



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

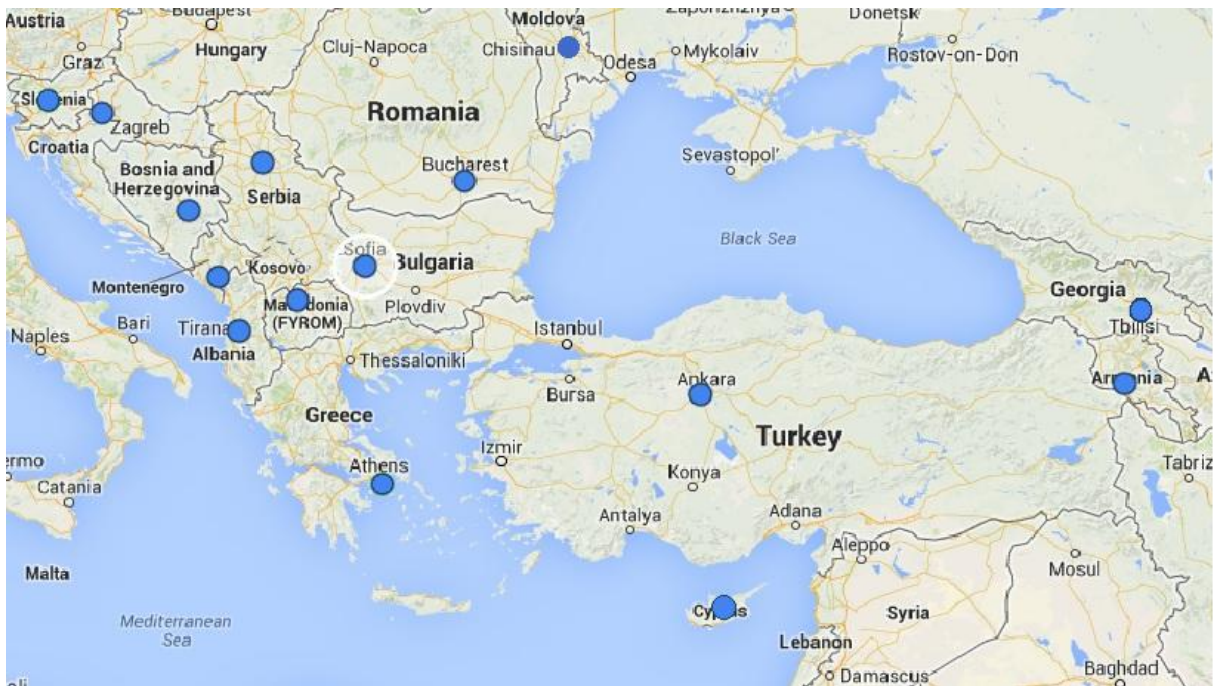
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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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

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2015 ACTIVITY REPORT





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I. INTRODUCTION

During the past year 2015, the activities of the Regional Centre for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO were successfully realised under the sign of the celebrations of the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO. The Centre has been trying consistently to be an active partner to the Member States of South-Eastern Europe in initiating different calls and supporting the organisation of training workshops, round tables, conferences, forums and expert meetings on topics related to the intangible cultural heritage.

In keeping with its well-established operating principles, notably the principle of the fullest possible inclusion of the countries of South-Eastern Europe, the team of the Regional Centre addressed specific proposals to them regarding their participation in the activities planned in the course of the year. In April, the Member States were asked to supply chronologically information about events, initiatives and activities in the area of the intangible cultural heritage scheduled at national level, which could then be publicised through the *interactive calendar* on the official website of the Association (**Activity 2.3. Interactive cultural calendar for the intangible cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe on the website**). Only Cyprus and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia responded by submitting one article each for publication in the calendar. On account of the insufficient interest on the part of the Member States and passivity, the Centre decided to suspend the calendar from its website in the hope that the concept of it would evolve and the involvement of States would increase over the years to come.

In July, the Centre addressed yet another invitation, this time for participation in the 11th *Bulgarian National Folklore Festival in the town of Koprivshtitsa* and in a *Round Table on '70 years of UNESCO: Peace through Education, Science and Culture'*. Again, only two Member States accepted the invitation and sent their respective representatives to the event: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Romania.

In keeping with the recommendations of the 2015 General Assembly, in September the Centre initiated an invitation to the Member States to submit articles pertinent to the implementation, at the national level, of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, in order for these to be published in a *multi-lingual Jubilee Edition*. After multiple reminders were sent out and the deadline was moved back a few times, by December only 5 Member States had submitted their articles for publication: Albania, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, and Greece. This necessitated the merging together into a single volume of the proposed Jubilee Edition with the collection of reports from the International Forum held in December, but even then, four Member States: Armenia, Romania, Montenegro and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, failed to submit their papers and do not appear in the edition.

For the first time the Regional Centre initiated (in October) an invitation to the Member States offering its financial support for funding events at national level that they would like to organise in the general context of the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO. It was in that way that the Centre supported an expert meeting organised by the Ministry of Education and Science of Cyprus and the Cypriot National Commission for UNESCO and held in January 2016, which enabled the discussion of a possible multinational application for inscription on the UNESCO Representative List. Regrettably, no other countries took



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advantage of this opportunity. It was under the sign of the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO that the Centre supported national and international folklore festivals, gatherings and competitions that helped promote the intangible cultural heritage as well as the very activity of the Regional Centre. The Centre invited the Member States, if they so wished, to organise an ICH Contest similar to the one organised for the Bulgarian elements inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. To our regret, none of the Member States showed any interest in the invitation.

In October, the Centre addressed an invitation to the Member States of South-Eastern Europe for *partnership in the organising of workshops* in the context of the UNESCO Capacity Building Strategy for the Safeguarding of ICH. Owing to the positive feedback from the already completed workshop for national experts in Tirana, in September 2015, the Centre received many applications from would-be partners. It was for that reason, and in unison with the functions laid down in the Agreement with UNESCO, that in 2016 a large part of the financial resources of the Association will be channelled into the organisation and delivery of training seminars, more specifically, to be hosted by 6 countries of the region of South-Eastern Europe: Albania, Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (*Activity 1.1. Workshop on 'Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at the National Level', Skopje, FYR Macedonia, planned for 2015 but postponed due to financial constraints for April 11th-15th, 2016*), Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia. The selection of topics and facilitators is made in close consultation with UNESCO.

The Regional Centre has been making every effort to strengthen its communication with the network of Category 2 centres for the intangible cultural heritage by taking part in the annual meetings between those centres and UNESCO and in other initiatives such as the International Expert Meeting for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Western and Central Asia, organised by the Tehran ICH Centre. This Centre did not send its representative to the 10th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Namibia, because it coincided in time with other initiatives (*Activity 5.4. Participation in expert meetings to be organized by UNESCO*).

In 2015 the Centre has set aside part of its funding for the implementation of the external performance evaluation and the renewal of its Agreement with UNESCO in 2016 (*Activity 5.2. Preparation of the Regional centre for the process of performance assessment by UNESCO Headquarters*).

II. PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES AND ATTAINED RESULTS:

1. Organising and convening the General Assembly meeting of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO in Sofia, Bulgaria, March 10th, 2015 (Activity 5.1.)

The 4th meeting of the General Assembly of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under UNESCO Auspices took place on March 10th, 2015, at the Central Park hotel in Sofia (Bulgaria). Participating in it



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were representatives of a total of 10 member states of the Centre: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Turkey, as well as the other full members of the General Assembly – representatives of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of Bulgaria and non-governmental organizations. The meeting was moderated by Mr. Frank Proschan, Chairman of the General Assembly and personal representative of the UNESCO Director General. The programme of the meeting which, according to the agenda, comprised three working sessions, was successfully fulfilled.

Outcomes:

- The members of the General Assembly unanimously accepted and welcomed enthusiastically the two new member states of the Regional Centre: Georgia and Greece. Thus their total number grew to 14 countries of the region.
- The meeting discussed and approved the key documents of the Centre: proposed amendments to the Statutes; the annual activities report for 2014; a work plan for 2015 and a set of financial documents.
- A new Chairperson of the General Assembly was elected: Mrs. Zhulieta Harasani of the Republic of Albania.
- The new representative of the UNESCO Director-General to the General Assembly of the Regional Centre was welcomed by the regular members: Mrs. Véronique Dauge.

Total: 22 961.58 BGN

2. A workshop on 'Intellectual Property, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Medicine in the Context of the Policies of Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Countries of South-Eastern Europe', Sofia, Bulgaria, April 23-24, 2015 (Activity 2.2.)

In fulfilment of the Regional Centre's objectives of creating networks and promoting cooperation in the area of the intangible cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe, a two-day workshop was held in Sofia on the subject of *'Intellectual Property, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Medicine in the Context of the Policies of Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Countries of South-Eastern Europe'*. For the purpose, the Regional Centre hired experienced lecturers from the UNESCO network and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Representatives of 12 countries in South-Eastern Europe attended the seminar.

On account of the specificities of the issues related to intellectual property, in the context of the policies for safeguarding the ICH, the UNESCO and WIPO lecturers adapted the workshop programme in such a way as to infuse the event with more educational content in addition to the scheduled discussions. The agenda featured **topics** such as *'Intellectual property and the intangible cultural heritage: the UNESCO and WIPO accomplishments in that sphere'*; *'Intellectual property and traditional knowledge, skills*



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and cultural forms of expression'; 'UNESCO's achievements in safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage and the relationship with intellectual property'; 'Intellectual property protection and traditional medicine'; 'Intellectual property and the documenting of intangible cultural heritage', a.o.

The workshop provided excellent opportunities for a fruitful discussion and for raising and solving real-life issues pertinent to intellectual property and the intangible cultural heritage through examples at local and national level. The participants underscored the need for further trainings in similar subject matter that would promote cooperation and the exchange of good practices among the member states in South-Eastern Europe.

Total: 25 211.83 BGN

3. International Ethnographic Film Festival, Sofia, Bulgaria, May 11-16, 2015 (Activity 3.1.)

Between the 11th and 15th of May, 2015, Sofia hosted the fifth edition of the International Ethnographic Film Festival (IEFF), organised by the Association for Cultural Initiatives in partnership with the Ethnology Chair of the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia and the Academic Ethnological Association, with the financial support of the Programme for Culture of Sofia Municipality for 2015, the Student Council of the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia and the Cultural Centre of St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. The festival showcased a selected list of 26 films on subjects like cultural heritage, migration, natural environment, family relationships, globalisation and many others.

The Regional Centre provided support to the first two days of the festival featuring films about the intangible cultural heritage made by directors from South-Eastern Europe or on other subject matter concerning the Balkans. The audiences were quite diverse and got a chance to familiarise themselves with the variety of ritual practices, folk crafts on the verge of extinction and curious traditions of significance not just for the region but for the entire continent of Europe.

Total: 1 280.40 BGN

4. Ninth annual meeting of the South East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage on 'Intangible cultural heritage and the diversity of cultural expressions: synergies and coordination between UNESCO 2003 and 2005 Conventions', Venice, Italy, June 18-19, 2015 (Activity 2.1.)

The ninth annual expert meeting on the intangible cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe focused on the coordination and interrelation between the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). The meeting was co-organised by the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO in cooperation with the Venice-based UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe.



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Key subjects and discussions:

Round table No. 1: Implementation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: progress, experience and challenges.

All the participants were invited to make brief presentations about the progress made in the implementation of the 2003 Convention, with a special focus on developments and innovations during the 2014-2015 period. Again, the emphasis was on the legislative framework, management structures, national registers, the experience accumulated and the existing challenges.

Round Table No. 2: The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: similarities and coordination.

All participants were invited to share their views about the similarities and differences between the two Conventions and their own experience working with them.

Round Table No. 3: The intangible cultural heritage, culinary traditions and sustainable development in the years of the EXPO 2015 Milano.

The participants visited the exhibition on 'Protecting cultural and natural diversity to feed the planet', organised by the meeting hosts.

The meeting was appreciated by both participants and organisers for its importance and usefulness in the sphere of the intangible cultural heritage, and its contribution to better coordination between the countries in South-Eastern Europe.

Total: 27 448.88 BGN

5. Third Annual Coordination Meeting of Category 2 Centres for the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Guiyang, China. July 6-8, 2015 (Activity 5.3.)

The Third Annual Coordination Meeting of Category 2 Centres for the Intangible Cultural Heritage was held in the Chinese city of Guiyang on July 6-8, 2015. It was hosted by the team of the International Training Centre for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Asia-Pacific Region (CRIHAP).

The total number of participants in the meeting was 20, representing the Category 2 centres for the intangible cultural heritage based in Bulgaria, China, Iran, Japan, Peru, and South Korea, as well as the UNESCO HQ and regional offices. The Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO was represented to the meeting by Mr. Hristo Angelichin, Interim Executive Director of the Centre, and Ms. Zhulieta Sina Harasani, Chair of its General Assembly.

The meeting's agenda comprised **six key sessions**, moderated by representatives of the centres, as follows:



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- Recent developments in the life of the Convention and objectives of the meeting, an introductory presentation by Ms. Cécile Duvelle (UNESCO HQ);
- Information and networking, including through the web, moderated by the Category 2 centre of the Republic of Korea (ICHCAP);
- Collaboration with UNESCO in the global capacity-building programme, moderated by the China Centre (CRIHAP);
- Approaches to programme planning and budgeting, moderated by the Regional Centre Sofia;
- Approaches to governance and getting the most from your governing body(ies), moderated by the Peru-based Centre (CRESPIAL);
- Cooperation with Member States in planning and implementing programmes, moderated by the Tehran Centre;
- Evaluation and renewal of the Agreements with the C2 Centres under UNESCO Auspices (IRCI).

The sessions were complemented with interesting discussions on major issues of governance and administration which the centres encounter in their daily work.

Total: 6 573 BGN

6. Workshop on 'Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at the National Level, Tirana, Albania, September 14-18, 2015 (Activity 1.1.)

In the context of the UNESCO Strategy for increasing national capacities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, the Regional Centre, jointly with the Ministry of Culture of Albania, successfully delivered a training seminar for national experts from Albania. The seminar aimed to improve the understanding of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage while discussing policies and practices for its implementation and national and international level, as well as its connection with the remaining UNESCO conventions in the field of culture. Among the participants in the seminar were representatives of different institutions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education of Albania, as well as of non-governmental organisations and individual Albanian municipalities.

Total: 14 000 BGN

7. Participation in the International Meeting of Experts in the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Western and Central Asia, on the island of Qeshm, Islamic Republic of Iran, October 11-13, 2015 (Activity 5.5.)

As it aspires to strengthen communication with other Category 2 centres for the intangible cultural heritage, in 2015 the Regional Centre sent a representative to the International Meeting of Experts in the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Western and Central Asia organised by the ICH Centre in Tehran. The topic of the meeting was *'Exploring concrete measures for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural*



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heritage'. Participating in it were international experts who shared their experience and cited examples of successful practices for the safeguarding of their intangible cultural heritage.

Total: expenses covered by the organizers

8. Participation in initiatives and events marking the 70th anniversary of UNESCO (Activity 5.6.)

8.1. Conference on 'The Folk Dance as an Element of Traditional Culture' within the framework of the 18th International Folklore Festival, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, July 15-18, 2015

The International Folklore Festival in Veliko Tarnovo is organised by the International Folklore Festivals Foundation and Veliko Tarnovo Municipality in the city of Veliko Tarnovo and the neighbouring communities. The Festival has been granted the status of 'CIOFF Festival'. On the last day of the festival, July 25, a scientific conference on *'The Folk Dance as an Element of Traditional Culture'* was organised jointly by the National Council of CIOFF® Bulgaria and the Ministry of Culture under the patronage of the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Among the 18 participants in the conference were members of the Union of Bulgarian Musicians and Dancers, academics, representatives of folk dance studios and the Academy of Music, Dance and Visual Arts. Having heard the reports on the subject matter of the folk dance, seen as an element of the intangible cultural heritage, the participants in the conference engaged in a discussion and sharing of good practices in addressing the problems encountered by experts in the field. The team of the Regional Center presented its main objectives and functions as well as its planned activities during the year.

Total: 119.60 BGN

8.2. XI National Festival of Bulgarian Folklore, Koprivshtitsa, Bulgaria, August 7-9, 2015;

The Ninth National Festival of Bulgarian Folklore was officially declared open on August 7th, 2015, jointly by the Mayor of Koprivshtitsa Municipality and Mrs. Irina Bokova, the UNESCO Director-General. This was the Festival's jubilee edition, marking its 50th anniversary and the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. The event was visited by thousands of Bulgarians and foreign guests, who came to demonstrate their love for, and interest in, the traditional Bulgarian culture known today as intangible cultural heritage. The Regional Centre addressed a formal invitation to representatives of each of the member states to visit the event and be official guests of the opening ceremony. Representatives of Romania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia did attend the National Festival. The National Festival of Bulgarian Folklore in Koprivshtitsa showcased Bulgaria's intangible cultural heritage and provided a unique opportunity for the team of



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the Regional Centre to present its work and functions before a large international audience through the printed brochures and materials (*Activity 4.2. Production and printing of brochures and other information materials of the Centre*). The Festival has been nominated for inclusion into the UNESCO Register of Best Safeguarding Practices.

Total: 2 546.00 BGN

**8.3. Round Table on '70 Years UNESCO: Peace through Education, Science and Culture',
Sofia, Bulgaria, August 8, 2015**

On August 8, 2015, the National Palace of Culture hosted a round table on the subject of '70 Years UNESCO: Peace through Education, Science and Culture', a joint initiative of the Sozopol Foundation, the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO and the National Palace of Culture.

The Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO was chosen as partner of the event. Also attending the Round Table were representatives of the UNESCO Secretariat, of national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations, scholars, academics and eminent experts in the area of culture and education. The participants discussed the modern vision, the role and innovative approaches of UNESCO that have contributed towards changing the world, for genuine dialogue and mutual understanding in the areas of education, science, culture and communications.

The programme of the International Round Table included a panel on intangible cultural heritage, on the subject of '**Living Human Treasures**'. Participating in it on behalf of the Regional Centre were the representatives of Romania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Acad. Sabina Ispas, Director of the Romanian Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies, and Ms. Ivona Tatarchevska, adviser for the intangible cultural heritage to the Ministry of Culture of FYR of Macedonia.

Total: 9 987.00 BGN

**8.4. Round Table on 'Myths, Popular Beliefs, Oral Narratives and Legends in Balkan
Literature', Sofia, Bulgaria, October 4, 2015**

The Regional Centre granted its support to the celebration of the 20-year jubilee of the Balkanica Foundation, by assisting in the organisation of the Round Table on '*Myths, Popular Beliefs, Oral Narratives and Legends in Balkan Literature*'. The Foundation was established in 1995. Its co-founders are 7 Balkan nations: Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Serbia, FYR of Macedonia, Romania, and Albania.

Total: 5 000.00 BGN

**8.5. Round Table on 'The National Cultures of the Balkans: Parts of a Whole', Sofia,
Bulgaria, November 19, 2015**



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A scientific round table on the subject of 'The National Cultures of the Balkans: Parts of a Whole' was hosted by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The event was co-organised by the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO and the non-governmental organisation Brain Workshop Institute.

The Round Table was designed to showcase different aspects of the Balkan identity: cultural, historical, and political, while emphasizing those of them that make the Balkans an integral whole, rather than emphasizing traditional dividing lines between individual countries. The exposés presented by eminent scholars in the field of Balkan studies triggered a lively discussion on what has been accomplished so far and what remains to be done in an institutional and a historical context, in order to ensure the proper understanding and preservation of the Balkan identity against the backdrop of globalisation and the blurring of European borders. Also, the Round Table made an in-depth analysis of the historical and geographical factors as well as the no less important political ones that have contributed to the crystallisation of the national self-identity of the Balkan peoples in a comparative aspect.

Total: 10 000 BGN

8.6. Youth Competition 'Meet and Share the Living Heritage of Bulgaria'. Sofia, Bulgaria, November 2015

The Regional Centre organised a youth competition under the motto '**Meet and Share the Living Heritage of Bulgaria**' on the occasion of the 70-th anniversary of UNESCO. The competition was open for participation to Bulgarian school pupils and university students aged 15 or over; the entrants were required to prepare a poster, postcard, video or multimedia presentation featuring one particular Bulgarian element on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In addition to a visual component, the proposed entry was required to contain a written exposé suggesting how the element was to be conserved and transmitted to the coming generations, and in what way the author envisioned the involvement of young people from the region of South-Eastern Europe in the process. Three first prizes for most successful projects were awarded – one for each of the three Bulgarian elements in the Representative list of UNESCO for intangible cultural heritage. Due to the great interest to the element listed in 2014 – the tradition of carpet-making in Chiprovtsi and a large number of derived works, the commission awarded two prizes for this element.

Total: 519 BGN

8.7. International Forum on 'The Contribution of the UNESCO Member States of South-Eastern Europe to the Dissemination and Implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage', Sofia, Bulgaria, December 11-13, 2015



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The Forum was a joint initiative of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under UNESCO Auspices, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria, the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the University of Library Studies and Information Technology. It was officially opened on December 12 by Mrs. Irina Bokova, the UNESCO Director-General. Prior to the official opening, the participants and guests of the event got a chance to experience the Surva folk ritual in front of the National Theatre in Sofia. That was the way Bulgaria saluted the inscription of that ritual, which is traditional for the Pernik region, on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind.

Participating in the forum were representatives of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, ICH experts from 14 countries of South-Eastern Europe, representatives of Bulgarian academic institutions and foreign diplomats. At the official ceremony, Mrs. Bokova bestowed upon the Mayor of the town of Chiprovtsi the UNESCO Certificate for the Tradition of Carpet-Weaving of Chiprovtsi. Mrs. Bokova also conferred distinctions upon the winning entrants of the National Youth Competition for presenting the Bulgarian sites and elements on the UNESCO representative lists of the intangible, tangible, and natural heritage. The competition was dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

The scientific component of the forum, which took part within the two panel discussions as announced in advance, was also a major success. The panel discussions, hosted at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the University of Library Studies and Information Technology (ULSIT), were on the subjects of: *Panel 1: 'Measures taken in the countries from SEE for the implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)';* and *Panel 2: 'The role of local communities in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage'*. This event marked the conclusion of a series of initiatives dedicated to the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

Total: 55 342.57 BGN

8.8. Publication in English translation of *The Balkan Man* by Yordan Velchev

The Regional Centre Sofia has decided to support the translation of Volume 1 of ***The Balkan Man* by Ivan Velchev**. A monograph conceived on a grand scale and with undoubted literary and historical value for Bulgaria and the Balkans as a whole, it consists of 7 books arranged in three volumes of 1,000 pages each, with numerous illustrations and over 700 explanatory footnotes. The English translation of this mammoth work will give it access to the international literary market and a specialised foreign audience.

Total: 10 000 BGN

8.9. A survey on 'The Intangible Cultural Heritage, Intercultural and Regional Relations. UNESCO's Faces in South-Eastern Europe'



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

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The main goal of the research project on '*Intangible Cultural Heritage, Intercultural and Regional Relations: the Faces of UNESCO in South-Eastern Europe*' is to suggest an optimal, in the present circumstances, survey of public opinion and a review of the expert perspective on the subject of the intangible cultural heritage and some issues intrinsically related to it, in a current context, as well as a view on the operation of the Regional Centre for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The objectives set for this study relate to estimating some tentative levels of awareness of the topic of the intangible cultural heritage, involvement and degrees of commitment to the subject matter; a survey of public attitudes to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage; belonging and identity; testing attitudes to current issues concerning intercultural relations in a national and regional context; and the expert perspective with respect to problems, prospects and recommendations pertinent to that subject matter. This survey has been designed to provide the guidelines for formulating future long-term goals and strategies of the Regional Centre on the basis of data obtained by a sociological agency.

Total: 22 800 BGN

9. Expert meeting at Nicosia, Cyprus, January 23-24, 2016

The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Cyprus and the Cypriot National Commission for UNESCO with the support of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO, as yet another planned initiative to mark UNESCO's 70th anniversary.

Experts from six countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Greece, Spain and Switzerland presented the *technique of dry stone* and its characteristic features at national level. In the course of delivering their presentations, they discovered many similarities and commonalities between related practices in their home countries. In the end, the experts united around the idea of the possible submission of a multinational application for the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Total: 5 000 BGN

10. Jubilee edition regarding the implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Activity 4.1.) (to be published in 2016)

The original concept for such a jubilee edition was to publish in a single tome materials submitted by the member states of the Regional Centre related to the implementation at national level of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Because of similarities in the subject matter, the editorial team added to the contents of the book the reports delivered at the International Forum on '*The Contribution of the UNESCO Member States of South-Eastern Europe to the Dissemination and Implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible*



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Cultural Heritage, held in Sofia on December 11-13, 2015. This is a multilingual publication, with each article being presented in its original language and an English translation.

Total: 13 200 BGN

11. Workshop on 'Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at the National Level', Skopje, FYR Macedonia, April 11-15, 2016 (Activity 1.2.)

The workshop on 'Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at the National Level' in Skopje was planned for 2015. However, due to financial reasons it was postponed for April 11-15, 2016. The partners of the organization are the Ministry of Culture of FYR Macedonia and the International Council for Traditional Music. Facilitators are Mr. Nikolay Vukov and Mr. Sasa Sreckovic who were designated by the host country.

Total: 14 000 BGN

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The activities carried out in the course of 2015 prompt the following major conclusions and recommendations:

- With every passing year, it can be noted the positive trend of shaping the profile of the Centre, which plans better, develops and implements its activities as well as its better positioning in the national and international aspect.
- Expanding its scope (in 2015 are included 14 countries), the Centre already has an important and reliable network in South-Eastern Europe for communication, partnerships, exchange of knowledge and practices for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
- The Regional Centre makes visible efforts for the operational and financial optimization of the activities and meanwhile tries to synchronize them with the strategic objectives of UNESCO. However, it is recommended to improve the process of planning and to concentrate its efforts on the implementation of the activities approved by the General Assembly while avoiding the implementation and support of a large number of unscheduled events and activities.
- In organizing the events which have not been approved by the General Assembly should provide enough time to inform the representatives of the Member states from South- Eastern Europe in the General Assembly for being able to join with full capacity or to designate a participant.
- During the last 2015 the efforts of the Centre are visible in view to enhance the involvement of South-East European countries in its activities. However, this process can be improved to be more open for suggestions from the Member



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States by entering clearer criteria for funding and by improving the dialogue and communication with them.

- After the successful workshop to enhance the capacities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, held Albania and the good reviews on behalf of the hosts, the Regional Centre should intensify its cooperation with the countries of South-Eastern Europe to organize such workshops on a rotational basis in the Member States. For 2016 are planned 6 workshops in the region of South-Eastern Europe.
- The Regional Centre should create conditions for the continuous exchange of information with the Member States for important international events and initiatives in the field of intangible cultural heritage with the aim of promoting them on the official website of the Centre.
- In 2016, still to come is the Assessment of the work of the Regional Centre and the renewal of the Agreement with UNESCO (in 2017). The Assessment by external experts will be an essential corrective to the activities of the Centre, the recommendations of which will contribute to the improvement of the regional activity and international cooperation for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe.