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Bosnia and Herzegovina



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

11th Annual Meeting of the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage

***“Funding the Safeguarding of Intangible
Cultural Heritage”***

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 27-28 June 2017

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We, the participants in the 11th annual meeting of the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage (Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 27-28 June 2017), henceforth “the Network”, wish to thank the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the National Commission for UNESCO of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe; and the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe under the auspices of UNESCO (Sofia, Bulgaria) for the organization of this meeting.

Our special appreciation goes to the authorities at all levels and to the colleagues from Bosnia and Herzegovina for the warm hospitality in the beautiful cities of Sarajevo and Mostar.

During the meeting, issues of common concern emerged and recommendations for future action were made, which are summarised herewith according to the following list of contents:

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1. Common issues and priorities for future action

- ICH has often a special relationship with the environment(s) in which it is expressed. Accordingly, participants remarked the importance for ICH safeguarding to consider risks and opportunities related to the link between specific ICH elements, built heritage and the natural environment whenever relevant.
- Along the same line, participants highlighted the need to better integrate ICH into other policy areas, with the double objective to reinforce the sustainability of ICH safeguarding efforts, and to unlock ICH potential in terms of contributing to sustainable development. Such policy areas may include education, health, agriculture, social protection, creative industries, climate change and environmental protection, emergency preparedness and response, as well as any other area as relevant for the specific ICH elements and their context.
- Consequently, ICH shall be duly considered and integrated within development policies, plans and programmes at all administrative levels. This requires to reinforce awareness, training and capacity-building with regard to ICH bearers, experts and authorities on one side, and other relevant stakeholders on the other (such as development policy and decision makers), in order to better understand and foster ICH contribution to Sustainable Development Goals.

- The relevance of ICH with regard to several policy areas, coupled with the plurality of concerned stakeholders, entails the need to define appropriate governance frameworks as a necessary condition for the sustainability of ICH safeguarding. In this regard, this Network may contribute to the identification and sharing of good practices, drawing on the experiences that are being developed in some of the participating countries.
- Participants stressed the important contribution of ICH experts in order to support the above-mentioned processes. At the same time, it was agreed that the expert's role should be to accompany communities and facilitate their action, rather than to set the agenda, in agreement with the spirit of the 2003 Convention.
- The meeting confirmed the importance of ICH in terms of cross-border, regional and international cooperation. In this regard, the countries in South-East Europe has developed a considerable experience in terms of identifying shared heritage, preparing multinational nomination files for inscription in the ICH Representative List, and other cooperation initiatives on ICH that ought to be further supported, analysed and disseminated.
- As regards funding and sustainability of ICH safeguarding, the workshop showed that most countries in the region have already set up or are establishing funding mechanisms drawing on State budgets. In some countries, additional funding from regional and local authorities complements such mechanisms. On the other hand, participants remarked the need to explore and tap other funding opportunities, in order to reduce the dependency on public budgets, increase the available resources, and engage new partners; these may include the creation of conditions for sustainable ICH income-generating activities, as well as the access to international funding such as the UNESCO international assistance facilities and relevant EU financing programmes.
- At the same time, participants underlined the importance to ensure an overall coherence to fund-raising efforts and consequent activities, which remains challenging because of the plurality of the concerned stakeholders and limited funding opportunities.
- Finally, participants highlighted that fund-raising actions are often hampered by the insufficiency of human resources and of specific capacities.

2. Conclusions and follow-up

- The workshop confirmed the Network's importance as the main cooperation platform for the exchange of knowledge and experiences, the sharing of good practices, and the enhancement of regional cooperation on the safeguarding and promotion of intangible cultural heritage in South-East Europe.
- The Network underlines the importance to ensure regular reporting on the implementation of the 2003 Convention by the Members states, as a crucial tool to enhance information and knowledge exchange at international level.
- The experience of this Network, developed over its 11 years of activities, is *per se* a good practice that ought to be promoted and disseminated at global level, in order to serve as a possible source of inspiration for similar initiatives in other regions.
- Accordingly, we are committed to continue our joint activities within this Network, and appeal to UNESCO and the Sofia Regional Centre to continue supporting the Network and its annual meetings.
- In addition to the exchange of knowledge and experiences, future activities of the Network shall possibly include capacity-building opportunities for the Network participants, on specific subjects to be agreed with the Network partners.
- In conclusion, participants welcome the proposal by Slovenia to host the next meeting of the Network, in 2018, and look forward to this further opportunity. The topic of the meeting shall be possibly defined based on the priorities reported in the present document.