



Venice Office
Regional Bureau for Science
and Culture in Europe



SOFIA
REGIONAL CENTER
FOR THE SAFEGUARDING
OF THE INTANGIBLE
CULTURE HERITAGE IN THE
SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
UNESCO



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Conclusions of the seminar

Seventh Annual Regional meeting on Intangible Cultural Heritage in South East Europe

*“New strategies for sustainable
development, tourism and partnerships”*

Sofia, Bulgaria, 27-28 May 2013

A meeting organized within the initiative



We, the participants in the Seventh regional seminar of the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage (Sofia, Bulgaria, 27-28 May 2013), hereinafter “the Network”, thank the Sofia Regional Center for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, hereinafter “the Sofia Regional Centre”, for having hosted and organized, together with the UNESCO Venice Office for Science and Culture in Europe, this annual seminar.

We underline that this meeting, which is a follow-up to the previous meetings in Arbanassi, Bulgaria (June 2007), Safranbolu, Turkey (May 2008), Zagreb, Croatia (April 2009), Râmnicu-Vâlcea, Romania (May 2010), Belgrade, Serbia (May 2011), and Athens, Greece (May 2013) marked a further step forward to enhance a common understanding of opportunities and challenges linked to the safeguarding and promotion of intangible cultural heritage in the region.



During our discussions, the following topics and challenges of common interest emerged, and recommendations for future action were proposed:

Improving policy and legal frameworks

- Participants agree to support efforts within their relevant ministries to continue revising and adapting cultural heritage national legal frameworks (including laws and by-laws) in order to incorporate specific provisions on the safeguarding of ICH, in accordance with the objectives of the 2003 UNESCO Convention.
- Participants stress the crucial importance to develop ICH-specific policies to both enhance the role of ICH in fostering sustainable development, and the safeguarding of ICH through revenues from heritage-related income generating activities (tourism, etc). In this sense, participants agree on the necessity for all countries to develop ad-hoc normative and fiscal

tools to support and regulate the relation between ICH and development oriented activities. This should also involve the improvement of cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation, as well as the cooperation with the community of bearers and other relevant stakeholders from the private sector.

- Besides the update and possible improvement of legal and policy framework, participants note the need to ensure as far as possible continuity and predictability in sectoral policies, which only can allow the definition of effective safeguarding programmes and the achievement of sustainable concrete results.

Challenges and priorities for the region

- Participants indicate the following priorities, challenges and opportunities for future action in the safeguarding of ICH, at both national and regional level:
 - development of effective and sustainable management of cultural tourism;
 - contemporary application of ICH elements;
 - clarification of copyright issues and intellectual rights for the commercialization of traditional productions;
 - reflection on notion of authenticity;
 - involvement of local stakeholders in community-centered safeguarding, through the establishment of continuous cooperation with the communities of bearers;
 - ICH transmission and involvement of young generations;
 - training of national staff and capacity-building for the identification/inventorying of ICH;
 - definition and evaluation of non-formal education programmes and their impact in supporting transmission of ICH elements;
 - development of measures/policies to include ICH in the formal education



Regional cooperation and future common initiatives

- Participants highlight the importance of continuing transnational cooperation and common work on multinational/transnational nomination files; transnational nomination files are proving to be an important tool of cultural diplomacy and intercultural dialogue, both at institutional and community level. In this sense, participants agree that the Sofia Regional Centre could be used in future to facilitate discussions and meetings on the preparation of multinational nomination files.
- Participants agree to share information on funding opportunities and in particular, proposals for EU funding in the field of ICH, as well as application files submitted for funding, to be used as a source of information and inspiration. The Sofia Regional Center agrees to inform on its website of such funding opportunities and share them with the network.
- Participants agree to prepare a joint regional round table, under the auspices of the Belgrade Ethnographic Film Festival 2013 (4-8 October 2013) and the Sofia Regional Center, and in consultation with Croatia and the Forum of Slavic Cultures, in order to discuss a joint regional film production on ICH and crafts. This film should be discussed also in the context of the project "CraftAttract" presented by the Croatian partner. The Belgrade Ethnographic Film Festival (Focal point: Sacha Sreckovic) will be convener of the meeting and send a circular letter to the network before 15 July (including non-Slavic countries of the network, namely Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Turkey), outlining brief description of project, profile of experts needed, dates, agenda of the meeting. The Center agrees to support financially the organization of this round table.
- The ICTMM National Committee and the Ministry of Culture of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are organizing in September 2013 a concert presenting traditional music and dance elements from the region of South East Europe inscribed in the UNESCO Representative List, to mark the 10th anniversary of the 2003 Convention; in this regard, it was proposed that the national training programme to be organized in Skopje by the Sofia Regional Centre, as per the approved Centre's plan of action, may also focus on traditional dance and music and be scheduled in order for its conclusion to coincide with the date of the concert. As a possible follow-up action, the proposal was made to consider a regional cooperation project on the definition of a cultural map of SEE on traditional music and dances.
- Participants propose that an International Day of ICH be proposed by Member States to the UN Secretariat and UNESCO Secretariat of the 2003 Convention.
- The Regional Sofia Center could consider the possibility to create few scholarships granted to young researchers in the field in ICH and its policies



ICH Regional Network: the way forward

- Participants highlight the importance of the present Network for the sharing of knowledge and good practices, the promotion of regional cooperation, institutional awareness-raising and capacity building, and the promotion of collective thinking for the enhancement of ICH safeguarding.
- Accordingly, participants agree to maintain these annual meetings of the network, possibly introducing the following changes:
 - national presentations on the status of implementation of the 2003 convention shall focus on most significant novelties/selected best practices occurred during the previous year;
 - one single thematic topic should be proposed for each meeting, in order to allow for a more in-depth and detailed discussion; the thematic topic for the next annual meeting (2014), to be identified among those proposed during the present meeting, will be “ICH: Youth, transmission and education”;
 - participants should be asked to submit papers related to their presentations, to be collected and made available on internet (possibly through the website of the Sofia Regional Centre) for future consultation.
- Participants stress the need to ensure more continuity in the network’s activity and contacts, and more regular exchanges in between the annual meetings; accordingly, the establishment was proposed of an on-line platform or mailing list, to be possibly created and managed by the Sofia Regional Centre, aimed at sharing information on issues of common interest on a more regular and frequent basis.



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