The “Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe - Enhancing Culture for Sustainable Development” (CoMoCoSEE) gathered on 24–25 February 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. The main purpose of this meeting was to discuss the further enhancement of the regional cooperation in the field of culture and development, with a special focus on supporting the implementation of the “Ohrid Regional Strategy for Cultural Cooperation in South-East Europe”.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey organised the second meeting of this leading regional cooperation platform in the field of culture, since the revision of its format in 2014.

The meeting focused on the “Protection and Sustainable Management of Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe: priorities, challenges and opportunities for reinforcing regional cooperation on culture within the CoMoCoSEE”. Participating delegations shared ideas and proposals to advance their common efforts for the enhancement of cultural heritage as a driver for sustainable development, in the wake of the recent approval of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The programme and working documents of the meeting in Istanbul were the results of the preparatory meeting of the CoMoCoSEE Committee of Officials – organized at the initiative of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey – which took place on 10 December 2015 in Venice, Italy.

The Istanbul meeting approved joint action lines to strengthen regional cooperation, according to the “Ohrid Regional Strategy for Cultural Cooperation in South-East Europe”, also known as the “Ohrid Strategy”, approved by CoMoCoSEE in 2014.

The Strategy indicates priority areas for regional cooperation to enhance culture as a driver for sustainable development, as well as relevant action lines and monitoring mechanisms.

A special focus for discussion in Istanbul was put on the sustainable use of cultural heritage, disaster risk reduction, and the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

Participants included ministers and high representatives of the CoMoCoSEE Member States: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

High representatives of Italy and UNESCO also attended the meeting, as CoMoCoSEE Observers. Mr Mahir Ünal, Minister of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, opened the plenary session, followed with speeches by the Ministers and heads of delegations of the CoMoCoSEE Member States. The Director-General of UNESCO was represented by Francesco Bandarin, Assistant Director-General for Culture a.i., accompanied by Ana Luiza Thompson-Flores, Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe.

### CoMoCoSEE adopted declaration on cultural heritage protection

In harmony with the Ohrid Regional Strategy for Cultural Cooperation in South-East Europe, the Ministers and heads of delegation participating in the CoMoCoSEE meeting reaffirmed their commitment to further enhance regional and bilateral cooperation on culture, creativity and cultural heritage as a driving force for dialogue, good neighbourship and sustainable development for the benefit of all.

In particular, the declaration adopted on 25 February 2016 establishes that the CoMoCoSEE Member States agree to work towards the reinforcement of coordination at all levels between the cultural and other sectorial policies, including tourism, that are relevant to the enhancement and promotion of the role of culture for development.

The overall objective is to create greater synergies and to develop an integrated approach towards the sustainable management and promotion of culture as a driver for inclusive and equitable growth.

The improvement and implementation of statistical tools to assess and monitor the impact of culture for development shall be supported, with the aim of further mainstreaming culture in development programmes, policies and strategies at all levels.

The CoMoCoSEE Member States shall reinforce cooperation and develop a coordinated approach to support the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property, from and through the region, in full compliance with the relevant international standards. The CoMoCoSEE Member States shall step up efforts to make best use of all relevant regional, cross-border and/or transnational EU financing programmes, and avail themselves, whenever possible and appropriate, of cooperation with UNESCO, the CoE and the EU.

As a shared priority for future action, the CoMoCoSEE Member States support the idea of exploring the possibility to develop sub-regional activities on the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property, as well as on the sustainable safeguarding and exploitation of cultural and natural heritage, in cooperation with UNESCO.

>>full story
Climate Change. The Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD) for 2016-2025 was further adopted by the parties at the Barcelona Convention COP19.

Within such a setting, the meeting in Athens called on universities to urgently adjust their culture, curricula and operations and, to propose long-term innovative approaches to very complex issues. Universities need to strengthen their links with society at local, national and global levels. They should play a more active role as promoter of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and agent of change toward Sustainable Development (SD).

A suitable pilot way to meet some challenges could be to effectivly link universities with the function of some UNESCO Designated Sites - specifically World Heritage (WH) sites, Biosphere Reserves (BRs) and Geoparks. Such a relationship could generate “beacons of sustainability” and “education laboratories” offering a ‘win-win’ sustainable interaction model among people, ecosystems and, cultural and natural heritage.

What could universities gain from interacting with nearby Designated Sites’ experiences? And, vice-versa, what could Designated Sites gain from the universities in their region? These and other questions were raised during the meeting. SD and ESD are core issues for universities and they ought to be urgently incorporated in teaching and research. It should be a pervading, shared “cultural approach” that promotes a more responsible behaviour and is seeded in all university operations. The SDGs should be actively embraced by all, regardless of the legal status and the field of work. Rural and urban Designated Sites can provide universities with concrete cases to address many of the vital issues directly related to the efforts for achievement of the 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets, integrated and indivisible. The knowledge, the research, science and technology that universities provide are fundamental to achieve the SDGs.>>

The role of universities in supporting UNESCO designated sites, beacons of sustainability

Greece was host of a debate among 38 experts from 9 countries on the role of universities and UNESCO Designated Sites as incubators of sustainability. Global discussions led to a call for synergy and collaboration to address the complex issues faced by modern society and encapsulated in the Sustainable Development Goals.

The regional meeting co-organised by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, MIO-ECSDE, the Greek National MAB Committee, and the UNITWIN MedUnNet, was hosted on 18-19 January 2016 by the National and Kapodestrian University of Athens.

The intensive workshop was run for a selected number of invited participants – from professors to researchers and administrators, as well as managers from UNESCO Designated Sites that are host of, or are closely related to, universities from Europe and the Mediterranean area.

Universities serve science and the society within which they operate. They generate, distribute and disseminate knowledge, preparing students and providing them with competences and skills to effectively address current issues and future challenges.

The role of universities is essential in the face of the complex multiple problems faced by today’s society, at global and regional levels. The economic crisis, high levels of unemployment - especially among youth – and, war conflicts have resulted in unprecedented refugee and migratory fluxes, and various routes are used to travel across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

At the same time, world leaders pledge common action and endeavour across a broad and universal policy agenda. In 2015, important global agreements were reached for the benefit of all, such as the adoption of new global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD) for 2016-2025 was further adopted by the parties at the Barcelona Convention COP19.

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The Mediterranean Universities Network on SD and ESD (MedUnNet) was launched in Athens in 2008, with the support of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, the University of Athens (UNESCO Chair in Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean) and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE).

The network was created with the aim to promote the integration of SD aspects in university programmes, departments and faculties, in a “whole-institute approach”, addressing not only the needs of academicians and students, but also those of the public administration, the private sector, NGO’s, policy-makers or the media.

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A brand for the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve? Italy, Spain and Germany shared experiences

The international workshop on “Delta Po Biosphere Reserve Brand and Marketing” took place in Porto Viro, Po Delta (Italy), from 20 to 23 June 2016 in the presence of experts from Spain and Germany. The workshop was organized by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, in close cooperation with the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve management team.

In June 2015, the International Coordinating Council of UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) added the Po Delta site to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). The inclusion of the Po Delta is a recognition at the international level of the high value of its environmental assets and socioeconomic dynamics. It provides the local stakeholders with a unique opportunity to promote their territory as a destination of national and international importance, and to strengthen development processes that could assign a brighter future to a territory left aside from the main development stream for too long.

To inscribe such development in a sustainable perspective, local actors will have also to coordinate their efforts and make the best use of their creativity and their socioeconomic dynamics. It provides the local stakeholders with a unique opportunity to promote their territory as a destination of national and international importance, and to strengthen development processes that could assign a brighter future to a territory left aside from the main development stream for too long.

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The 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Lima, Peru (March 2016) confirmed that these territories are one of the most important and efficient tools at hand to promote and disseminate the ideal of sustainability, and to support the Member States towards the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The designation assigned to the Po Delta connects the territory to a network of 669 sites in 120 countries committed to a real-life experimentation of sustainable development approaches in all its forms and dimensions, in all parts of the world. Within the WNBR network, Biosphere Reserves are invited to share their experience and expertise and, to develop cooperative experimentation projects and joint communication efforts. The exchange of experience with Spanish and German partners, promoted within the framework of this workshop, is a good illustration of such networking spirit.

Over 3 days, the institutions involved in the management of the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve and socioeconomic actors in various fields (from agriculture to fisheries, industry, services and tourism) work with external partners to initiate the process leading to the design and launch of a brand for the promotion of their territory and its products. To achieve this, they took inspiration from the experience developed recently in this field by the Biosphere Reserve in Spain “Terres de l’Ebre”, the Spanish MAB National Committee (The Biosphere Reserves Brand in Spain) and the promoter of the Biosphere Reserves Destination initiative. Following brief theoretical and methodological introductions by the invited experts, the workshop proceeded in the form of a laboratory process leading to the design and management of such a brand was be defined, to continue to operate in the coming months and years within the overall framework of the stakeholders’ involvement process recently launched by the Biosphere Reserves coordination team.

The main outcomes of the workshop on “Delta Po Biosphere Reserve Brand and Marketing” were presented to the public during the opening ceremony of the first Eco Design Week – Delta del Po which was held on 23 June 2016 at the Ca’ Vendramin Museum.

The Exhibition ‘Behind Food Sustainability’ was on show at the Eco Design Week until 26 June 2016. > full story

Our participation in shaping a new vision in Lima for a sustainable future of Biosphere Reserves

Peru was host of the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves “A New Vision for the Decade 2016-2025. UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development” in Lima from 14 to 17 March 2016. The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe joined actively this world meeting of the Committees of UNESCO MAB Programme and experts involved in the practical implementation of biosphere reserves.

Organized by the UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB), the Ministry of Environment of Peru (MINAM) and its National Service of Natural Areas Protected by the State (GERNAP), and the MAB National Committee of Peru, this new edition of the World Congress of Biosphere Reserves followed 3 previous meetings held in Minsk (1984), Seville (1995) and Madrid (2008). 317 delegations of countries from all continents gathered in Lima to discuss and agree international strategies for issues related to natural resources. Were present MAB National Committees from around the world and experts directly involved in the practical implementation of Biosphere Reserves (BRs), including: representatives of governments, BRs, local communities, UN agencies, NGOs, academic institutions, and organizations and institutions from all over the world working with the MAB Programme.

The Lima Congress addressed different issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. On the agenda were discussions on the progress and obstacles related to BRs’ issues and the work to develop a new vision for the years to come. The Congress reviewed the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves 2008-2013, the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of 1995. It further looked into the lessons learned and the new challenges faced by the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) consisting of 615 Biosphere Reserves (BRs) in 120 countries, including 15 transboundary sites. In addition to the plenary sessions, the Congress provided sessions and parallel workshops focusing on specific themes. The UNESCO Regional Bureau was involved in the first session dedicated to the MAB Regional Networks - of which EuroMAB, the largest regional MAB Network. In the following two sessions, it moderated workshops centreing on islands and coastal zones and tourism and, likewise intervene in youth engagement, BR brand and communication.

The Congress was significant for MAB communities and partners, especially BRs, and allowed them to examine progress, achievements and challenges since the Seville Strategy (1995) and the Madrid Action Plan (2008). It was an opportunity to train regional committees in the tools to achieve scale, consistency and widespread application across the World Network. The UNESCO Regional Bureau supported the participation of 34 representatives from EuroMAB, the network of BRs of Europe and North America. The representation of 31 countries was supported by UNESCO’s Belgrade, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine. > full story

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My Biosphere, My Future campaign of UNESCO: World Network of Biosphere Reserves aspires for sustainable development through different projects.
Albania: Investigating the inclusion of Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media in university curricula

The training workshop on the use of the UNESCO Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM) in university-level teaching curricula was held in Tirana, Albania on 17-18 March 2016. The event was organized by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, in close collaboration with UN Women in Albania. The training focused on the use of the GSIM in universities, with examples related to the Sustainable Development Goals, the difference between gender equality and women’s empowerment and, other areas of gender equality and women’s empowerment to the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNESCO has accordingly been promoting women’s participation in the media through several initiatives over the years – like for instance the ‘Women Make the News’ initiative held every year on the occasion of the 8 March celebration. The 2016 theme for International Women’s Day is “Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality”. The theme considers how to accelerate the 2030 Agenda, building momentum for the effective implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals, especially goal number five – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls - and number 4 – Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.

The Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM), a global framework to gauge gender sensitivity and promote greater diversity in the media, represents another UNESCO initiative in this context. While the GSIM are fairly comprehensive, they are not intended to be exhaustive or definitive. The indicators can be modified, if necessary, to suit specific contexts. They are meant to be used by media organisations, media workers’ unions, professional associations and self-regulatory bodies to internally assess their own operations and practices, set goals, monitor progress and conduct training in order to achieve the professionally sound goals of social inclusivity and diversity among media personnel, as well as in media content.

The UNESCO Regional Bureau, together with UN Women and other partners in Albania, facilitated a two-day training workshop in Tirana in March to familiarise a wide range of stakeholders in the media, academia and civil society with the Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media. The GSIM handbook already translated into Albanian was used. The workshop’s primary purpose was to examine how the GSIM can be incorporated into the curricula of institutions of higher learning offering media/journalism education and training in Albania, as well as the editorial and human resources practices of media houses in the country – in both the public as well as the private sector. The workshop facilitated an initiation of the process of reviewing and refining the media-related indicators included in the National Harmonized Indicators on Gender Equality and the Status of Women in Albania introduced in 2011 by the Albanian Ministry of Social Welfare with the support of UN Women.

The workshop was attended by media scholars/educators/trainers, senior media professionals and managers, members of civil society engaged in media/freedom of expression and/ or gender/women’s rights issues, and any others with a special interest in promoting gender equality and balance in the media.


Biosphere Reserves of the Volga river basin area. Map and Brochure released

The publication and map were supported by UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, the noncommercial partnership Biosphere Reserves of Eurasia, the National Committee of Russia for the MAB Programme, and the biosphere reserves of the Volga basin area.

The brochure “Biosphere Reserves of the Volga river basin area” describes the Volga basin area and sustainable development efforts conducted by its 13 biosphere reserves included in the UNESCO’s World Network.

UNESCO’s biosphere reserves are specially governed territories that aim to address one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century: preservation of the diversity of plans, animals, and microorganisms, which constitute biosphere and are responsible for maintaining the balanced state of natural ecosystems. This must be accomplished while meeting the needs and wants of growing number of people in the world.

The map and brochure were presented at the regional meeting on “The role of Biosphere Reserves in large river basins and sustainable development within a local, regional and international context: the case of the Volga river basin and the opportunities for the Po river basin” held from 21 to 24 September 2015. The event was organized by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe in cooperation with the Non-profit Partnership for Euro-Asian BRs (Russia) and the Po Delta BR Authority (Italy).

Participants included representatives of 13 BRs from the Volga river basin, the Italian and Russian MAB Committees, 4 BRs in Po river basin, UNESCO, other UN agencies that have supported projects in the Volga river basin or delta territory, the Living Volga Partnership Programme, local authorities - the Po Water Authority and the Po Delta Land Reclaiming Authority - and 3 other deltaic BRs from France, Romania and Spain.

The Volga River basin is the largest river of the European part of Russia and one of the most important rivers in the world in terms of resources and natural value. The Volga river basin area describes the Volga river basin and the territories of the region it passes through, the Volga delta and its deltaic BRs. The Volga river basin area is a part of the Volga-Don-Western Black Sea river basin, which is located in the land of the European part of Russia and in the republics of the Central Asia region and Turkey. The Volga river basin area is one of the most important river basins of Eurasia with a river basin area of 1.3 million km².

The map and brochure were released by the Albanian Ministry of Social Welfare in 2016. The map and brochure were released to the public and distributed to various stakeholders in the media, academia and civil society to raise awareness about the importance of biosphere reserves.

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To know that culture impacts sustainable development is one thing, to know how it does it is the role of the UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS). This pioneering advocacy and policy tool, that establishes a common ground for culture and development actors to better integrate culture in development policies and strategies, is being applied in South-East Europe. Its implementation is ongoing in 5 countries and partial results and lessons learnt have been shared to extend activities to other countries in the region.

On 20 April 2016, in Belgrade, the Ministry of Culture and Media of Serbia hosted the regional meeting on “The implementation of Culture for Development Indicators in South-East Europe: results, lessons learnt, recommendations”. The event was organized in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe. Besides taking stock of the progress made in the implementation process in the concerned countries, the meeting served to present and assess challenges encountered, threats and opportunities for improvement as well as a monitoring framework based on the Implementation Toolkit provided by UNESCO.

During its pilot implementation phase at global level from 2011 to 2014, the CDIS involved over 24 national level workshops to discuss and validate results, bringing together a large number of stakeholders from ministries, national statistics institutes, academics, development agencies and civil society. The pilot phase included Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following that experience, since 2015, the UNESCO Regional Bureau is supporting the implementation of the CDIS in other countries in South-East Europe, starting with Montenegro, Croatia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, and Albania.

The CDIS process in Montenegro started in February 2015 following data collection and the construction of indicators, a final workshop took place on 15 April 2015 to present the preliminary results. The analysis and validation of the indicators and the finalization of the report are completed, and the final presentation is to take place in the course of May 2016. The country team in Croatia began data collection and the construction of indicators in late April 2015. The validation of indicators is ongoing. A final workshop to present Croatia’s results is planned for the summer of 2016. The implementation of the CDIS methodology in the Republic of Moldova was officially launched on 8 June 2015 in Chișinău. The construction of the CDIS indicators is well under way. CDIS activities were launched in Serbia (June 2015) and Albania (December 2015), with works in progress.

In 2016, other countries of the region are expected to implement the CDIS. Thanks to these joint efforts, South-East Europe is the sub-region at global level in which the implementation of the CDIS methodology is most advanced, providing an unprecedented opportunity to compare data, results, and sectoral policy at a sub-regional and European level.

Under the coordination of the UNESCO Regional Bureau, the meeting in Belgrade allowed to share as well as confront experiences and practices with partial results in the 7 key CDIS policy dimensions: Economy; Education; Governance; Social participation; Gender equality; Communication; and, Heritage.

Recommendations for future action at policy level were provided on the basis of the outputs collected so far. The meeting set the stage for a reinforcement of the international cooperation on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, at sub-regional level and vis-à-vis the broader European framework. Officials participated in representation of the ministries of culture and relevant authorities of the Member States of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe - Enhancing Culture for Sustainable Development (CoMoCoSEE), namely: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. International experts and UNESCO representatives also took part in the meeting.  

UNESCO Regional Bureau’s recognition at CIAK JUNIOR film festival went to Israel: It’s Not Me!

Nine short films from seven countries were in competition at the 27th edition of CIAK JUNIOR International Film Festival held in Cortina d’Ampezzo, Italy, from 27-28 May 2016. Over the years, the festival has reached thousands of children from around the world contributing to a culture of peace and sustainable development. This year, the winner of UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe’s special recognition was the short film presented by teens from Israel, “It’s Not Me”.

Over more than two decades, the UNESCO Regional Bureau has been a supporter of the CIAK JUNIOR festival, along with television partners from 25 countries around the world. For UNESCO, young people are essential actors in finding solutions to the issues faced by the world today and its Youth Programme, in particular, works to create an enabling environment in which this goal can be achieved, by bringing youth voices to the fore and encouraging young people to come together to take action.

On 27 May, the UNESCO Regional Bureau joined the members of the International Jury to review the films competing in this year’s festival. China with ‘The Steps’ won the award for Best Film and Israel “It’s Not Me” the award for Best Subject, as well as a special recognition assigned by the Bureau to the film which best expressed the mission and mandate of the Organization.

The story of “It’s Not Me” (original title ‘Telephone Shavur’), produced by Lahav NPO - Children’s channel, tackles the principle of moral responsibility and accountability, condemning discrimination and dishonesty. The film’s message reflects the need for tolerance and mutual respect, the basic values of a more equitable and peaceful society, to which UNESCO is committed by all means. “Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty, it is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace.” (UNESCO Constitution 1955)

With this recognition, the UNESCO Regional Bureau highlighted the potential of creativity and cultural diversity in line with the key principles set forth by the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005).

In today’s interconnected world, culture’s power to transform societies is clear and its diverse manifestations - from our historic monuments to traditional practices and contemporary art forms - enrich our everyday lives in countless ways. Creativity contributes to building open, inclusive and pluralistic societies where tolerance and dialogue underlie human relationships.
South-East European countries share insights to enhance the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Island of Brac in Croatia hosted the Annual Meeting of the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage on 14-15 June 2016, entitled “Intangible Cultural Heritage and World Heritage: synergies and coordination between the UNESCO 2003 and 1972 Conventions”.

This tenth meeting was jointly organised by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, the Ministry of Culture of Croatia, and the Croatian Commission for UNESCO, with the support of the Sofia Regional Center for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO (Bulgaria). The promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage stands high among the political priorities of South-East Europe in the field of culture. All countries from the region have ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention and are stepping up efforts to safeguard their intangible cultural heritage.

In order to support the Convention’s implementation in the region, the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage was established in 2007 and it represents the main regional forum for the exchange of knowledge and experiences on this topic.

Previous annual meetings of the Network were held in: Bulgaria (2007), Turkey (2008), Croatia (2009), Romania (2010), Serbia (2011), Greece (2012), Bulgaria (2013); Cyprus (2014) and Italy (2015). These meetings contribute to enhance a common understanding of opportunities and challenges linked to the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage as a key asset of cultural heritage and diversity, as well as to develop institutional and professional capacities within the relevant national authorities.

This year’s meeting was composed of two sessions, devoted respectively to “Implementing the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage: progress, experiences and challenges” and “The UNESCO 1972 and 2003 Conventions: convergences and coordination”.

During the first session, participants presented the main developments, achievements and challenges in implementing the 2003 Convention in their respective countries, with special focus on the period 2015-2016. Presentations included information on legal and regulatory frameworks, general policies, cooperation mechanisms, institutions, networks, as well as on specific safeguarding and awareness-raising activities.

The second session included presentations on respective experiences in linking the UNESCO 1972 and 2003 Conventions, both at local and country levels, which was followed by a round table discussion on the potential complementary role of the two instruments, as well as on the challenges and opportunities related to their synergic action and integrated implementation.

The meeting was attended by experts in representation of the ministries of culture of Albania; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Cyprus; Greece; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Serbia; Slovenia; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and, Turkey. Representatives of Austria, Hungary, Italy, and the United Arab Emirates also participated as observers, as well as international experts and UNESCO Staff. As part of the meeting’s conclusions, participants accepted the proposal by Bosnia and Herzegovina to host the next session of the Network, in 2017, with a special focus on resource mobilization, fund-raising and partnerships for ICH safeguarding.

Second phase of the project: Towards the Great Galleries of the Accademia

On 29 January 2016, the Palladian wing of the Gallerie dell’Accademia in Venice was reopened to the public, following the completion of the second phase of the project for the refurbishment of the ground floor of the museum. Nine additional rooms were inaugurated at that occasion displaying major works of art, recently restored, thanks to a joint contribution by two private committees, the Venice International Foundation – Friends of Venice Italy and the Venice in Peril Fund, though the UNESCO-International Private Committees Programme for the Safeguarding of Venice.

The refurbishment of the Palladian wing was carried out on the basis of a project prepared by renowned architect and designer, Tobia Scarpa, under the direct supervision and coordination of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism. The new layout begins with a room devoted to artists such as Sebastiano Ricci and Jacopo Amigoni, Rosalba Carriera, the most famous Venetian female artist, Canaletto, Bellotto and Guardi. The paintings underwent conservation works and are presented within wooden frames restored for this specific purpose.

The following rooms retrace the origin of the galleries that started in these rooms since 1808. Among the paintings displayed therein are the Prospect with portico by Canaletto and the Annunciation by Giambattista Pittoni. A large focus has been given to the works of Antonio Canova. His sketches and plaster casts on show were either donated directly by the artist or purchased at the instigation of Leopold Cigognara, President of the Accademia at that time, as selected works to become an object of study for the sculpture class.

To Canova’s works is also reserved the gallery overlooking the courtyard and the famous Tablino, masterpiece by Palladio. One of the rooms contains the cattedra (chair and desk) of Leopold Cigognara, restored at that occasion, and some of the most famous plaster casts by Canova. To another great pupil of the Accademia, Francesco Hayez, has been dedicated an entire room.

The layout of the project, led by Tobia Scarpa, guarantees a formal continuity in the context of the important overall refurbishment of the Great Galleries of the Academy. The project, included in the UNESCO-International Private Committees Programme for the Safeguarding of Venice since 2014, was initiated with the refurbishment of five rooms on the ground floor funded by the Venetian Heritage Foundation.
Towards strengthened governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region

The Fifth Management Planning Workshop, in the framework of the project "Towards strengthened governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region" took place in Udënisht, Pogradec area, Albania, on 22 and 23 June 2016.

The Lake Ohrid region is home to one of the world’s oldest lakes and is one of the most unique sources of biodiversity in Europe. The convergence of distinctive natural values with the quality and diversity of its cultural, material and spiritual heritage makes this region truly unique.

Two-thirds of Lake Ohrid is located in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and is listed on the World Heritage List as the property "Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region". The integrity of this World Heritage property would be significantly reinforced by extending it to the remaining one-third of Lake Ohrid located in Albania.

The workshop focused on governance systems and more specifically on the identification of mechanisms for the involvement and coordination of various activities between different partners and stakeholders. Additionally, the workshop aims to identify priority themes, targets and actions concerning sustainable development options in the Lake Ohrid region in Albania.

This European Union funded project "Towards strengthened governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region" aims to improve transboundary cooperation and management effectiveness for the protection of the natural and cultural heritage in the Lake Ohrid region. The project is coordinated by the World Heritage Centre in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe - Sarajevo in partnership with the authorities of both countries, as well as the three Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (ICOMOS International, IUCN and ICCROM), and is financed by the European Union with the co-financing of the government of Albania.

Last of a series of five, this Fifth Management Planning Workshop will be the opportunity to review the outcomes of the Fourth Management Planning Workshop (12-13 May 2016, Tushemisht) along with the conclusions of the Third meeting of the Technical Working Group (19 May 2016, Tirana). These Management Planning Workshops have greatly contributed to the capacity building of the project "Towards strengthened governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region".

Funded by the European Union and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Albania, the project is going towards its final year of implementation.
In the aftermath of the devastating floods of 2014, France, Slovenia and the European Union convened a Donors’ Conference to mobilise further support to Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a mark of solidarity, France donated 1 million euro to support the reconstruction of 3 cultural institutions in Doboj, Maglaj and Bosanski Šamac. The project is a rebuilding challenge and an opportunity to contribute to the full recovery and wellbeing of the population heavily affected by the floods through the re-establishment of essential cultural public services.

In 2014, the worst floods in living memory of the Balkans affected an estimated one million people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a fourth of the population. The devastation was colossal in a country still recovering from consequences of the war. 81 municipalities were reported to have suffered substantial damages, losses, social or environmental impacts of different degrees; and, hundreds of thousands of households, many of whom, mostly vulnerable groups, displaced and without proper shelter.

As part of the Government-led Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) exercise - conducted at the request of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the support of the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank -, UNESCO undertook an evaluation of the damage and reconstruction needs in the municipalities most affected by the floods. Key cultural infrastructures in the 3 municipalities were identified as exceptionally needful of intervention, having in mind that the continuous interruption of cultural and educational services severely impacted on the population, especially in terms of human development.

UNESCO responded to this emergency recovery need with the project on “Revitalisation of cultural institutions and services in flood affected municipalities Doboj, Maglaj and Bosanski Šamac”. The project implemented by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe and its Antenna Office in Sarajevo has received the generous financial assistance of 1 million euro from France. Of chief importance for the project is the involvement of the local authorities and the inhabitants - especially schoolchildren and young people.

Access to culture and the ability to practice one’s culture are essential components of human rights; they likewise contribute significantly to the psychological healing of post-disaster traumas and the strengthening of the social cohesion and resilience of the affected communities. Taking into account the social dimension of the recovery and the undeniable power of culture, the expected outcomes of the project are that of bringing stability and, in the long term, helping build up a stronger cultural sector that can lay the foundation for lasting peace and economic recovery.

The project of a duration of 24 months was initiated in April 2015 with coordinated efforts to rehabilitate the people’s library of Doboj (Narodna Biblioteka in Doboj), the Cultural Centres in Maglaj and Bosanski Šamac. These institutions serve the local population by giving access to a broad range of cultural resources and facilitating the practice of cultural expressions and culture dialogue: traditional crafts, music, costumes, dance, concerts, poetry readings and book presentations.

Their rehabilitation was a vital component of the sustainability and development of those communities affected by the floods, that, over the decades have seen a large demographic population shift as many departed the region. The 3 cultural institutions were inaugurated in May.

Within the framework of such constructive cooperation, the Institut français of Bosnia and Herzegovina in partnership with UNESCO and the French Embassy in Sarajevo convened on 3-5 February 2016 an encounter entitled “Deconstruction/Reconstruction: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Laboratory of Europe”. The event aimed to reinforce capacity building for the cultural and creative sector and it allowed for an exchange of know-how and experiences around the question: “How does culture foster intercultural dialogue?”. Bearing in mind the link between European integration and reconstruction, Sarajevo was illustrated as a laboratory city in Europe with its cultural diversity and its post-conflict situation. The encounter comprised a series of lectures, workshops and round tables to speak about deconstruction/reconstruction of European territories and to challenge participants to express concepts and ideas. A thematic in-the-field day “Reconstruction beyond rebuilding”, with visits to Maglaj and Doboj, closed the event.

Dialogue for the Future. Programme of building bridges to the region

The Third Conference of the Dialogue for the Future Platform ended with a clear message: namely, that this project has good prospects to continue as an initiative bringing regional youth together. It was concluded that “In a world tainted with hate, programmes like this can build bridges”. The conference was held in Sarajevo on 27 June 2016, gathering over 130 participants.

Culture, education and youth issues where the focus of the third and final conference of the Dialogue for the Future Platform, implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO, in partnership with the United Nations and the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These topics, just as in the previous two conferences, were discussed among decision-makers and civil society representatives.

As a part of the final activities of the Project, 40 applications were submitted for a competition Differences Inspire. The conference was an opportunity to awarded recognition for social engagement - Differences Inspire, aimed to dedicate attention and acknowledge the importance of “anonymous leaders” for a better future, to individuals or organisations promoting the culture of dialogue and inspiring others to get involved in creating a better atmosphere, environment and life for all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
Cheap-GSHPs project: UNESCO undertook a mission to the Bodani Monastery in Serbia

On 6-8 April 2016, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe undertook a mission to Serbia to get a first-hand contact with the management community of the Bodani Monastery, selected as a virtual case study of the Cheap-GSHPs project. The mission, organized in coordination with the Provincial Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Vojvodina, aimed at coordinating efforts to accomplish the normative, structural and hydrogeological data as required by the project work plan.

The Cheap-GSHPs project addresses the feasibility and cost of installing and operating efficiently shallow geothermal systems, within a 25% to 30% range, aiming at curbing CO2 emissions accordingly. It also deploys novel heat pumps for higher CO2 emissions accordingly. It contributes to demonstrating and carefully overseeing the compatibility of the proposed innovative geothermal power systems with the conservation of monuments and to enhancing the capacity of management authorities through dedicated trainings.

Besides other real and virtual case studies, UNESCO is responsible for the virtual case study of the Bodani Monastery in Serbia. During the mission, UNESCO met the local religious community to introduce and advance the activities foreseen by the Cheap-GSHPs project. The priests are in charge of the maintenance and custodianship of the orthodox monastery located in the Bačka region, in the northern autonomous Serbian province of Vojvodina. The monastery is at a short distance from the village of Bodani, in the Bač municipality. Declared nationally ‘Monument of Culture of Exceptional Importance’ in 1990, the Bodani Monastery is protected under the law of Serbia. The monastery and the surrounding area are also part of the transitional zone of the Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve.

UNESCO’s role in the project is relevant to its interdisciplinary activities aimed at combining geothermal innovative solutions with the conservation of cultural heritage and at mainstreaming sustainable development climate-friendly solutions in the management of specific dedicated sites of high symbolic and demonstrative value, such as the Bodani Monastery. Energy management in historical assets, including listed building, can contribute to dealing with the challenge of CO2 reduction and to increasing the educational impact, which are the objectives of UNESCO within the Cheap-GSHPs project, in line with the UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change.

UNESCO, through its Regional Bureau, joined a consortium of partners coordinated by the Italian National Research Council (CNR-ISAC) for the project “Cheap and Efficient Application of reliable Ground Source Heat exchangers and Pumps” (Cheap-GSHPs).

Ark of Inquiry: success of inquiry-based science education in the classroom outlined in pilot phase report

The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe conducted the pilot phase of the Ark of Inquiry project in Italy from September 2015 to February 2016. The project reached 629 youth in 38 high school classes with 19 engaging inquiry-based science activities, surpassing the project’s initial goal of reaching 420 pupils.

Teachers reported positive experiences using the online platform, and noted that their pupils’ curiosity in science was peaked through the implementation of the activities. Key next steps for the project’s expansion across Europe in September 2016 are outlined in the report. The pilot phase was completed in high schools in the Veneto region gained success overall. Participating teachers recounted high levels of pupil engagement with the inquiry activities available on the online platform. One teacher in particular revealed that pupils showed interest and enthusiasm throughout the inquiry learning process, and that the activities gave “greater independence” during learning time. Another teacher commented that the activities were catered towards pupils aged 13 to 16 (31 out of the 38 total implemented activities).

“Ark of Inquiry: Inquiry Awards for Youth over Europe” is a research and development project on teacher training, oriented towards raising science awareness, particularly that of youth aged 7 to 18, to Responsible Research and Innovation (RR). Funded by the European Commission and involving 13 project partners from 12 countries, the project started in 2014 and has a duration of 4 years.

“Making connections to Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) practices allows pupils to think about science topics beyond the context of the science classroom”.

At the end of the pilot phase survey and during face-to-face meetings, participating teachers commented that the inquiry activities allowed pupils to apply their scientific knowledge to problems facing the world today. They all agreed that the development of these skills is essential for pupils’ success in higher education settings and in their daily lives.

The Cheap-GSHPs project is funded by the European Union in the framework of “Horizon 2020”, call LCE-03-2014, under the technology-specific challenges in demonstrating of renewable electricity and heating/cooling technologies. The lifetime of the project is 4 years, up to June 2019.

The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe is part of the UNESCO Action on Climate Change (UNESCO-ACC), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, with the project line of “Climate change education, awareness and outreach” (UNESCO-ACC). UNESCO’s role in the project is to coordinate efforts and to enhancing the management authorities through dedicated trainings.

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I-REACT Kick off: Social Media, smartphones and wearables to better manage natural disasters

I-REACT, the EU-H2020 funded project on Improving Resilience to Emergencies through Advanced Cyber Technologies, officially started on 9 June 2016. The Istituto Superiore Mario Boella, Turin, coordinator of the project, hosted the kick-off meeting.

UNESCO, through its Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe in close cooperation with the Earth Sciences and Geo-hazards Risk Reduction of the UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector, is one of the 20 consortium partners, that will gather in Turin, Italy, to establish common ground of understanding, values and targets to conduct the project, its implementation and strategic plan. Society as a whole is increasingly exposed and vulnerable to natural disasters because extreme weather events, exacerbated by climate change, are becoming more frequent and impacting. I-REACT is a project over 6.5 million euro that has received funding under the “innovation action” scheme of the European Commission with the aim to create a real time prevention and management system for natural disasters. I-REACT is a project over 6.5 million euro that has received funding under the “innovation action” scheme of the European Commission with the aim to create a real time prevention and management system for natural disasters. I-REACT is the proposed system to increase the resilience of European citizens and assets to natural disaster. I-REACT will help prevent and manage emergency situations. Emergency responses will be more coordinated, costs will be reduced and citizens will be actively involved.

By 2018, I-REACT will implement a platform that, thanks to advanced technologies, will gather and analyse various data sources to generate real-time information on floods, fires, earthquakes and other natural hazards. The interoperability with Copernicus Emergency Management Service (EMS), the liaison with the United Nations and its International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) will further enhance the expected outputs.

I-REACT is built on the outcomes of the EU project FLOODIS (Integrating GMES Emergency Services with satellite navigation and communication for establishing a flood information service), a collaborative European Community project, led by ISMB in Turin with the participation of UNESCO, and funded under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7-SPACE-2013-1), ran from 2013 to 2015.

Floods are rising in Albania, requiring a more efficient and effective coordination between civil protection authorities and the entities in charge of weather forecasting and environmental monitoring with the inclusion of professional volunteers and skilled users from the local communities and required external expertise to enhance safety of persons and property.

This is the challenge that prompted Albania to join the EU-funded FLOODIS project to test the area of Shkodra with success in June 2015. The project FLOODIS (Integrating GMES Emergency Services with satellite navigation and communication for establishing a flood information service), a collaborative European Community project funded under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7-SPACE-2013-1), ran from 2013 to 2015 under the leadership of ISMB in Turin with the participation of UNESCO through its Regional Bureau.

Aiming at supporting the implementation of the EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC in Albania, FLOODIS intends to support the development of policies and provide technical assistance necessary to strengthen early warning and flood monitoring systems promoting the national framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The project, implemented with UNESCO as a partner, was developed to provide disaster alert and information system leveraging on existing space and mobile communication assets for emergency response teams and affected citizens.

Following the optimal results achieved in the testing phase of the FLOODIS application, a second phase begun in order to operationalise its real time reporting function, being a highly valued service according to the Civil Protection authority in Albania, within the DEWETRA platform. The DEWETRA platform is a real-time integrated system for hydro-meteorological and environmental monitoring with the up-to-date, reliable risk scenarios. The objective of this on-going technical and scientific cooperation supported by UNESCO is to provide an additional and effective communication flow between the Operational centres of the Civil Protection and its field agents while monitoring and reporting on targeted flood related, hazardous events at a national scale within the country.

FLOODIS application, in particular the real-time reporting module, may considerably decrease the general...
The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the Ocean and Climate Platform emphasized the ocean’s crucial role in relation to sustainable development and climate on World Oceans Day, celebrated every year on 8 June. The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe gave support to the promoting of the celebration.

In a round table debate entitled “Moving from Agreement to Action” at UNESCO Headquarters, policy makers, experts, private sector representatives, and nongovernmental organizations took stock of threats to the ocean, including acidification, rising water temperatures and coral bleaching and highlighted the need for urgent action.

“The state of our planet depends on the state of the ocean,” declared UNESCO Deputy Director-General Getachew Engida, speaking on behalf of Director-General Irina Bokova.

“I said before calling on the international community to proclaim a UN Decade for the Ocean and the Planet. UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the Ocean and Climate Platform spearheaded a strong mobilization, which helped include the Ocean in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in December last year. They were also behind the decision of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to issue a report, in April 2016, on the Ocean. Six months ahead of the next climate conference, COP22, World Oceans Day was an opportunity to proclaim that the time has come to put into practice the commitments expressed by the signatories of the Paris Agreement. The Ocean and Climate Platform and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission will organize the 2nd Ocean and Climate Forum at the COP22 next November.

“The oceans is a source of vital human health. The ocean makes our seas and oceans. Sea Change will design and implement mobilisation activities focused on education, community, governance actors and directly targeted at citizens. These actions will be assessed for their effectiveness which, in turn, will allow the project to improve its techniques and spread a “Sea Change” in behaviour across Europe. The Sea Change objectives will be achieved by a closely interlinked programme that will include engaging with schools, citizens, decision makers and industry representatives with the idea that we ALL share one ocean and that this ocean is fragile.
**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### 2016

#### January
- The role of Universities in Supporting UNESCO Designated Sites as Drivers for Sustainable Development at Local and Regional Levels Athens, Greece. 18-19 January 2016
- Ark of Inquiry: 4th consortium meeting Amsterdam, The Netherlands. 24-27 January 2016

#### February
- Construction - Destruction Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. 3-5 February 2016
- 2nd dialogue Platform Conference - Dialogue for future project Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. 8 February 2016
- 2nd Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe - Enhancing Culture for Sustainable Development Istanbul, Turkey. 24-25 February 2016

#### March
- 3rd Transboundary Platform Meeting for the safeguarding of the Lake Ohrid region Pogradec, Albania. 7 March 2016
- 4th World Congress on Biosphere Reserves Lima, Peru. 14-17 March 2016
- Workshop on using the Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media in university curricula side event on Women in Science in the Media Tirana, Albania. 17-18 March 2016

#### April
- Mission to Bodani Monastery “Cheap and Efficient APplication of reliable Ground Source Heat exchangers and Pumps5” (Cheap-GSHPs) Bodani, Serbia. 6-8 April 2016
- Visit of H.E. Mr. Stanley Mutumba Simatata, President of UNESCO General Conference to the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe Venice, Italy. 9-12 April 2016
- Mission to History Museum of Sarajevo “Cheap and Efficient APplication of reliable Ground Source Heat exchangers and Pumps5” (Cheap-GSHPs) Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. 18-20 April 2016
- General Assembly of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe Sofia, Bulgaria. 19 April 2016
- Regional Meeting of the SEE Experts Network on the Implementation of CDS in South-East Europe Belgrade, Serbia. 20 April 2016
- Blue helmets -Delivery of diplomas Rome, Italy. 29 April 2016

#### May
- Training course on “Promoting nature, culture and World Heritage in the Lake Ohrid region” Pogradec and Tushemisht, Albania. 10-11 May 2016
- Fourth Management Planning Workshop of the Lake Ohrid region Tushemisht, Albania. 12-13 May 2016
- Conference “The Local Landscape Observatory for the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve” Porto Viro, Po Delta. 13 May 2016
- Inauguration Peoples Library in Doboj and Cultural Centre in Bosanski Samac Doboj and Samac, Bosnia and Herzegovina. 16 May 2016
- CIAM Junior International Film Festival – XXVII edition Cortina D’Ampezzo, Italy. 27-28 May 2016

#### June
- Sixth Meeting of the Parties to the FASRB Zagreb, Croatia. 1 June 2016
- Ark of Inquiry: Mid-term Review Brussels, Belgium. 7-8 June 2016
- Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference Batumi, Georgia. 8-10 June 2016
- Kick-off Meeting of the European Project I-REACT (Improving Resilience to Emergencies through Advanced Cyber Technologies) Turin, Italy. 9-10 June 2016
- 10th Annual meeting of the Regional Network of Experts on Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe Brac, Croatia. 13-15 June 2016
- Consultations meetings for the rollout of FLOODIS II in Albania Tirana, Albania. 15-17 June 2016
- High-Level Forum on Implementing Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction at Local Level Florence, Italy. 16-17 June 2016
- Meeting on Delta Po Biosphere Reserve brand and marketing Porto Viro, Italy. 20-23 June 2016
- Training programme “Building a strategy and writing projects for EU: Conception of common projects for the valorization of cultural heritage in BIH” Doboj, Bosnia and Herzegovina. 21-22 June 2016
- Fifth Management Planning Workshop of the Lake Ohrid region Udenisht, Pogradec area, Albania. 22-23 June 2016
- Exhibition ‘Behind Food Sustainability at Eco Design Week: Delta del Po Porto Levante, Porto Viro, Taglio di Po, Scardovari, Pila, Italy. 23-26 June 2016

First Annual Review “Cheap and Efficient APplication of reliable Ground Source Heat exchangers and Pumps5” (Cheap-GSHPs) Dublin, Ireland. 30 May - 1 June 2016

#### July
- 40th session of the World Heritage Committee Committee Istanbul, Turkey. 10-20 July 2016
- Sea Change Project: Launch of Campaign Europe. 18 July 2016
- Summer University of Samothraki 2016: Integrated Management Approaches for Biosphere Reserves and other Designated Areas Samothrace, Greece. 9-22 July 2016

#### August
- Biosphere Reserves branding through high quality food products and gastronomy Langhirano, Appennino Tosco-Emiliano Biosphere Reserve, Italy. 30 August - 1 September 2016

#### October
- Sub-regional Workshop Managing Disaster Risks in UNESCO Designated Sites Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. 10-13 October 2016
- 40th session of the World Heritage Committee UNESCO Headquarters. 24-26 October 2016

#### November
- Workshop and study-tour for Bosnia and Herzegovina on the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property Rome, Italy. 21-25 November 2016

#### December
- Workshop on managing urban heritage and fostering creativity in UNESCO designated sites Turin, Italy. 1-6 December 2016
On 11 and 12 April 2016, during his visit to Venice, Italy, H.E. Mr Stanley Mutumba Simataa, President of the General Conference of UNESCO, met Ana Luiza Thompson Flores, Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau in Venice and her team to examine the mandate and activities of the Bureau as well as its unique governance system, which relates to the annual contribution of Italy to the programme activities of the Bureau.

The President acknowledged the diversity of activities led by the Bureau, in Europe and particularly South-East Europe, as well as in Central Asia with regards to the UN interagency coordination mechanism and processes, in cooperation with the concerned UNESCO Offices, in the field of the Natural Sciences and Culture. The President was also presented with both the opportunities and challenges related to the governance of the Bureau, which relies, in addition to the Medium-Term Strategy and the Programme and Budget of UNESCO, on the role of the Bureau’s Steering Committee and Scientific Council as regards the planning, implementation and monitoring phases of the Italian contribution work plan.

“At a time when the UNESCO Governing Bodies are discussing key structural issues of the Organization, such as its governance architecture, it is important to recall that effective results delivery at country level is essential and that the UNESCO Field Offices are a key component in this regard”, stated the President of the General Conference. The Director thanked the President for his visit as it is the first time that a President of the General Conference visited the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe.

Presentations delivered by the Director, the Head of the Bureau’s Antenna in Sarajevo and the Programme Specialists for Natural Sciences and Culture provided a detailed overview of the strategic position of the Bureau, notably taking into account its role in supporting the implementation of the regional cooperation strategy of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe, among others. The President also congratulated the team for its pro-active fund-raising efforts, which are indeed key in programme delivery.

On the occasion of his mission, the President benefited from the courtesy visit of Mr Umberto Marcello del Majno, Chairperson of the Association of International Private Committees for the Safeguarding of Venice, who, together with the Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau, renewed the commitment of both institutions to pursue effective relations in view of the safeguarding and promotion of the cultural heritage of the City of Venice.