to be more specific, which would enable thorough and detailed discussions in a more clearly defined subject matter. Following that advice, the 2014 meeting in Limassol focused the attention of participants on the intangible cultural heritage and education.

The debates were structured along three main strands, each followed by a discussion:

- Progress in the implementation of the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) made by the countries in South-Eastern Europe;
- Integration of the intangible cultural heritage into formal as well as informal educational programmes and systems;
- Regional cooperation pertinent to the UNESCO global strategy for capacity building and the establishment of a proper institutional and professional environment for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

Participating in the meeting were officials of the ministries of culture of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Turkey, as well as representatives from Italy, Hungary and the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, based in Sofia.

The first session was on the subject of 'Progress in the implementation of the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) made by the countries in South-Eastern Europe'. The presentations delivered within its framework highlighted the progress achieved in the implementation of the 2003 Convention in the countries of South-Eastern Europe; here again, an emphasis was placed on the legal framework, management structures, national registers, the accumulated experience and the existing challenges. The second session was titled 'Integration of the intangible cultural heritage into formal as well as informal educational programmes and systems'; it showcased good practices in training and the transmission of the intangible cultural heritage. In the third session, on 'Strengthening regional cooperation in the field of the intangible cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe', the work of the Regional Centre in the area of capacity building for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage was presented – the experience of 2012-2013 and the upcoming workshops included in the Work Plan of the Centre for 2014.

The main conclusions of the discussions identified by the participating experts pointed to a stronger interest in intangible cultural heritage at all levels: from experts in the field of culture, through the media, and down to the public at large. The dossiers nominated for inscription on the UNESCO lists, the national registers and the festival events contribute to the visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and the positive interest it triggers. Nevertheless, increased interest in that sphere does not always signify proper understanding of intangible cultural heritage in line with its definition in the 2003 Convention, which in turn necessitates the development of specific communication programmes and involvement of communities and ICH practitioners.



With respect to training, the participating experts underscored the importance of including the intangible cultural heritage in both formal and informal educational programmes. The aim is to enrich the educational platform while also increasing its effectiveness, which would contribute to the preservation of the channels of transmission of the intangible cultural heritage. From the presentations delivered it became clear that the inclusion of the intangible cultural heritage in the existing school curricula is indeed a good practice. The session also underscored the significance of cooperation with museums as key partners, as well as with the government authorities, foundations and civil society. Music and food culture stood out as promising subjects for the development of educational activities with an emphasis on the intangible cultural heritage. The preparation of multinational nominations is another good practice, which enables cooperation, the exchange of ideas and intercultural dialog.

Training seminars aimed at capacity building for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage were also identified as a priority for the region, as were the opportunities for applying for EU funding through various projects. The experts expressed their desire that the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe would play an important role in the dissemination of information about cooperation in the region.

The experts' recommendations for the next meeting mostly focused on the advisability of presentations highlighting only the most current trends and the best practices of the past year. They proposed that the next annual meeting would consider the subject matter of coordination between Convention 2003 and Convention 2005. In all likelihood, the annual meeting will continue to be held in the future, as the experts underscored yet again its significance and relevance to their work in the field of the intangible cultural heritage.

3. Participation in the Fifth Session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (June 2-5, 2014 in Paris, France);

The Fifth Session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (the 2003 Convention) began on June 2 and lasted until June 5, 2014 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (France). The Executive Director of, and an expert from, the Centre took part in its sessions in their capacity as observers.

The work sessions during the first day dealt with organizational matters and also heard reports on the work carried out during the past two years: the Report of the Committee before the General Assembly about its work during the period June 2012 through June 2014; the Report of the Intergovernmental Committee based upon the 2012 and 2013 reports of the member states regarding the implementation of the 2003 Convention and the current status of all ICH elements inscribed on the Representative List; and Report of the Secretariat on its activity during the period June 2012 through June 2014.

During the following days the participants discussed the proposed amendments to the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the 2003 Convention. For their most part, the discussions focused on the proposal to set up a separate Evaluative Body for the submitted nominations for inscription on the UNESCO lists, which would pool together the resources of the two pre-existing bodies: the Consultative Body and the Subsidiary Body. The proposal for setting



up such a body was accepted and the merger was recorded in the Operational Directives. All other proposals for changes in the Operational Directives: terminological clarifications needed for the translation of excerpts from the Convention into different languages; regarding the use of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund; the rules and procedures of participation of countries applying for membership in the General Assembly – all of these were positively appreciated by all the participants and adopted with unanimity.

To mark the 10th anniversary of the Forum of Slavic Cultures International Foundation and its long-standing partnership with UNESCO, representatives of the Centre attended the inauguration of an international exposition at UNESCO Headquarters (Salle des Pas Perdus). The exposition was compiled by 12 Slavic countries within the framework of the Forum of Slavic Cultures and Museums; the 12 countries will subsequently take turns hosting the exhibition.

During the General Assembly meeting, new member states were elected to the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. At the respective session, Bulgaria was elected together with Hungary as a Group II member state of the Committee for a term of four years, 2014 through 2018.

The representatives of Centre had meetings with the team of the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention, during which they discussed in detail the implementation of the Work Plan of the Regional Centre for 2014.

4. Participation in the Second Annual Meeting of Category 2 Centres Active in the Field of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (June 6, 2014 in Paris, France);

On June 6, Hall VIII at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris hosted the Second Annual Meeting of Category 2 Centres under the Auspices of UNESCO Active in the Field of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Taking part in it were representatives of all eight ICH centres, as follows:

1. ALGERIA: Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Africa;

2. BRAZIL: Regional Heritage Management Training Centre;

3. BULGARIA: Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe;

4. CHINA: International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region

5. ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN: Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia;

6. JAPAN: International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region;

7. PERU: Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America;

8. REPUBLIC OF KOREA: International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region;



as well as representatives of the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention.

During the first session of the meeting, the participants were familiarised with the drafts for the UNESCO Medium-term Strategy for 2014-2021 (Document **37 C/4**) and the programme and budget for 2014-2017, as well as with Strategic Goals 7 & 8, which concern the intangible cultural heritage. The Category 2 Centres were briefed about the deadlines and assessment procedures for renewal of their agreements with UNESCO – a task facing every single centre in the years to come. As an example, they were made familiar with the just completed assessment of the centre in Peru (CRESPIAL) and its renewed agreement in effect from early 2014. The meeting also outlined the expected activities, results and contributions of the Category 2 Centres to the attainment of the strategic UNESCO goals for the period 2014-2021.

Key conclusions of the meeting:

- Strengthened cooperation between UNESCO and the Category 2 Centres as the right partnership network for attaining the strategic goals of the Organization;
- Improved communication between the Category 2 Centres and UNESCO aimed at streamlining the operation and document flow of the Centres;
- Improved cooperation between Category 2 Centres with a view to establishing a functional global network of the intangible cultural heritage and the sharing of expertise and good practices.

The next meeting of category 2 Centres is to be hosted by **CHINA**, at the International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region.

5. Review Meeting of the Global Capacity-Building Strategy for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Europe and Central Asia (September 23-26, 2014 in Sofia, Bulgaria);

The Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, jointly with the Capacity Building Section of UNESCO, conducted in Sofia, between 23 and 26 September, 2014, a Review Meeting of the Global Capacity-Building Strategy for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Europe and Central Asia. This has been the fourth meeting of its kind and comes as a continuation of the preceding ones, for the Asia-Pacific Region (Beijing, November 2012), Latin America and the Caribbean (Cuzco, September 2013), and the Arab Region (Kuwait, May 9-10, 2014).

Taking part in the meeting was an international group of 20 participants, all of them facilitators from the UNESCO network, experts based either at Headquarters or at the regional offices. The meeting aimed to take stock of the current state of affairs and make improvements with respect to the implementation of the global capacity-building strategy of UNESCO for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

Results of the meeting:

- The meeting provided a suitable opportunity for reviewing the global capacity-building strategy of UNESCO for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage; it enabled



the participants to share experience in its implementation while building upon their knowledge with respect to the latest developments about the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; it also prompted the introduction of new modular courses, training materials and guidelines as developed in recent years by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section of UNESCO. The discussions also helped outline the role of Category 2 Centres in the implementation of the capacity-building strategy and their inclusion in both trainer training processes and in those of monitoring and evaluation. The speakers emphasized the opportunity for the centres to act as mediators in the preparation of multinational applications.

- The forum has been instrumental in familiarising the Regional Centre with the capacity-building strategy, which in turn will contribute to its future implementation in the countries of South-Eastern Europe.

6. Workshop on 'Strengthening Capacities for Implementing the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage' (October 13-17, 2014 in Sofia, Bulgaria);

Between 13 and 17 October, the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO organised a 5-day training workshop on the subject of 'Strengthening Capacities for Implementing the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage'. The training was conducted entirely in line with UNESCO's global capacity-building strategy in the field of the intangible cultural heritage. Since this is a UNESCO priority programme, the Centre has been following the direct instructions of the UNESCO Capacity-building Section. It was at the recommendation of the latter that the Centre invited two experienced trainers from the UNESCO's network of facilitators delivering training and capacity-building services around the world: Mr. Rieks Smeets and Mr. Nikolay Vukov. Together, the two trainers prepared the thematic content of the training workshop and adapted the training materials originally developed by UNESCO to the needs and professional profiles of the invited trainees.

The aim of the workshop was for the participants to become familiar with the basic concepts and principles of the 2003 Convention and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage at both national and international level, as formulated in the 2003 Convention and the Operational Directives. The Centre and the trainers additionally decided to put an emphasis on discussing and comparing the policies and practices of the implementation of the 2003 Convention in the countries of South-Eastern Europe while at the same time taking into account the experience and professional interests of the participants.

It is the practice of UNESCO in this respect to avail itself of the opportunity to invite as participants at various levels, e.g. representatives of different institutions active in the field of the intangible cultural heritage: ministries of culture, universities, scientific research institutes, NGOs, community centres, ICH practitioners, a.o. This facilitates inter-institutional coordination and partnership. The total number of participants should not exceed 20 persons.

With the aim of targeting this workshop at young people, the Regional Centre had set an age limit of 36 years. The idea of limiting the maximum age of participants was welcomed with understanding by the trainers while making sure that the participants – 18 in all – were mostly



people who were yet to begin a career in that field. Regarding the professional experience and competence of the Bulgarian participants, they came from very diverse backgrounds. Six of them work in scientific research institutes or university departments; one is an employee of the Regional Centre for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; one, an official with the Ministry of Culture; four come from non-governmental organizations and one works at a community centre. Their widely diverse professional interests contributed to the great variety of issues and subjects raised during the training sessions and discussions.

The original idea was for the workshop to be regional in nature, covering all the member states of the Centre. Therefore the Centre had prepared letters of invitation that were circulated in due time to the members of the General Assembly, asking them to select an expert each to take part on the workshop. To our regret, the only applications on behalf of would-be participants came from Greece and Romania; then, after some last-minute cancellations, only a representative of the Greek Ministry of Culture took an active part in the training seminar. From the responses of half of the member states of the Regional centre it becomes apparent that the main hurdle to their joining the workshop has been the scarcity of funds for such overseas assignments and/or a prior engagement for the period in question. In line with the re-targeting of the workshop at a predominantly Bulgarian audience, the topics and examples used during the sessions had to be altered in part, while the central concept, that of comparing the Bulgarian context with the contexts of other countries in South-Eastern Europe, was kept intact.

Results achieved:

- The workshop managed to present and discuss thoroughly the concepts, principles and activities pertinent to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in accordance with the 2003 Convention;
- The presentation of the policies and practices relevant to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage was supported with pertinent examples from around the region and threw light on the challenges facing the member states in the implementation of the Convention at both national and regional level;
- Each of the selected topics was linked with a discussion of specific case studies and an analysis of the experience of participants; thus the workshop was made more relevant to their professional spheres of expertise;
- The workshop succeeded in presenting a thorough review of the key issues related to the implementation of the Convention; it managed to involve the participants in fruitful discussions on various subjects;
- The workshop featured discussions on various subjects pertinent to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage; these were attuned to the professional interests of participants in order to be beneficial for their future professional development.

Recommendations by the two facilitators:

The Regional Centre is suitably located to play an important role in organising capacity-building events at regional level. The need for that is there, even if only for the sake of paving the



road to productive international cooperation. Should financial constraints continue to hamper regional involvement, the Centre will need to turn for international support to the Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Another good idea would be for such seminars to be hosted on a rotational principle by different countries in the region, whether every year or every half-year. This will encourage the broad participation and cooperation of representatives of different national and institutional contexts.

7. Participation in the Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (November 17-21 in Paris, France);

The Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on November 24 through 28. Taking part in it in observer capacity were the Executive Director, the Chairperson of the Executive Board and an expert from the Regional Centre. The Committee reviewed proposals submitted by the member states for inscription of elements on the Lists of the Convention 2003, as well as proposals for inclusion in the Register of Good Practices relevant to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. The Committee also reviewed applications for international assistance.

The following documents were presented by the member states at the session:

- 27 reports on the implementation of the 2003 Convention and 8 reports about elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;
- 8 nominations to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;
- 4 proposals for the Register of Good Practices for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage;
- 2 applications for financial assistance in excess of US\$ 25,000;
- 46 nominations to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The following new elements were inscribed in 2014 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by the member states of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO:

- Armenia: Lavash, the preparation, meaning and appearance of traditional Armenian bread as an expression of culture;
- Bosnia & Herzegovina: Zmijanje embroidery;
- Bulgaria: The tradition of making the Chiprovtsi Carpets;
- Greece: Know-how of cultivating mastic on the island of Chios;
- Serbia: Slava, celebration of family saint patron's day;
- The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Kopachkata, a social dance from the village of Dramche, Pijanec;



- Turkey: Ebru, Turkish art of marbling;
- The review of the multi-national application by Croatia – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – Serbia – Romania – Moldova – Turkey entitled 'Spring celebration: Hidrellez or Saint George's day' was postponed for the coming year.

8. Exhibition and competition titled: 'Fairyland of Legends, Myths and Tales from My Homeland' (December 1, 2014 in Sofia, Bulgaria)

The announcement by the Regional Centre of a competition under the title: 'Fairyland of Legends, Myths and Tales from My Homeland', targeted at children aged 8-14 from the region of South-Eastern Europe, was timed to coincide with June 1, 2014, International Children's Day. The aim of the competition was to provoke the youngest generation to share through drawings its views and attitudes with respect to the traditions inherited from parents and loved ones. Each drawing was supposed to be accompanied by a description in English and/or Bulgarian of the image depicted in it, and its relevance to the intangible cultural heritage of the respective region. The competition, which lasted for three months, stirred avid interest among Bulgarian as well as foreign children, who kept sending in their works all through the summer.

A specialised panel of judges comprising Prof. Ivaylo Mirchev, Prof. Andrey Daniel, Alexandra Gogova and Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yana Gergova was faced with the far from easy task to select a winner from among the 126 entries submitted from the member states of the regional Centre: Bulgaria, Albania, Armenia, Croatia, Cyprus, Romania and Slovenia. The judges selected four winners and conferred six more incentive awards.

On December 1, 2014, at 5 p.m., Sofia Mayor Yordanka Fandakova and UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova inaugurated the exhibition showing the children's drawings selected by the judges at an art gallery located at 1 Paris St. in Sofia. The exhibition was organized with the kind assistance of Sofia Municipality. On the day of its opening, the four winning entrants from Bulgaria, Armenia and Slovenia, who had arrived in Sofia especially for that purpose, received their awards. Their participation was made possible by the generous financial support of the regional Centre. A programme of children's performances featuring young singers from Spiritual Mirror Society and girl singers from the Nikolay Haitov Community Centre added to the festive atmosphere of the event.

The Grand Prix was conferred personally by Mrs. Irina Bokova upon the winning entrant, Ivona-Siyana Staneva (8) from the town of Popovo, northern Bulgaria, for her drawing 'Young Maidens Dance the Kopanitza'; the second Prize was handed by Mrs. Yordanka Fandakova to Lili Manyan (12) from Yerevan (Armenia) for her drawing 'Ara Beautiful and Shamiram'; [former prime minister] Mr. Simeon Saxe Coburg Gotha conferred one of the third prizes upon 10 year-old Eva Druzinec from Slovenia for her work 'The Coat of Arms of Skofja Loka'; the other third prize was received from the hands of judge Andrey Daniel by Monika Melkonyan (8) from Yerevan (Armenia) for her drawing 'David of Sassoun'.

During the exhibition, Mrs. Irina Bokova also bestowed upon Sofia Mayor Yordanka Fandakova the award 'City of Cinema' in recognition of the fact that Sofia had joined the UNESCO Network of Creative Cities in the cinema category.



The exhibition will be a traveling one, i.e. it will be shown in all member states of the Regional Centre.

9. New official website of the Regional Centre with an interactive calendar as an application; the Centre's profile in the social networks

The Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO has updated its official website with a new layout design and new administration, intended to facilitate the use and posting of information on it. This is in line with the decision adopted by the General Assembly on March 5, 2013, to improve the website of the Centre, and complies with the draft plan adopted by the General Assembly on April 1, 2014.

Pursuant to the idea to design an interactive calendar that would keep track of events in the field of the intangible cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe, an application by that name has been developed and integrated into the website, which also features an online forum facilitating communication among the various partners of the Centre.

The association's Facebook profile is gaining popularity as a vehicle of information and faster, easier communication. The Centre receives all kinds of queries through the social network. The Regional Centre can be found under the short name [in lower case letters] **Unesco Centre Sofia**.

10. Expanding the scope of the Regional Centre: admission of new member states

In view of the recommendations made by members of the General Assembly for the Regional Centre to expand its geographical scope, letters of invitation to join the Centre were sent to the following countries:

- In June 2014, to the Republic of Moldova;
- In July 2014, to Georgia and Ukraine;
- In November 2014, to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

To date, the Regional Centre has received an official reply from Georgia giving its consent to join as a member state.

11. Work on key documents of the regional Centre (on a year-round basis);

In the course of the year, the Regional centre has been focusing its efforts on the creation of a substantial solid set of statutory and strategic documents necessary for its proper functioning. Additional proposals were made to amend the Statutes of the Association. Presentations were developed covering different events organised and conducted by the Centre.

B. UNPLANNED ACTIVITIES

1. Workshop on 'Local Policies for a Local Heritage' (January 13-14, 2014, at the village of Rudartzi, Bulgaria)

The Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO organised a workshop on 'Local Policies for a



Local Heritage' in partnership with the Regional for Expert Information on Community Centres in the city of Pernik. The workshop coincided in some with the Surva Festival.

By organising this forum, the Regional Centre aimed to publicise the example of the already existing local centres for the intangible cultural heritage in the villages of Bulgari and Bistrizta, a unique good practice for Bulgaria and the region, and to promote the setting up of similar centres in other populated areas around the country. The meeting was attended by representatives of the local administration and cultural institutions from all five participating municipalities, elements from which had been nominated by Bulgaria for inscription on the UNESCO Lists of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013. Representatives of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the already established local centre for the intangible heritage at the village of Bistrizta also joined the meeting. The topics covered included a presentation of the 2003 Convention on the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the evolution of the concept of intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO as an international organisation, the operational principles of institutions under UNESCO auspices, the policy of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria with respect to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, preparing the nominations for the UNESCO lists, the ways of setting up local intangible heritage centres, expertise and good practices.

The initiative was developed as a pilot project aimed at promoting local policies as a key mechanism for safeguarding and publicising ICH. The Regional Centre will continue to promote the development of local policies and will attempt to multiply the results of this initiative throughout the region.

2. Partner meetings

2.1. Participation in an International Forum of Non-governmental organisations in Official Partnership with UNESCO on 'The Role of Youth in the Safeguarding of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage' (Sofia and Sozopol, September 28-30, 2014)

A representative of the Regional Centre took part in an international event organised by the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, in partnership with the Sozopol Foundation, which was hosted under the high patronage of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Ministry of Culture and the Mayor of Sozopol Municipality.

The Third International Forum of NGOs took place during the period September 28-30. Individual sessions of the event were dedicated to the role of young people in safeguarding the tangible as well as the intangible cultural heritage. In parallel with the plenary and break-out sessions, during the two days of discussions the participants considered different options for youth involvement in safeguarding the cultural heritage, the challenges and difficulties facing young people in that respect, as well as the ways to encourage them in working for safeguarding that heritage. The main topics discussed at the various sessions were: capacity-building among young people for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage; promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialog; job creation.

Special attention in the context of the tangible cultural heritage was focused on the issue of the young people's commitment to the sites and elements of the world heritage (both cultural and natural) and their respective contribution to maintaining that heritage. With regard to the



intangible cultural heritage, an emphasis was placed on the policies for its safeguarding, and the role of NGOs, in accordance with the 2003 Convention.

2.2. Informal meeting with the Director of the Forum of Slavic Cultures (09/2014 in Sofia, Bulgaria)

The Executive Director of the Centre met with Mrs. Andrea Richter, Director of the Forum of Slavic Cultures, at the latter's initiative in Sofia. This was an informal meeting for establishing contacts and exchanging ideas as may come in handy for their future cooperation on joint projects and programmes among Slavic countries.

3. Internship programme, work with graduate and doctoral students

In 2014 the Regional Centre appointed for a one-month summer internship Ms. Anelia Trayanova (Bulgaria). Ms. Trayanova is currently pursuing a Master's degree as part of the international programme *Choreomundus*, delivered simultaneously at four universities: in Norway, France, Hungary and the UK, in the course of two years. The young girl has been highly motivated and has fulfilled with diligence all tasks assigned to her, which amounted mainly to analysing the legal documents of Category 2 centres for the intangible cultural heritage. The intern was given an opportunity to familiarise herself in detail with the operation of the Regional Centre, the intangible cultural heritage and the 2003 Convention. Through such internship programmes, the Centre is creating a network of young people showing an interest in intangible cultural heritage.

III. CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the activities performed by the Regional Centre in the course of 2014 prompts the following major conclusions:

- The Regional centre has succeeded in establishing and better positioning itself in both a national and a regional context;
- The amendments made to the statutory documents of the Centre provide an opportunity for its positive growth and improved functioning;
- The improved official website of the Centre facilitates the dissemination of information on the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in the region, while keeping young people aware of the elements of the intangible cultural heritage in the region;
- The expert networks thus created enable cooperation among countries in the region and the involvement of communities, groups and individuals in safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe;
- The Centre has established itself as an active partner of UNESCO by contributing to the dissemination and implementation of the strategic goals of the Organisation.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

During 2014, the Regional Centre managed to formulate several key recommendations pertinent to its future work:

- The need to improve the planning process in order to achieve better synchronicity with the UNESCO strategies and programmes;

**РЕГИОНАЛЕН ЦЕНТЪР ЗА ОПАЗВАНЕ НА
НЕМАТЕРИАЛНОТО КУЛТУРНО НАСЛЕДСТВО
В ЮГОИЗТОЧНА ЕВРОПА ПОД ЕГИДАТА НА ЮНЕСКО**

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United Nations
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Cultural Organization

Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of
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- To ensure that projects and activities contribute genuinely to the capacity building of the member states for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage and the prospect for sustainable development;
- The need to promote active multilateral communication between the Centre and individual member states by strengthening continuous dialog and active work between them;
- To jointly and specifically identify the interests, actual capabilities and conditions in individual countries of the region to submit project proposals and other extrabudgetary initiatives;

In 2016, the Centre is slated to replace the current General Assembly (elected for a term of 4 years), while undergoing a performance evaluation for renewal of its agreement with UNESCO (in 2017). Such a performance evaluation, conducted by external experts, will inform corrective measures on the part of the Centre, as the recommendations of those experts will contribute in a substantial way towards improving the regional operation of the Centre and cooperation in the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.