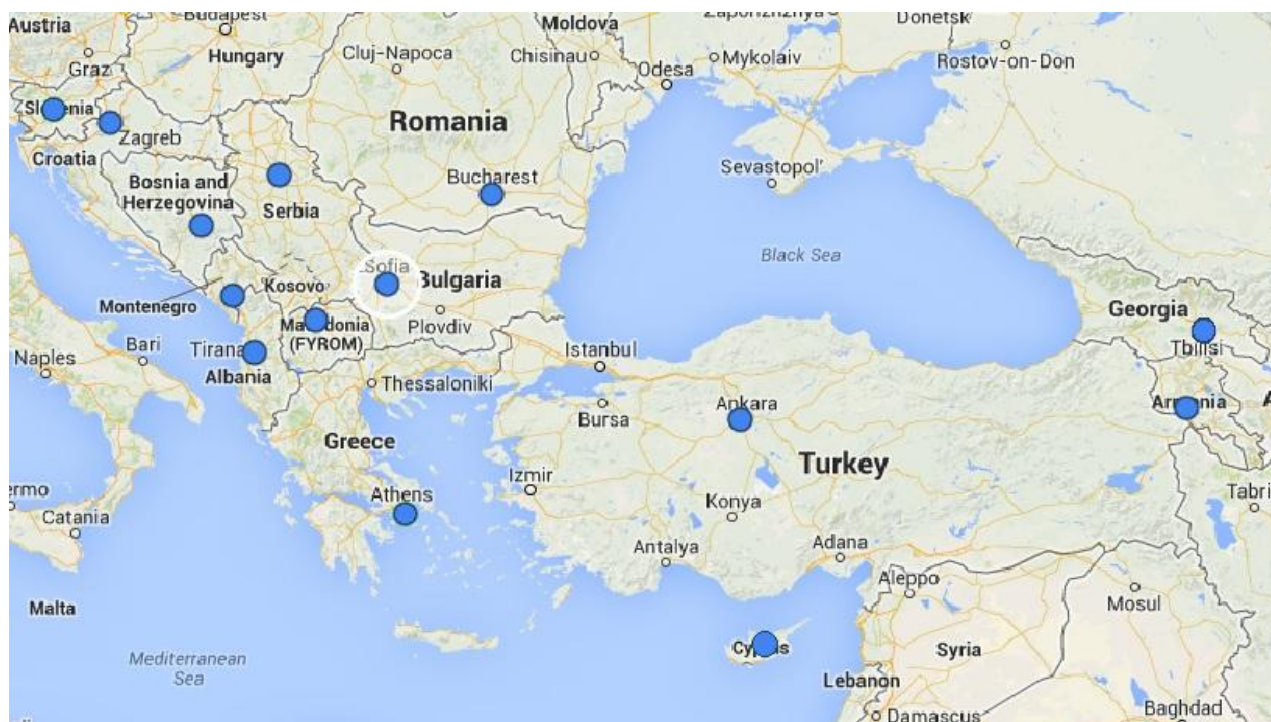


MINUTES
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING
OF THE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR THE
SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL
HERITAGE IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
UNDER UNESCO AUSPICES
(MARCH 10TH, 2015)



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



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

MINUTES
of the General Assembly Meeting of the Association
REGIONAL CENTRE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL
HERITAGE IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE UNDER UNESCO AUSPICES
The Central Park Hotel, Sofia, March 10th, 2015

The following members of the General Assembly took part in the meeting:

1. **Mr. Frank Proschan**, representative of the Director General of UNESCO;
2. **Ms. Maya Dobрева**, representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Chairperson of the Executive Board; Director of the Eastern Europe Desk and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
3. **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ventzislav Velev**, representative of the Ministry of Culture; member of the Executive Board; Head of the Regional Activities Department with the Ministry of Culture;
4. **Prof. Mila Santova**, representative of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; National expert in intangible cultural heritage;
5. **Ms. Mima Stoilova-Nikolova**, Executive Director of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO (non-voting member);
6. **Ms. Maria Donska**, Secretary General of the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of Bulgaria;
7. **Prof. Stoyan Denchev**, representative of the International Association of National Folklore Federations;
8. **Ms. Zhulieta Sina Harasani**, representative of Albania; Director General of Directorate of Strategic Planning for Cultural Heritage and Diversity, Ministry of Culture;
9. **Ms. Yeranuhi Margaryan**, representative of Armenia; Deputy Head of the Department of the Cultural Heritage and Folk Crafts, Ministry of Culture;
10. **Ms. Berisa Mehovic**, representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Senior advisor with the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports;
11. **Ms. Velika Stojkova Serafimovska**, representative of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Ethnomusicologist, Researcher at the Marko Cepenkov Institute for Folklore;
12. **Ms. Marina Taktakishvili**, representative of Georgia; Chief specialist of Cultural Heritage Inventory and Documentation Unit, National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation;
13. **Ms. Stavroula Fotopoulou**, representative of Greece; Director of Modern Cultural Assets and Intangible Cultural Heritage, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs;
14. **Ms. Thekla Papantoniou**, representative of Cyprus; officer with the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO
15. **Acad. Sabina Ispas**, representative of Romania; Director of the C. Brailoiu Institute of Ethnography and Folklore;
16. **Dr. Miroslava Lukic Krstanovic**, representative of Serbia; Senior Scientific Associate of the Institute of Ethnography SASA;
17. **Prof. Dr. Mehmet Öcal Oğuz**, representative of Turkey; President, Turkish National Commission for UNESCO ;

18. Ms. Vesna Pascuttini-Juraga, representative of Croatia; Senior Expert Advisor-Conservator Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Conservation Department in Varaždin City, Ministry of Culture;

Also in attendance were the following guests of honour and observers:

- **Ms. Véronique Dauge**, representative of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Venice, Italy);
- **Ms. Maria Radakovic**, representative of the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- **Mr. Emil Pavlov**, representative of the Bulgarian National Section of CIOFF;
- **Mr. Tony Dimov**, legal consultant

The meeting proceeded to the following **Agenda**:

Opening of the General Assembly

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Acceptance of new members to the General Assembly
3. Discussion and adoption of the key documents of the Regional Centre Sofia:
 - Amendments to the Statutes
 - Annual report 2014
 - Financial report 2014
 - Work plan for 2015
 - Budget for 2015
4. Executive Board: presentation of the current Board and election of new members
5. Election of the Chairperson of the General Assembly
6. Setting the date for the next scheduled meeting of the General Assembly
7. Miscellaneous

OPENING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The meeting was opened by Ms. Mima Stoilova-Nikolova, who greeted all of the participants with a warm 'Welcome!' to the fourth annual 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 (the Regional Centre, RC) in Sofia. She shared a few brief words about the activities of the Centre, the challenges it faces and wished the General Assembly a fruitful work reminding the present members that the GA is the supreme governing body of the RC and thus it determines the course of its further development.

Ms. Maya Dobрева also made a few addressing words to the meeting; she greeted the members of the General Assembly and expressed her hope that in the course of 2015, RC would contribute to events connected to the 70th anniversary of the establishment of UNESCO. She also shared her desire about the Centre to continue its positive and constructive development in the future.

Mr. Frank Proschan declared the fourth meeting of the General Assembly open and presented to the participants Ms. Véronique Dauge, who would take over from him as representative of the UNESCO Director-General to the General Assembly of the Centre beginning from 1 April 2015.

Ms. Véronique Dauge introduced herself and shared her positive expectations about her future work with the Centre.

This was followed by introductions all round.

UNDERITEM 1 FROM THE AGENDA:

The Chairman of the General Assembly, Mr. Proschan, proposed for discussion the agenda for the meeting.

The representative of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Santova, voiced her reservations about the agenda item concerning the proposed amendments to the Statutes of the Association, on account of the issue being insufficiently discussed among the relevant institutions of Bulgaria. On behalf of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, she proposed that the item in question be dropped from the General Assembly's agenda for this particular meeting.

The Romanian representative seconded the proposal made by Prof. Santova. The Turkish representative likewise proposed that the agenda item in question be considered at a later stage, since he had not had an opportunity to peruse in depth the proposed amendments to the Statutes due to other professional engagements.

Of all the members of the General Assembly who took part in the voting, 12 cast an 'AYE' vote, 3 cast a 'NAY' vote, there were no abstentions and the General Assembly thereby

DECIDED as follows:

The Agenda was approved as proposed.

UNDER ITEM 2 FROM THE AGENDA:

Mr. Proschan presented the new candidates for membership of the General Assembly: Georgia and Greece.

Of all the members of the General Assembly who took part in the voting, all 15 cast an 'AYE' vote, there were no 'NAY's or abstentions and the General Assembly thereby

DECIDED as follows:

Georgia and Greece were unanimously and enthusiastically welcomed as the two new member states of the Centre, whereby the full line-up of the General Assembly was increased to 17 members.

UNDER ITEM 3 FROM THE AGENDA:

As the **first sub-item of Agenda Item 3**, Mr. Proschan invited Ms. Maya Dobрева, the Chairperson of the Executive Board (EB), to make a brief expose about the proposed amendments to the Statutes of the Association.

Ms. Dobрева pointed out that on Feb. 6th, 2015, the Executive Board convened an *ad hoc* meeting to adopt the working documents of the General Assembly. She emphasized that the EB decisions were legitimate and the materials for the session had been drafted in due course in order to ensure their circulation around the member states within the time limits prescribed by the Statutes. Ms. Dobрева explained that the proposed new version of the Statutes aims to bring them in fuller compliance with the relevant clauses from the Agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and UNESCO (signed 2010).

Mr. Proshan reminded the participants of the importance of that Agreement as a key source of reference for RC and supported the proposed amendments to the Statutes aimed at bringing them in line with that document.

**MS. DOBREVA'S EXPOSE
regarding the amendments to the Statutes
proposed for approval by the 2015 GA**

The proposed version of the Statutes aims to achieve utmost conformity between their provisions and the relevant clauses of the 2010 Agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and UNESCO ('the Agreement'). The most important changes being proposed seek to modify the profile of individual governing bodies of the Centre.

I. Art. 7 of the Agreement provides that the Centre is to be governed and supervised by a General Assembly made up of the following members:

1. Two representatives of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria (the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), or their designates;
2. One representative each of the member states who have dispatched a notice of membership to the Centre;
3. One representative of the UNESCO Director General;
4. One representative of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences;
5. One representative of the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO;
6. Up to two representatives each of other intergovernmental organizations or of international non-governmental organizations who may be granted a seat by a decision of the General Assembly.

Art. 18 of the proposed Statutes directly refers to the Agreement.

II. Art. 18 of the Agreement, titled 'Executive Board', reads as follows:

'To ensure the effective governance of the Centre between meetings, the General Assembly may delegate to a permanent Executive Board, whose members are to be appointed by the General Assembly, whatever powers it deems necessary.'

Art. 26 of the proposed Statutes reads as follows:

The Executive Board shall ensure the effective management of the Centre between the sessions of the General Assembly. The General Assembly may delegate to the Executive Board any powers it deems necessary when this is compliant with the current legislation and these Statutes.

III. Art. 7, sentence 2 of the Agreement provides that 'The Executive Director of the Centre participates in meetings of the General Assembly as a non-voting member.'

Pursuant to Art. 7 (2), indent (d) of the Agreement, the General Assembly reviews the annual reports as submitted by the Executive Director, including the biennial self-assessment of the Centre's contribution to the attainment of the UNESCO programmatic goals;

Art. 9 of the Agreement provides that the Secretariat of the Centre consists of an Executive Director and other staff as may be necessary for the proper functioning of the Centre.

An analysis of all of these texts in the Agreement would prompt the conclusion that the Executive Board is more of an executive than a governing body of the Centre, which is a non-mandatory entity performing its functions not pursuant to a specific law but as delegated by the General Assembly. The 'managing body' of the Centre, as that term is understood in the relevant Bulgarian law on non-profit entities, is therefore the Executive Director.

The currently applicable Statutes of the Centre, however, provide the following:

Art. 27. (1) The Executive Board shall be the managing body of the Centre.

(2) The Executive Board shall be composed of a minimum of three (3) members elected by the General Assembly for a four (4) year term of office.

(3) The founding entities of the Centre shall be permanent members of the Executive Board.

(4) In the event that a representative of one of the permanent members is relieved ahead of term of his/her duties on grounds provided under Bulgarian law, the head of the relevant government agency shall notify un due course the heads of the remaining founding members of the centre in order for the relevant changes to be entered into the Court Register.'

Art. 31. (1) The Chairperson of the Executive Board shall be elected by the Executive Board among the heads of the three founding institutions on the principle of rotation for each two (2) years. They may be represented by their direct deputies.'

The above provisions not only have no basis in the Agreement; they come in conflict with it. Moreover, the model of governance practiced so far has proved ineffective, which directly reflects on the work of the Centre. The frequent changes of government lead to constant replacements in the composition of the Executive Board, to lack of continuity and consistency in the work and decision-making process of the Centre, and that should be avoided from now on.

Following Ms. Dobрева's introduction, Mr. Proschan opened the floor to the members of the Assembly.

Prof. Santova presented to the attention of all members of the General Assembly a formal letter on behalf of the President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) in response to the proposed amendments to the Statutes of the Association; the letter was addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Culture, Ms. Maya Dobрева and Ms. Maria Donska. In it, BAS declined to support the proposed amendments to the Statutes and insisted that the relevant item be withdrawn from the agenda of the GA meeting.

Mr. Ventzislav Veleв stated that he supported, on behalf of the institution he represented, the proposal made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Statutes to be reviewed, while making the proviso that if any comment was made, it should be accepted by the other members of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly Chair began reading out the proposed amendments to the Statutes clause by clause. He proposed to the attention of everyone present some slight changes pertinent to the grammar and translation of the text, which did not need to be put to a debate. The first such change was made in Art. 6 of the Statutes: *Member States* should be spelled with capital initials in the English version. The second technical change was made in Art. 7, where in the English translation of the Statutes *Operational Guidelines* was to become *Operational Directives*, as that would bring the text in line with the language of the 2003 UNESCO Convention. Art. 8 in the English text was to be reworded to *Program Activities*.

The next proposed amendment was to Art. 9, where paragraphs 3 & 4 were to be deleted.

Prof. Santova proposed the following language for that particular article: natural persons, by which are meant experts and individuals directly related to the problems in the implementation of the 2003 Convention, would be inducted as associate members. This would enable people to participate directly in observer or expert capacity without being included in the decision making process.

Mr. Proschan urged the members of the GA to voice their opinions on that article. No further proposals were made, Prof. Santova's amendment found no support and **Art. 9 was therefore approved with the amendments as proposed in the draft Statutes.**

Mr. Proschan continued with the next proposed amendment, namely to Art. 17, seeking a clearer formulation of the functions of the three governing bodies of the RC.

Prof. Santova voiced, on behalf of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, a dissenting opinion on the proposed amendments to that article.

The Albanian representative stated that, judging by her long-standing experience, it would be advisable to give more power to the Executive Director of RC, who is the person responsible for the day-to-day running of the institution; therefore, she deemed the proposed amendments to that article appropriate.

Prof. Denchev seconded the opinion of the Albanian delegate while proposing some changes in the Bulgarian and English definitions of Executive Board. In his view, in English it should say *collective, executive and supervisory* body.

Mr. Dimov clarified that in every such centre, the executive board is a collective body reporting to the General Assembly and is called '*Executive Board*', translated in the UNESCO documents into Russian as '*Исполнительный совет*'. Actually, '*Executive Board*' should not have been translated into Bulgarian as '*Управителен съвет*' within the meaning as per the currently applicable Non-Profit Legal Entities Act; rather, it is an executive body.

Mr. Proschan clarified that it is necessary to have a division of responsibilities between the supreme governing body, the Executive Director and the intermediate body. From the opinions presented thus far it became clear that the members of the General Assembly should decide whether sorting out the role of each of these three bodies would be beneficial, or whether it would be preferable to keep their functions as formulated at present.

In the ensuing discussion whether the Bulgarian translation for '*Executive Board*' was an accurate one, Prof. Denchev made a proposal for the GA to put only the English version of Art. 17 to a vote, while the Bulgarian one is being sorted out.

The proposal was put to a vote and Art. 17 was endorsed in its English version by all members of the General Assembly.

Mr. Proschan moved the discussion forward to Art. 18 of the Statutes, where the proposal was to simplify the language of par. 1, namely: rather than enumerating once again all the specific officials as prescribed in the Agreement, to insert a reference to the relevant article in the 2010 Agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and UNESCO.

Prof. Santova voiced a dissenting opinion about cutting short that article of the Statutes. She made it clear that in her view there were not reasons why all the members of the General Assembly should not be enumerated.

Mr. Proschan proposed to the Assembly to keep the original language of Art. 18 (1), while adding the text 'ratified by a special law and promulgated in *State Gazette* No. 27/15 March 2013', and to reject for the time being the proposed amendment.

The proposal was put to the vote and endorsed by all members of the General Assembly.

Prof. Santova proposed that that the wording of Art. 18 (1) would not exclude the representative of the UNESCO Director-General from the election of a Chairperson of the General Assembly.

Prof. Denchev proposed the following addition to the text: 'The Chairperson is to be elected by the General Assembly from among its regular members representing the member states *or the representative of the UNESCO Director-General*'.

Mr. Proschan explained that in none of the other category 2 centres for the ICH was there an established practice for the representative of the UNESCO Director-General to perform the function of Chairperson of the General Assembly and, on behalf of the Director-General, he requested that the Assembly conform to the normal practice elsewhere.

The proposal was put to the vote and approved by all members of the General Assembly with the request that both proposals, that of prof. Santova and that of Prof. Denchev, be put on record.

Mr. Proschan submitted to the attention of the participants Art. 18 (4) and the proposed change therein, namely, to capitalize the word 'Procedure'.

The proposal was put to the vote and endorsed by all members of the General Assembly.

Mr. Proschan put to debate Art. 19 (2), where the proposed amendment was to add the text: 'The General Assembly shall determine the members of the Executive Board and their powers.'

The Romanian delegate asked for a clarification as to what exactly the word 'determine' implied and how it differed from the previous wording, namely, 'elect and dismiss'.

The Albanian delegate proposed that both texts of the Statutes be combined together in the following wording: '... shall elect and dismiss the members of the Executive Board and determine their powers.'

Prof. Santova clarified that while the Agreement uses the working '... shall elect members of the Executive Board', the language in the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act reads: '...shall elect and dismiss', which is obviously the better wording.

The proposed amendments under par. 2 and par. 4 were put to a vote and endorsed by all members of the General Assembly.

Mr. Proschan also explained the proposed amendments to Art. 19 (8), namely: to delete '... repeal decisions of the Executive Board and other bodies of the Centre, when contrary to the law, the Statutes or another resolution of the GA' and to replace it with 'Determine the procedure and organize the performance of the activity of the Centre and be liable for it.' The latter wording is borrowed directly from Art. 28 and is moved to Art. 19 (8), where the focus is on the responsibilities of the GA, and not of the Executive Board.

Prof. Santova expressed an opinion that the proposed wording is incorrect as the General Assembly is a body whose functions are more normative than executive. Also, she shared her concerns about the proposed larger number of members of the General Assembly, scattered all around the region of South-Eastern Europe, which would make it more difficult for the Assembly to convene and make decisions, whereas an EB of three members, as heretofore, can meet expeditiously to decide and organize the execution of the Centre's functions.

Mr. Dimov explained that the managing body of the Association is no longer a collective one but consists of a single person (the Executive Director), which necessitates that the decision making functions be located in the supreme body. The way

the new governing bodies are constituted, the competences of the new Executive Board are *delegated*, i.e. *secondary*. While no one expects the GA to carry out the day-to-day running of the organisation, there must be a firm body that is known to have the original competences and has the power to delegate, at its discretion, such competences to its executive body, whether it would be called Management Board or Executive Board.

The proposed amendments under par. 8, par. 9 and par. 10 were put to a vote and endorsed by all members of the General Assembly.

Mr. Proschan referred to a comment made by Ms. Dauge to the effect that paras 5 and 14 of Art. 19 are largely identical in their content; it was therefore proposed that para 14 be kept in place as the more appropriately worded one and that the language of para 5 be added to it. Thus, from the deleted para 5 onwards, all paragraphs should be renumbered and moved up by one notch.

The proposal was put to the vote and approved by all members of the General Assembly.

The meeting continued with a suggestion submitted by the Greek delegate, namely, that on account of the busy agenda and the clear implications of the proposed amendments to the Statutes, the GA would proceed by voting *en bloc* on all such proposed changes rather than debate them clause by clause, and would then carry on with the next items on the agenda.

The proposal was seconded by the Turkish and Serbian delegates.

Mr. Proschan suggested that, as long as there was consensus, since everyone was familiar with the main thrust in the proposed amendments to the statutes, the rationale and the supporting arguments behind them, then the meeting would proceed with voting on the remaining amendments *en bloc*.

An objection was recorded by Prof. Santova, who insisted that the remaining amendments to the Statutes be debated clause by clause.

Since there were no other objections, the Chairman of the General Assembly put to the vote the amendments to the statutes as proposed by the EB, from Art. 21 onwards. These were all approved with an explicit objection on behalf of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, to the effect that ‘the Academy does not accept the amendments as proposed, and as adopted *en bloc*’. Romania abstained and everyone else voted in favour.

Of all the members of the General Assembly who took part in the voting,
15 cast an ‘AYE’ vote, 1 cast a ‘NAY’ vote, 1 delegate abstained and the General Assembly
thereby

DECIDED as follows:

The following amendments were adopted to the Statutes:

- Art. 9. (3) & (4) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) **are deleted**;
- Art. 18. (1) (amended by GA 10/03/2015), subpar. 2, is supplemented as follows: the following words are added: ‘**ratified by a law and promulgated in State Gazette, No. 27/15 March 2013**’.
- Art. 18. (2) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is supplemented by a second sentence, as follows: ‘The General Assembly shall elect its Chairman in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. **The Chairman shall be elected by the General Assembly among its regular members representing the**

member states of the Centre. The Chairman shall preside over the sessions of the General Assembly.'

- Art. 19, subpar. 2 (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is supplemented as follows: 'Art. 19 subpar. 2: Elect and dismiss the members of the Executive Board **and determine their powers.**'
- Art. 19, subpar. 4 (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'Accept the report of the **Executive Director** on the activity of the Centre.' Art. 19, subpar. 8 (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: '**Determine the procedure and organise the performance of the activity of the Centre and be liable for it**';
- Art. 19, subpar. 9 (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: '**Appoint liquidators upon dissolution of the Centre, except for cases of insolvency**';
- Art. 19, subpar. 10 (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'Repeal decisions of the Executive Director and the other bodies of the centre, when contrary to the law, the Statutes or another resolution of the General Assembly';
- Art. 19, subpar. 14 (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: '**Review the annual reports submitted by the Executive Director, including the biennial assessment of the contribution of the Centre to the programming objectives of UNESCO**';
- Art. 19, subpar. 15 (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: '**Adopt Internal Regulations containing the rules of operation of the Executive Board, the election of the Executive Director, and personnel management, and governing the financial and administrative procedures of the Centre in compliance with the laws of the country**';
- Art. 21 (1) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: '**The General Assembly is convened by the Executive Director**';
- Art. 21 (2) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'If within one month from receiving a request to convene the general Assembly the Executive Director fails to send a written invitation...';
- Art. 21 (4) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'by electronic mail, whereby its delivery is confirmed by the signature of each member thereupon, whether received in original or digitized copy';
- Art. 23 (21) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'regular members...'
- Art. 24 (2) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'For decisions as per Art. 19, subpars. 1, 4, 7, 8 & 9, a 2/3 majority of all members of the Centre is required.'
- Art. 26 (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'The Executive Board shall ensure the effective management of the Centre between sessions of the General Assembly. The General Assembly may delegate to the Executive Board any powers it deems necessary when this is compliant with the current legislation and these Statutes.'
- Art. 27. (1) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: (1) The Executive Board is the executive and supervisory body of the Centre.'
- Art.27. (2) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: *The Executive Board shall comprise 5 (five) natural persons, to be elected for a term of 1 year by the General Assembly from among the representatives of its regular members.*
- Art. 27. (3) & (4) are deleted.

- The wording '*powers of the Management Board*' is amended to read: '*powers of the Executive Board*' (amended by GA 10/03/2015)
- Art. 28. (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: The Executive Board shall: '1. Perform supervisory functions with respect to the execution of decisions of the General Assembly; 2. Oversee the disposal of the property of the centre in keeping with the provisions of these Statutes; 3. Oversee the performance of financial transactions by the Centre in accordance with its budget; 4. Oversee the stewardship and protection of the property of the Centre; 5. Oversee the allocation and use of the available resources of the Centre.'
- Art. 29. (1) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'The Executive Board is convened for a regular meeting at least once every 6 months by its Chairperson.'
- In Art. 29. (4) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) the following text is added: '*The Executive Director shall attend the meetings of the Executive Board.*'
- Art. 30 (4) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is deleted.
- In Section V. STRUCTURE AND BODIES OF THE CENTRE, the words 'Chairperson of the Management Board' shall be replaced throughout with 'Chairperson of the Executive Board'.
- Art. 31. (1) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'The Chairperson of the Executive Board is a member of that Executive Board elected by the General Assembly for a term coinciding with his/her term as a member of the Board.'
- Art. 31. (2) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'The Chairperson of the Executive Board shall organize and preside over the meetings of the Executive Board and shall sign the contract with the Executive Director of the Centre.'
- Art. 31. (3) & (4) are deleted.
- In Section V. STRUCTURE AND BODIES OF THE CENTRE, the words 'Executive Director and Secretariat' shall be changed throughout to read: 'Executive Director'.
- Art. 32. (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: '(1) *The Executive Director shall be elected in accordance with the rules as per the Internal Regulations of the Centre.* (2) The Executive Director of the Centre shall: 1. Organize the operations of the centre in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly and the Executive Board; 2. Approve the organizational and managerial structure of the Secretariat, the procedure for appointment and dismissal of staff, the internal regulations, remuneration and other internal acts of the Centre; 3. Carry out the day-to-day management of the Centre and enter into agreements where necessary for the functioning of the Centre; 4. Ensure the proper stewardship and protection of the property of the Centre; 5. Represent the Centre before third parties in Bulgaria and abroad; 6. Sign financial documents on behalf of the Centre in compliance with its Internal Regulations; 7. Report without delay to the General Assembly and the Executive Board about any significant circumstances as may affect the operation of the Centre; 8. Report about his/her work to the Executive Board and the General Assembly at least once every year; 9. Prepare an annual report of the activity of the Centre and submit it to the General Assembly for review; 10. Prepare the annual budget and annual work plan and submit them to the General Assembly for approval; 11. Prepare a long-term and a medium-term programme and submit them to the

General Assembly for approval; 12. Make decisions on any matters that do not fall within the competences of another body, whether by law or according to these Statutes.'

- In Section V. STRUCTURE AND BODIES OF THE CENTRE, the word 'Secretariat' is added.
- Art. 33 (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'The Secretariat of the Centre shall consist of officers and experts as are necessary for the proper functioning of the Centre.'
- Art. 34. (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'The Secretariat of the Centre shall be appointed and managed by the Executive Director.'
- Art. 35. (3) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is deleted.
- Art. 38. (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: '*Any expenditures pertinent to the operation of the Centre shall be made in accordance with the annual budget as prepared by the Executive Director and approved by the General Assembly.*'
- Art. 43. (2) (amended by GA 10/03/2015) is amended as follows: 'A liquidation shall be carried out by a person nominated by the General Assembly or by (an) appointed liquidator(s), who shall perform any and all actions as provided under the Commerce Act for the liquidation of the legal entity, the cashing out of its assets and the satisfaction of the creditors of the centre.'
- In Art. 44. (amended by GA 10/03/2015) the word 'seal' is replaced with 'logo'.
- In Section X. FINAL PROVISIONS the date 10/03/2015 is added.

Under the **second sub-item from the agenda item three**, Mr. Proschan gave the floor to Ms. Chayana Bozhkova, an expert with the RC Secretariat, to present the activities report for 2014 of the Sofia Regional Centre.

Following the presentation, Mr. Proschan congratulated the Centre on the brief yet impressive account of the many different activities as approved by the General Assembly at its last meeting, which the Centre had managed to implement since, and asked the members of the GA whether they found the report acceptable.

The Albanian delegate made a comment about the positive and useful nature of the expert meeting in Cyprus and made a suggestion about the mobility of the children's drawings exhibition within the region. She congratulated RC on the launch of the new website and suggested that it would feature links to other ICH-related web pages.

The Serbian representative likewise congratulated the Centre on its new website, on its activities concerning children and the youth, and made a suggestion about synchronizing the work plan of the Centre with the work plans of the relevant institutions in the member states by the end of the year, in order to make it easier for them to fund their participation.

The Greek representative commended RC on its good work and focused on the capacity-building workshop held in Sofia, stating that the Greek participant in that event had found it extremely useful and was very happy with its outcome. She also made a suggestion regarding the duration of such workshops: in her view, they should be made shorter, as a whole week is not easy to fit in anyone's schedule.

The delegate from Cyprus likewise commented on the duration of the Sofia workshop. She suggested that the programmes for subsequent workshops to be held in the years to come would focus on the specific needs of individual countries; she also congratulated the RC on the excellent work done over the year.

Prof. Santova opened her remarks by congratulating the rapporteur on the manner of presenting the activities report; then she queried the organizers on events that had been featured in the previous work plan but never mentioned in the report: a workshop in North-Eastern Bulgaria and the Observatory for Policies on ICH. She wished to know more about the designers of the new website and expressed some concerns about the name of the children's drawings competition that had been held.

Prof. Denchev proposed an end to the debate and asked the organizers to put the activity report to the vote.

Mr. Proschan, exercising his powers as the Chairman of the GA, added his own congratulations to the Centre and, before moving on to the vote, handed over to Ms. Véronique Dauge, who explained that the venue for an expert meeting is up to the member states to decide, depending on which one of them is willing to play host to such a meeting. Further, Ms. Dauge noted with regret that BRESCE would contribute less and less funding in the future, yet promised stronger moral and intellectual support.

Of all the members of the General Assembly who took part in the voting, 17 cast an 'AYE' vote, there were no 'NAY's or abstentions and the General Assembly thereby

DECIDED as follows:

The GA approved the Annual Activities Report for 2014.

Under the **third sub-item of agenda item three**, Mr. Senyov, the Financial Expert of the RC, made some clarifications about the rules of budgetary accounting under Bulgarian law and reported that the audits that had been carried out thus far had established no violations. Then he moved on to the financial surplus accrued over the previous years and the 2014 subsidy and presented an analysis of the savings that the Association had made in 2014 as well.

Mr Proschan opined that the financial report was clearly structured, that there was full correspondence between planned and reported expenditures and that the Centre had saved about 40 percent of its budgetary allocations in the course of the reporting year. Since there were no objections from the floor, he put the financial report to the vote.

Of all the members of the General Assembly who took part in the voting, 17 cast an 'AYE' vote, there were no 'NAY's or abstentions and the General Assembly thereby

DECIDED as follows:

The GA approved the Financial Report of RC for 2014.

Under the **fourth sub-item of agenda item three**, Ms. Iliyana Ruseva, an expert with the RC Secretariat, presented the work plan for 2015.

After the plan was read out, Mr. Proschan noted that there is continuity from one year to the next, both in terms of the content of the activities themselves and in terms of the manner in which they are presented as main topics, specific activities and expected results, which makes it easier for the member states to participate in suggesting ideas for the years to come.

The Turkish delegate congratulated the RC for the work plan. He welcomed the new members of the GA, Georgia and Greece, and expressed his hope that in the coming year Moldova, Azerbaijan and Ukraine would also join the Regional Centre. He also suggested that a meeting on cultural diversity be organized within the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), while RC would circulate a

document reporting the results attained after the meeting of category 2 centres in the area of ICH.

The representative of the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of Bulgaria seconded that proposal, focusing on the interaction and exchange of good practices with respect to various initiatives and projects to be undertaken jointly with other category 2 centres in the area of ICH, as well as within the framework of events in the context of the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO.

The representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia congratulated the RC on the highly ambitious work plan. She made some specific recommendations: RC should notify the member states earlier of any scheduled events; it should strengthen its regional aspect; it should organize round tables as a good and not-so-costly form of debate; and the proposed publication should be multi-lingual. She congratulated Georgia and Greece on their accession to RC and expressed hope that the Polyphonic Singing Centre under UNESCO auspices in Georgia will be useful in a scientific context.

Ms. Stoilova-Nikolova explained that the reason for postponing the conference on 'Intellectual Property, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Medicine in the Context of the Policies for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Countries of South-Eastern Europe' was the need to coordinate the programmes of UNESCO, WIPO and the Regional Center; she then suggested that RC would cover the expenses of one expert from each member state pertinent to his/her participation in that event.

The Greek delegate thanked RC for the generous offer and proposed an idea with regard to the plan, namely, to consider organizing the ninth expert meeting during the International Ethnographic Film Festival in Sofia.

Then came a recommendation on the part of the Romanian representative about the Ethnographic Film Festival: namely, to invite an expert or a group of experts to present the theory behind an ethnographic film.

Prof. Santova explained that there has been an increased interest over the past few years in the visual recording of the intangible, which makes the Regional Centre uniquely positioned to contribute to that positive trend. In her view, however, the film about the Chiprovtsi rugs does not contain the type of visual record that would be applicable to the work of the 2003 Convention. By way of a second suggestion she said she believed that, should the proposed publication be more analytical in its approach, aimed at the formulae, means and methods of the national parameters in the implementation of the Convention, this would move our common work forward and would thus be extremely useful.

This was followed by comments by the Greek and Cypriot delegates regarding the scope and timing of the expert meeting, including suggestions that it should cover the three UNESCO Conventions (1972, 2003 and 2005). Mr. Proschan summed it up as follows: within this broad sphere, the participants should identify specific subjects that are covered by all three Conventions and should avoid discussing overly general issues.

The Albanian delegate shared her view that the 2015 work plan is lacking a scientific research and educational component; it would therefore be a good idea to publish selected articles by scholars from the region, as well as to organize, in the coming years, a training seminar on the 2005 Convention. She also proposed that Albania would play host to one of the capacity building workshops included in the 2015 work plan.

The discussion was wrapped up with a proposal on the part of Prof. Santova for a possible subject matter of the annual expert meeting on ICH: the synergies between the

1972, 2003 and 2005 UNESCO Conventions from the perspective of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage.

Of all the members of the General Assembly who took part in the voting, 17 cast an 'AYE' vote, there were no 'NAY's or abstentions and the General Assembly thereby

DECIDED as follows:

The GA approved the Work Plan of RC for 2015.

Under the **fifth sub-item from agenda item three**, Mr. Senyov presented the draft budget for 2015. His presentation triggered some specific remarks on the part of the representatives of the Ministry of Culture and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, as well as specific proposals by budget items and numbers on the part of Prof. Denchev.

Mr Proschan said that RC would be well advised to aim for closer correspondence between the activities included in the work plan and the relevant budgetary allocations, in order for the General Assembly to be able to make an informed decision when a task is assigned to it for implementation. He put to the vote the proposal to assign to the Secretariat and the Executive Board of RC to re-write, in the course of several weeks, the budget in such a way as to make it much more reflexive of the work plan and sensitive to specific proposals made by members of the GA for reducing administrative and office costs while increasing allocations for regional cooperation activities.

Mr. Velev seconded the proposal made by Mr. Proschan and reminded the participants that it was the obligation of the state party to the Agreement to provide office space for RC and the issue of the relocation of the Centre to new offices could be presented to the relevant institutions together with a budget proposal to cover the expenses for such relocation.

Ms. Stoilova-Nikolova spoke of the importance of the Regional Centre as the only category 2 centre under UNESCO auspices in all of Europe dealing with ICH, and opined that as such, it deserves to have a central location in the capital city, similarly to the other 7 such centres around the world.

Mr. Denchev supported Ms. Stoilova-Nikolova in her opinion. He also suggested that the GA would set a deadline for the finalization of the 2015 budget, e.g. April 10th, 2015.

Mr. Proschan proposed April 30th for a deadline, as that would enable more in-depth work on the budget and the summoning of possible meetings of the Executive Board.

Of all the members of the General Assembly who took part in the voting, 17 cast an 'AYE' vote, there were no 'NAY's or abstentions and the General Assembly thereby

DECIDED as follows:

The Executive Board, working in close cooperation with the Executive Director, is instructed to propose a new budget for 2015 not later than April 30th, 2015.

Said budget should reflect more closely the work plan for 2015 and should take into account specific proposals made by members of the General Assembly.

UNDER ITEM 4 FROM THE AGENDA:

Ms. Dobreva put to the vote the nominations for new members of the Executive Board, as follows:

1. **Bulgaria: Ms. Maria Donska**, *Secretary General of the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of Bulgaria*, **nominated for Chairperson of the Executive Board;**
2. **Bulgaria: Prof. Stoyan Denchev**, *representative of the International Association of National Folklore Federations;*
3. **Greece: Ms. Stavroula Fotopoulou**, *Director of Modern Cultural Assets and Intangible Cultural Heritage, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs;*
4. **Slovenia: Ms. Bojana Škafar**, *Director of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, coordinator for ICH;*
5. **Serbia: Ms. Miroslava Krstanovic**, *Senior Researcher with the SASA Institute of Ethnography in Belgrade; Coordinator of Joint Projects with the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with an Ethnographic Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.*

Prof. Santova spoke favourably about the nominations for the Executive Board, though she did not support the proposed amendments to the Statutes. She raised the issue of the term of office of the current Executive Board, adding that she considered it a mandatory requirement for said term of office to be defined by the Statutes. Otherwise the members of the General Assembly could find themselves in an awkward situation in the coming years, when it becomes necessary for the composition of the Executive Board to be changed.

Mr. Velev supported the opinion expressed by Prof. Santova and invited the legal adviser to propose a term of office that would be in line with the Agreement and the Statutes. He also proposed that the nominations for the Executive Board be recorded as representatives of the respective country or institution, not in their personal capacity and under their own name.

Mr. Proshan formulated for the record a combination of the two proposals cited hereinabove, namely, that the Executive Board would comprise 5 representatives of the countries nominated in their personal capacity for a term of 1 year, with a possibility of extension of their term. He added that the next General Assembly meeting must have an item on its agenda for 'Election of new members of the Executive Board' and that the Secretariat should then adopt a rotation procedure whereby some members could have their term of office extended while the outgoing members could be replaced by other representatives of the same countries.

Prof. Santova asked the legal adviser to try and formulate an article with the respective number in the section about the Executive Board and that said article be adopted as part of the procedure under the amended Statutes. She said it would make more sense to talk about personalities rather than institutions as members of the Executive Board.

Mr. Dimov clarified that the nominations are for individuals, i.e. natural persons. He added that the proposed draft Statutes do not prescribe a term of office because they follow the wording of the Agreement, which likewise does not prescribe a fixed term of office. The idea is that the General Assembly would meet on an annual basis and decide on the members of that executive-monitoring body who would keep on sitting on the board and who would be replaced, i.e. they have a one-year term of office. At the same time, the established practice with NGOs in Bulgaria shows that a one-year term of office is too short, if the aim is to ensure continuity.

Mr. Proschan suggested that the 5 persons nominated for the Executive Board be elected for an initial term of 1 year, with the possibility of extension of said term for all or some of the members.

Prof. Denchev proposed an amendment to Art. 19 par. 2 of the Statutes by adding text to the effect that every year, the General Assembly would appoint members of the Executive Board and determine their powers.

Mr. Proschan welcomed that proposal for the next meeting of the General Assembly.

Of all the members of the General Assembly who took part in the voting, 17 cast an 'AYE' vote, there were no 'NAY's or abstentions and the General Assembly thereby

DECIDED as follows:

The General Assembly approved the proposed composition of the Executive Board and assigned to it the following tasks,:

- 1) The Executive Board shall propose to the next General Assembly rules of procedure to govern the work of the Executive Board itself;
- 2) The Executive Board shall propose to the next General Assembly criteria and procedures for recruitment and appointment of an Executive Director;
- 3) The Executive Board shall adopt a procedure for nomination and rotation of the members of the Executive Board, which should be submitted for approval to the next meeting of the General Assembly;
- 4) The Executive Board shall determine the term of office for the members of the Executive Board to be elected in the future.

UNDER ITEM 5 FROM THE AGENDA:

Ms. Dobрева presented to the attention of all GA members the nomination for a new Chairperson of the General Assembly: Ms. Zhulieta Sina Harasani from Albania.

The Albanian delegate accepted with gratitude that highly responsible position and said that she would rely largely on the cooperation, assistance and input of all other GA members.

Ms. Harasani was elected by unanimous acclamation by the members of the General Assembly.

UNDER ITEM 6 FROM THE AGENDA:

Mr. Proschan suggested that the GA would adhere to the present time frame for convening its meetings: namely, in March.

The Albanian delegate said she would rather have it earlier, in February or even late January, in order to synchronise the fiscal year of RC with the national programmes of the member states. Mr. Proschan confirmed with the centre's accountant that an earlier schedule would not create problems for financial reporting.

Of all the members of the General Assembly who took part in the voting, 17 cast an 'AYE' vote, there were no 'NAY's or abstentions and the General Assembly thereby

DECIDED as follows:

The dates for the next meeting of the General Assembly will be determined jointly by the GA Chairperson, the Secretariat and the Executive Director who will make every effort to set the date as early in the calendar year as possible.

UNDER ITEM 7 FROM THE AGENDA:

Prof. Denchev proposed that the GA would issue a declaration in support of the UNESCO initiative for the protection of the world cultural heritage in the territories of Iraq and Syria against the barbaric acts of the so-called 'Islamic State'.

The Turkish delegate specified that the declaration should refer to the entity in question as 'the terrorist organization Islamic State'.

Of all the members of the General Assembly who took part in the voting, 17 cast an 'AYE' vote, there were no 'NAY's or abstentions and the General Assembly thereby

DECIDED as follows:

The Executive Director shall address a letter to UNESCO emphasizing the importance of the protection of the cultural heritage of Syria and Iraq.

Mr. Proschan clarified that the category 2 centres are subject to a mandatory performance evaluation once every 6 years from the moment of their being established; it is on the basis of such performance assessment that the UNESCO Director General will recommend an extension of the term of the Agreement or its termination. In April 2017 the UNESCO Executive Council will have to decide whether to renew the status of the Sofia Centre or not. This means that the work plan and budget for 2016 should allocate human as well as financial resources to support the performance of the evaluation and the procedure for renewal of the Agreement. As early as 2015 the Executive Board, while preparing the plan for the next year, should start considering the manner in which the renewal procedure will take place in the course of 2016. Mr. Proschan underscored that RC has functions determined by force of the Agreement, which it must strictly adhere to. Regrettably, those functions do not include scientific research, youth or other interesting activities that had been proposed by diverse members of the General Assembly, which can be pursued in different initiatives between academies, research institutes and government ministries. Support and understanding on behalf of the member states in focusing on those RC activities that are explicitly provided for in its programme will be needed, in order to avoid problems at the time of the evaluation. Mr. Proschan added that the Executive Board and the next General Assembly could potentially begin outlining a long-term plan for amending the Agreement in such a way as to expand the scope of their activity, but under the current Agreement the scope was restricted. Lastly, Mr. Proschan took his leave of all the participants as he was set to retire from UNESCO, and wished every success to all members in their personal endeavours as well as in their important work in the General Assembly of RC.

The meeting was closed due to the completion of the agenda.

Chairman of the meeting:

Ms Zhulieta Sina Harasani

Record taker:

Ms Diana Tokadzhieva