

# ANNUAL REPORT 2013

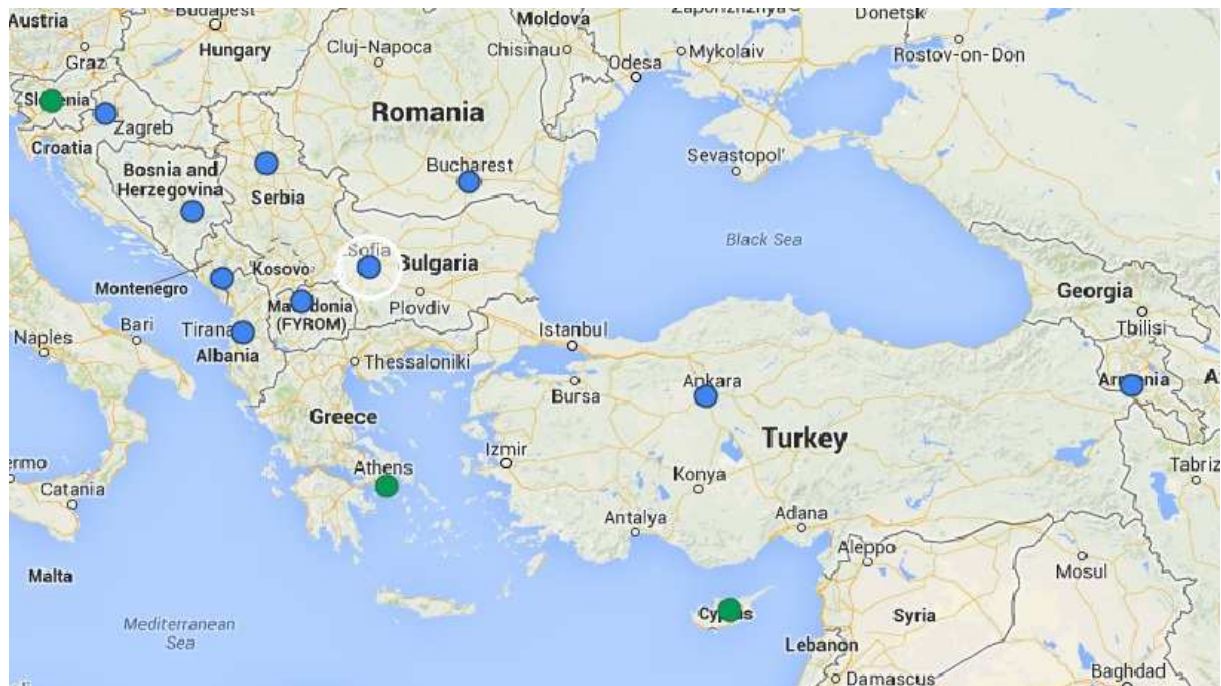
OF

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



SOFIA

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



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In practical terms, 2013 was the second year of operation for this Centre. There are several key factors that marked its development and confirmation as an institution:

1. The declared commitments and the responsibilities undertaken by the Centre prior to its General Assembly meeting held in Sofia on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013, attended by 15 members of the General Assembly, 4 observers and a number of guests from Bulgaria.

### ***More important outcomes:***

- a) Admitted new members: Armenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- b) Replacement of the representatives of FYR of Macedonia and Montenegro.

Following that election, the number of General Assembly members reached 15.

### ***Recommendations made and decisions taken:***

- a) The Centre's activities should be with predominantly regional, rather than bilateral, nature;
  - b) ICH experts are to be involved in the projects and initiatives being proposed;
  - c) The Centre is to participate in all major events held by the countries in the region (e.g. expert meetings, compilation of the national registers, multinational candidatures);
  - d) Enabling conditions are to be provided for the Centre to be kept informed of all major international events and initiatives, and to undertake to disseminate information about them;
  - e) A procedure is to be devised providing clear-cut criteria as to what activities proposed by the member states are to be supported, and how;
  - f) In relation to the proposed amendments to the Charter, a decision was adopted to study the structures and operation of other such centres and to propose changes, in conformity to Bulgarian law, that would be put to the vote at the next General Assembly meeting;
  - g) Mr Frank Proshan was re-elected by a vote as Chairman of the General Assembly;
  - h) The decision was made to summon the next General Assembly in late February 2014.
2. The dynamic political situation in Bulgaria and the replacement of the heads of all three founding members of the Centre: the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.
  3. Changes in the Executive Board of the Centre:
    - a) Election of a new Chairman of the Executive Board, in accordance with the principle of rotation of the managing body codified in the Centre's Statute;
    - b) Replacement of 2/3 of the Board's composition;

4. Changes in the leadership and expert staff of the Centre:
  - a) Resignation and release from her duties of the Executive Director on account of expiry of her term of office and launch of a competitive procedure (still ongoing) for the appointment of a new one;
  - b) Replacement of the legal adviser supporting the operation of the Centre.

## **II. KEY ACTIVITIES AND ATTAINED RESULTS:**

### **A. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2013 ANNUAL PLAN**

#### **1. THE 'BALKAN CUISINE' CULINARY DEMONSTRATION-Bansko, May 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>**

The 'Balkan Cuisine' demonstration of culinary delights was part of the programme of events dedicated to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). For the first time in 2013, that event was part of the 'Between Three Mountains' International Folk Festival. It was realised in partnership with Edita Group Productions and Bansko Municipality. Participants from Serbia, FYR of Macedonia, Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria joined the demonstration.

#### **2. THE SEVENTH ANNUAL REGIONAL MEETING OF ICH EXPERTS IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE-Sofia, May 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

This event was joint initiative of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO with the support of the UNESCO Regional Office for Science and Culture in Venice, Italy. Designed as a regional platform for the exchange of experience and good practices, such annual meetings of the expert network in South-Eastern Europe provide an opportunity for deepening and broadening knowledge of the intangible cultural heritage.

Participating in the meeting were experts from Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus, FYR of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia; observers from the embassies of Albania, Armenia, Romania, Serbia, Greece and FYR of Macedonia. Institutionally, the Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria, the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with the Ethnographic Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Bulgarian Studies of the St. Clement of Ohrid University of Sofia, and the Institute of Library Studies and Information Technology were also represented to the meeting by their relevant experts in ICH.

The **subject matter of the meeting**: 'The Intangible Cultural Heritage: New Strategies for Sustainable Development, Tourism and Partnerships' is part of the Culture: A Bridge to Development Global Initiative, approved in the UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2012-2013 (36 C/5) at the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNESCO General Assembly (October-November 2011).

**The seminar covered the following three key topics:**

- ❖ Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) in the countries of the region

The participating experts delivered brief presentations. The most important conclusions drawn from the panel discussion were as follows:

- The participants underscored the importance of the legal frameworks in each of the relevant countries in the process of safeguarding and conservation of intangible values.
- The need was highlighted to conduct periodic reviews of, and adopt new legislative provisions while pursuing special policies in that field, which would contribute to the sustainable development of the region while simultaneously raising the funds for the safeguarding for ICH through activities such as tourism.

❖ New strategies for sustainable development, tourism and partnerships

The discussion focused on the connection between the promotion of cultural tourism and ICH, the inherent risks and challenges, potential partnerships with tourism alliances, the local authorities and NGOs. The session comprised three presentations highlighting the opportunities for integration of ICH into cultural tourism.

❖ Training and capacity building: a needs assessment

The seminar underscored the need to develop an expert network that would initiate joint activities and projects.

***Common conclusions and recommendations of the Forum:***

- a) With respect to the future of such expert meetings, it is necessary to:
- b) seek consistency in involving the participation of experts;
- c) raise, as a subject matter for future discussions, the issue of transmission, its formal and informal parameters;
- d) discuss good practices in safeguarding arts and crafts, as well as in preparing nomination files;
- e) continue the discussion on the connection between ICH and tourism;
- f) gain a deeper insight into the subject matter for, and implementation of, more meaningful discussions by making sure, upon the recommendation of experts, that future meetings would focus on a single topic;
- g) maintain regular and active exchange of information among experts.
- h) With respect to the tasks facing the Centre in this context, the experts recommended that the Centre would participate actively in, and contribute to, the processes of exchange of information, setting up and active and effective network, promoting all forms of dialogue between the parties and advocacy for the creation of multi-national files.

**3. TRAINING SEMINAR FOR NATIONAL EXPERTS IN SOUTH-WESTERN BULGARIA ON: 'IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNESCO CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (2003) AT NATIONAL LEVEL'-Sandanski, June 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>**

Part of the Annual Action Plan of the Centre, this was the first seminar at national level to be organised by the Sofia Centre for local ICH experts from South-Western Bulgaria.

It should be noted that for the first time the Centre undertook and conducted a large amount of preparatory works, the outcomes of which were instrumental for the success of the seminar. The aim was to ensure that the agenda for the seminar would most fully correspond to the needs of local ICH experts. To that end, the Centre devised and posted on its website an interactive questionnaire that was to be completed by the participants ahead of the event. The answers given informed the selection of topics for discussion at the seminar.

Taking part in the seminar were 21 experts representing various institutions: community centres, museums, as well as the local administration of the districts of Blagoevgrad, Kyustendil and Pernik. The featured speakers were experts and university teachers with substantial experience in training Bulgarian and foreign specialists in intangible cultural heritage. The participants had the opportunity to familiarize themselves in some detail with the 2003 convention and its operational guidelines, its goals and the key concepts related to it.

During the discussion sessions, the participants shared good practices and exchanged proposals for cooperation, while also clarifying the procedures of making entries in the register of Bulgaria's intangible cultural heritage.

In the spirit of the pragmatic approach towards the preparation of the seminar chosen by the Centre, the finale of the seminar was a pre-designed test intended to evaluate the knowledge attained in it. The organizers conferred upon the participants in the seminar certificates attesting to their successful participation. Finally, the participants were asked to complete an evaluation form stating their level of satisfaction with being part of the seminar. Having collated the data from those forms, the organizers can conclude that the local experts were highly appreciative of the seminar and find the take-home results applicable to their future work in the field of ICH. A recommendation was made for such seminars to become traditional, being held periodically while expanding the range of participants in them.

#### **4. FIRST GLOBAL MEETING OF CATEGORY TWO CENTRES-Sozopol, July 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>**

This forum stands out as perhaps the most significant event on the Centre's agenda during the year 2013, for several main reasons:

- 1) The fact that for the first time, gathered at the same place were members of the UNESCO Secretariat, of its regional offices and the 6 Category 2 Centres active in the field of ICH: Bulgaria, China, Iran, Japan, Peru, and South Korea.
- 2) The scale of the event, which for all intents and purposes was first of a kind, in terms of its format, organizational and logistical parameters specific for this type of forum, in the Centre's brief history.
- 3) The significance and relevance of the key theme of the meeting proposed by the Secretariat: strengthening the usefulness coefficient of the Category 2 Centres in helping the Organization and the introduction of RBM (Result-Based Management) – new approach of management currently being phased in at the World Organization.
- 4) The new guidelines set forth for the interaction between UNESCO and the Category 2 Centres, as follows:

- Streamlining the process of resource provision to Category 2 Centres by introducing the ‘Result-Based Management’ method;
- Confirmation of the practice of continuous communication between centres and the UNESCO governing bodies on matters related to the eligibility criteria for the selection of external funding sources, whose ideology must match that of the World Organization;
- In the context of specific positioning and functional interlinkage of the centres, on the one hand, with UNESCO, and on the other, with the national governments that provide the relevant resources, it is necessary to raise the level of awareness of the Centre’s members in the entire process of planning and financing. This will enable their fuller participation in, and commitment to, the fulfilment of the plan of the relevant centre.

***Key conclusions and outcomes of the meeting:***

- ❖ Strengthening cooperation between UNESCO and the Category 2 Centres as an important part of the Organization’s governance programme aimed at coping with the challenges it is facing;
- ❖ Improving communication between Category 2 Centres and UNESCO with the aim of enabling fuller participation in, and contribution to, sustainable development. Their much needed and regular communication with UNESCO (including its regional office) will optimize the operation of both the centres and the Organization;
- ❖ It is necessary to improve cooperation at all levels, incl.:
  - between the Governing Body and the Directors of the centres;
  - among the centres themselves, on the basis of the already existing common platform for exchange of information and communication, as well as the hosting of annual meetings;
- ❖ Using the ‘Result-Based Management’ method enables an improvement of the all-round interaction between the Organization and the centres during the entire process of planning, implementation and evaluation of their programmes and activities. This method is also expected to help streamline the process of drawing up a programme, and subsequently, a report;
- ❖ It is necessary for Category 2 Centres to submit, once every six months, a progress report on the attainment of the goals set in their respective programme in the field of ICH, as defined in C/5, whereas their contribution will be featured in the report of the Secretariat, in the SISTER system; the strategy and the decisions of the Executive Board and the General Conference for Category 2 Centres will apply to all centres; the new agreements will integrate all new provisions; an independent performance evaluation is to be conducted prior to every renewal, with the costs being borne by the centres.
- ❖ The Strategy of the UNESCO participation with the Regional Intangible Heritage Centres for the period 2014-2021 must be developed using the RBM methodology; the expected results could be: 1) Increased effectiveness of the Centres through

stronger governance; 2) Reinforced contribution of Centres to the implementation of UNESCO programmes through an effective process of renewal; 3) increased impact of the Centres in the member states through stronger interaction between the Centres and UNESCO.

- ❖ The general conclusion is that the Sozopol meeting was a very useful one, and its results should be reinforced in practice. It enables all Centres authorized by the UNESCO General Conference in 2007 and 2009 to declare themselves operational, as well as to familiarize themselves with the new trends in the development of the World Organization in 2014.
- ❖ Irrespective of the positive results reported and good intentions declared by the participants in the meeting, the effort to conduct a questionnaire for its results was not successful, only two of the representatives of the China-based ICH Centre for Asia-Pacific have responded to the performance card prepared by the Centre jointly with the Secretariat.

#### **5. SUPPORT FOR, AND PARTICIPATION IN, THE INTERNATIONAL ETHNOLOGICAL FILMS FESTIVAL, Belgrade, Serbia, September 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>**

This activity, included in the Centre's Action Plan for 2013, had also been discussed and debated with members of the Secretariat and the Venice Regional Office at the Sozopol meeting. The concerns expressed by representatives of the Centre that the initially proposed idea to collate the brief presentations on ICH prepared separately by each country in the region would not result in a new reflection of the role and significance of the region's ICH, were received with understanding by the UNESCO representatives. It was in this spirit that the idea of organizing a round table within the Belgrade Festival, to discuss the methodology of making films successfully integrating ICH elements from all countries in the region, was discussed and accepted.

Thus the Centre has stated its ambition to become a genuine participant in the processes of structuring a common platform for shared knowledge and practices between the countries of the region in the sphere of ICH, incl. through seeking partnership with already established cultural practices and events. In practical terms, this approach turned out to be some sort of a 'touchstone' for the introduction of clearer criteria in the planning and funding by the Centre of national cultural events in the member states.

The subject matter of the round table on 'The contribution of audio-visual productions to the safeguarding of ICH' gathered experts in visual anthropology and the intangible cultural heritage from Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Slovenia, China, Montenegro, and Belgium, and well as representatives of Regional Bureau of science and culture in Venice and the Regional Centre.

The meeting was opened with keynote presentations by Naško Križnar (Slovenia) on 'The contribution of audio-visual productions to safeguarding ICH' and Vladimir Petrovic (Serbia) on 'The making of films on the intangible cultural heritage: factual, creative and other challenges and good practices'. A representative of the Centre took part in the forum by briefing the attendees on the Centre's mission, goals and objectives.

The second panel, moderated by Sasa Sreckovic, discussed the possibility for establishing an audio-visual production about the intangible cultural heritage.

The results of the discussions conducted reconfirmed the concern expressed initially by the Centre that to this day, there is no working approach to, or common concept for, the making of a film that would successfully integrate the elements of ICH of individual states.

The decision was made, therefore, for the Regional Centre, jointly with Regional Bureau of science and culture in Venice, to propose a concept for a common project/film, having coordinated the content of the script with all member states. It was also agreed that the financial framework for the project would be the subject of additional discussion, based upon the finished concept.

At the initiative of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO, for the first time within the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition of the International Ethnological Films Festival in Belgrade, Serbia (October 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2013), a special award was bestowed on the last day of the festival (October 8<sup>th</sup>) on behalf of the Regional Centre upon the film that best reflects the intangible cultural heritage. This award aims to motivate creative artists active in the field of ethnological documentaries for a more in-depth insight into the subject of the intangible cultural heritage and the objective portrayal of its current state and condition at the time of filming, as well as for its wider publicity.

The Festival jury, comprised of: Tamara Nikolić-Berić, ethnologist; Bozidar Zečević, film critic; and Livo Niglas, ethnologist and script writer, awarded the Grand Prix to the Japanese film *Yo Yoko* (meaning 'Good Food', directed by Daisuke Bundo, a 2012 production). The award was conferred by the representative of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to the Managing Board of the Regional Centre, Ass. Prof. Dr. Yoanna Spassova-Dikova, Scientific Secretary of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences for the sector of Cultural and Historical Heritage and National Identity. On behalf of the film makers, the award was received by Mr. Yukiyo Omori, Cultural Attaché with the Embassy of Japan to Belgrade.

## **6. PARTICIPATION IN THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UNESCO INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE - Baku, Azerbaijan, December 2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>**

A representative of the Centre took part in the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, while at the same time observing the proceedings of the parallel forum of non-governmental organization taking place at the same time.

## **7. PARTICIPATION OF THE BISTRITSA GRANNIES IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONCERT ORGANIZED BY UNESCO**

To mark the International Francophonie Day and the tenth anniversary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), Bulgaria took part in a major international concert featuring songs and dances included in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The event took place on March 18<sup>th</sup> at UNESCO HQ in Paris. Three countries: Bulgaria, Armenia and Lithuania, were invited to participate in the concert, each of them presenting elements of its own intangible cultural heritage.

Bulgaria partook in this prestigious event through the Bistritsa Grannies Group, on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Their participation was



made possible by the support of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO, jointly with the Municipality of Sofia.

## **B. UNPLANNED ACTIVITIES**

### **1. PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND MEETING OF CATEGORY 2 CENTRES - Baku, Azerbaijan, December 4<sup>th</sup>**

The Second Global Meeting was held at the initiative of the UNESCO Secretariat.

The Meeting was opened on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and ran in parallel with the Committee sittings, in afternoon and evening sessions. At the invitation of the UNESCO Secretariat, the meeting was organized and moderated by the representatives of the Category 2 Centres in Bulgaria and Iran.

The Meeting was launched through four exhibitions, each showing a different approach to the issues of Category 2 Centres:

- from Iran: a presentation of the Tehran Centre and its operation;
- from Bulgaria: a presentation of aspects of the common efforts of Category 2 Centres;
- from Algeria: a presentation of the challenges faced in the process of establishment of a Category 2 Centre;
- from Peru: a presentation of the renewal assessment procedure of the relevant Centre after the first 6 years of its existence and the challenges emerging in that context.

The discussions that followed the presentations touched upon issues highlighting the need to expand the expert capacities relevant to the UNESCO Global Capacity building strategy; the need to seek to establish more active contacts among centres, as well as between the centres and the Secretariat.

## **2. EXPANDING THE PARTNERSHIP NETWORK**

### **2.1. THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ETHNOGRAPHIC FILMS IN SOFIA**

The meeting took place on September 19<sup>th</sup> at the offices of the Regional Centre. The participants discussed the possibilities for partnership between the Festival and the Regional Centre.

The organizers addressed to the Regional Centre a specific request: to support the participation in the Festival of Elpida Skoufalou from Greece, who would conduct a master class, as well as, in principle, to promote partnership for future editions of the Festival.

The Regional Centre undertook and has since fulfilled the following commitments:

- To contribute to establishing contacts with the National Commission for UNESCO in Bulgaria and the National Commission for UNESCO in Greece, in support of Elpida Skoufalou's trip to Bulgaria;
- To post information about the Festival on the Centre's website;

- To consider future partnership and support on the part of the Centre (possibly an award or another form of support for the master class) for future editions of the Festival.

## **2.2. EXPERT GROUP OF THE PROJECT 'JP-EU/COE SUPPORT TO THE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY' – carried out in Pristina, Kosovo (not on the Action Plan)**

The meeting took place on June 18<sup>th</sup> at the Regional Centre, with the participation of experts from Kosovo, a representative of the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture and experts of the Regional Centre.

The guests presented their projects and the aims of their visit. They were familiarized with the operation of the Regional Centre to date, as well as the program of activities by the end of the year 2013.

The Kosovo experts:

- ❖ showed interest in the possibilities and procedures for joining the initiatives and projects of the Regional Centre and, more specifically, the ways in which the Centre may help the Kosovo experts increase their capacity for safeguarding ICH (*Kosovo is not a UNESCO member*) while providing expert support to Kosovo in compiling their national register;
- ❖ expressed their willingness to join multinational candidatures from the region;
- ❖ addressed a formal request to be kept abreast of the activities and initiatives of the Centre in the ICH field, in order to be able to join them in due course and familiarize themselves with good practices.

The Centre team proposed to the applicants to formally address the Executive Board of the Centre with a request to be given an opportunity to present their ideas of projects and initiatives, in order to be included, if possible, in the activities of the Centre as part of the network of ICH experts.

## **2.3. VISIT BY EXPERTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA**

The meeting took place at the offices of the Centre on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013, with the participation of representatives of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with the Ethnographic Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. It was basically a get-to-know-each-other event, the idea being to present the operation of the Centre to the Latvian guests and outlining its spheres of activity.

The Latvian colleagues briefed their hosts on the work of the Museum of Latvian History, the methods of project financing, on possible challenges and the steps to address them.

## **3. TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

### **3.1. MEETING WITH STUDENTS MAJORING IN CULTURAL STUDIES REGARDING A STUDY OF THE OPERATION OF THE REGIONAL CENTRE**

The meeting took place on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013, after the students had sent a preliminary questionnaire to the Regional Centre about its work. The study was undertaken in relation to their preparation of a term paper on the functioning of cultural institutions in Bulgaria.

### **3.2. CLASSES IN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Students pursuing a Master's course in anthropology at St. Clement of Ohrid University of Sofia had classes in intangible cultural heritage in the conference room of the Sofia Centre. They expressed their interest in, and willingness for, undertaking more such classes in the future.

### **3.3. INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME**

For the first time the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage opened its doors to interns in 2013. Our first intern was Mademoiselle Aurélie Pollet of France, who is pursuing a Master's Degree in Cultural Policy and Management with the University of Arts in Belgrade (UNESCO Chair).

The intern was given an opportunity to acquire in-depth familiarity with the measures for safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage and the principles of ICH management and stewardship in the countries of South-Eastern Europe. The conducive working atmosphere and her active communication with the Sofia Centre team have been no less stimulating for the creative and professional resources of the Centre. Mademoiselle Pollet received a maximum grade of 30 points for her report about the internship with the Centre, from her research supervisor, Prof. Milena Dragicevic Sestic, head of the Master's Programme at the University of Arts.

## **4. PROMOTIONAL, PUBLISHING AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES**

### **4.1. PUBLICATION: ALBUM OF 'MASTERPIECES OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE'**

In May 2013, the Centre bankrolled the printing of the illustrated album 'Masterpieces of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe', showcasing all elements on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage located in the region. The album uses texts and photographs submitted by the relevant National Commissions for UNESCO of the countries in the region (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, and Turkey).

For the first time, the album was distributed by the Centre during the Seventh Annual Regional Meeting on the Intangible Cultural Heritage, an expert meeting jointly organized with the Regional Bureau of science and culture in Venice and held in Sofia on May 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

### **4.2. EXHIBITION: 'COLOURS FROM THE PAST: ANCIENT EMBROIDERIES FROM THE SOFIA REGION'**

To mark the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention, the Sofia Centre, in partnership with the Sofia History Museum and the Municipality of Sofia, organized an exhibition of embroideries from the region around Sofia, dubbed '**Colours from the past: Ancient Embroideries from the Sofia Region**'. The exhibition featured specimens of the art of hand stitching from the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century. All exhibits are in the ownership of the Sofia History Museum. The exhibition was formally opened December 12<sup>th</sup> by Mrs. Yordanka Fandakova, the Mayor of Sofia.

### **4.3. PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION: 'A GUARD OF TRADITIONS'**

The 'Guard of Traditions' exhibition displayed 20 photographs out of the Original 600 entries submitted for review in the photographic competition in 2012. The exhibition was opened on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

#### **4.4. AN EXHIBITION OF CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS DURING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

An exhibition of children's drawings was staged in the foyer to Hall No. 7 of the National Palace of Culture to coincide in time with the session of the General Assembly of the Regional Centre. The drawings are the work of children aged 7 through 7 and are part of the Granny's Recipes competition sponsored by the A.R.I.Z.-7 Association for the Promotion of Arts and Crafts and the Ivital Consult Company. The goal of the competition was to revive children's interest in the national culinary traditions while showcasing traditional dishes from different regions of the country. The exhibition displayed 20 out of the 60 drawings donated to the Regional Centre

#### **4.5. ACCOUNTS IN SOCIAL NETWORKS**

The Regional Centre maintains its official website and online forum at <http://bg.unesco-centerbg.org/view/post/32>, as well as accounts in the social networks Facebook and Twitter. Between March of last year and today, the Facebook account of the Association has gathered some 300 likes. Unlike the website, our Facebook account is more dynamic, covering a broader range of information targeting a wider audience. Thus, we post on it UNESCO-related news, stories about international festivals and holidays, events held under the patronage of UNESCO and the Regional Centre; projects and programmes related to cultural heritage in general; information about specialist courses in the field of cultural heritage; conferences, forums and other interesting events relevant to the ICH elements in the region. Thus presented, the news are more accessible, rich in interesting facts and enabling people to follow forthcoming events in the region.

The Regional Centre may be found under its abbreviated name: **unesco centre sofia** (all lower-case letters).

### **5. OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE RELATED TO CENTRE ACTIVITIES**

#### **PREPARATION AND CIRCULATION OF A LETTER TO THE REGIONAL CENTRE MEMBER STATES IN RELATION TO THE REALIZATION OF AN INFORMATION PLATFORM IN THE AREA OF ICH**

In furtherance of the opinion expressed by the General Assembly regarding the creation of a common information platform, a letter was sent to all member states of the Regional Centre requesting the following information:

- suggestions regarding the information they would like to find on the proposed platform;
- information materials related to ICH in the members states: national legislation, strategic documents, analyses, scientific research papers, projects, good practices, elements of ICH on the UNESCO lists, candidatures, reports pursuant to the Convention, communication and other materials that can be uploaded on the website of the Regional Centre;
- information about future projects, programmes and initiatives in the field of ICH;

The letter invites representatives of the member states to identify one expert from each country who would undertake to supply, on a regular basis, information about any and all activities in the territory of the respective country concerning the safeguarding and publicity of its intangible cultural heritage.

Feedback has so far been received only from Armenia and Croatia; the documents submitted have since been uploaded on the website of the Regional Centre, in the Resources section.

### **III. CONCLUSIONS**

An analysis of the work done in 2013 by the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Sofia prompts the following conclusions:

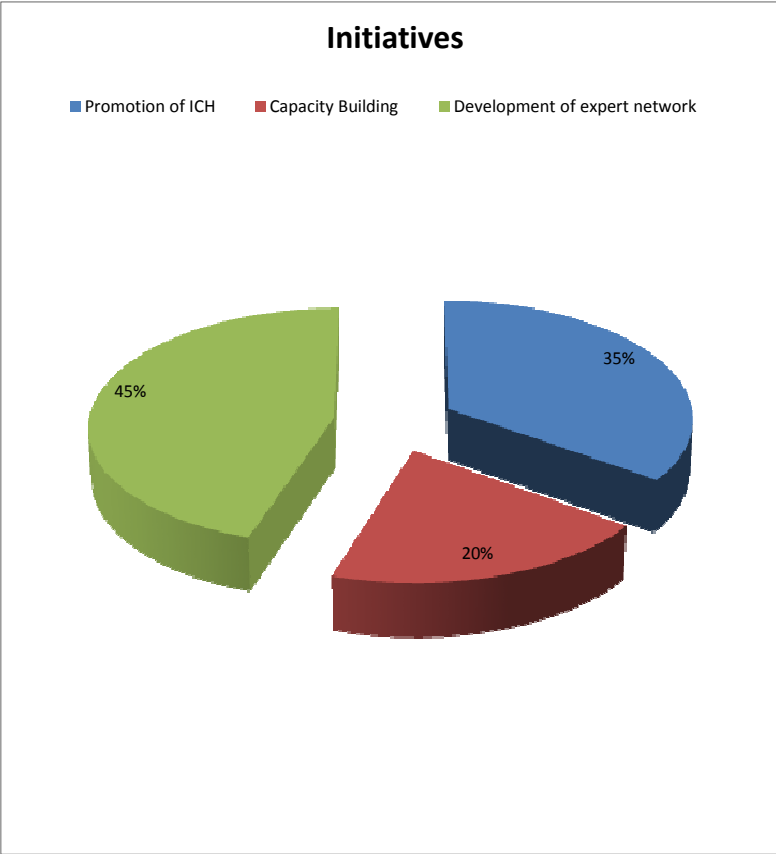
- ❖ A positive trend of the Centre shaping up its profile and fleshing out its activity with genuine content;
- ❖ Better positioning of the Centre in both a national and an international context;
- ❖ In 2013, the Centre continued the process of its organizational and functional 'emancipation' as an entity that should by definition be recognized by its three institutional founders: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, as a relatively independent structure under UNESCO auspices, having its own specific goals and objectives defined by the World Organization.

### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

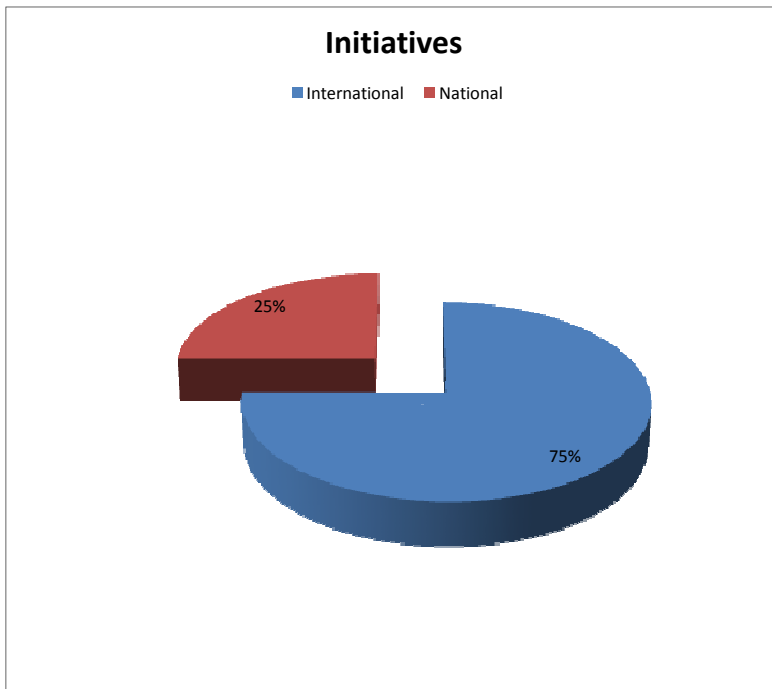
1. It is necessary to improve the planning process by devoting special attention to:
  - ❖ achieving better synchronicity with the UNESCO plans and general strategies;
  - ❖ objective coverage and assistance for attaining the goals of the individual Member States in their efforts for safeguarding ICH;
  - ❖ formulation of activities on the basis of the relevant expertise
  - ❖ identifying exact criteria regarding the manner of funding of such activities;
  - ❖ ensuring that projects and activities make a genuine contribution to capacity building in the member states for the safeguarding of their intangible cultural heritage and from the perspective of sustainable development;
  - ❖ ensuring the open nature of the framework of planned activities. Multilateral communication presupposes a possibility for proposals to be submitted by individual member states on a year-round basis;
2. Accelerated introduction of a set of criteria for evaluation and funding of activities proposed by the member states. The Centre should formulate those criteria in dialog with the UNESCO Secretariat.
3. Bridging the 'gaps' in the communication between the Centre and the individual member states. Thus, for example, due to lack of coordination with the host country, and the last-minute confusion regarding the funding mechanism, training seminars in capacity building scheduled for Greece and FYR of Macedonia had to be cancelled.

4. One of the highlights in the Centre's Action Plan for 2014 should be the preparation and holding of the conference on 'Copyright in the Field of Intangible Cultural Heritage', which had been scheduled for 2013 but had to be cancelled. Following a discussion with the UNESCO Secretariat, it was agreed that such a forum requires more thorough preparation. The proposal of the Secretariat was for this Conference to be rescheduled for the second half of 2014.
5. Improving dialog between the three institutional co-founders of the Centre and ensuring support for its management as a dynamic organization operating in accordance with modern standard and principles, under UNESCO auspices.
6. Exploring internal institutional mechanisms for improving the management of the Centre, including through making amendments to its Statute.

**ANNEX 1**

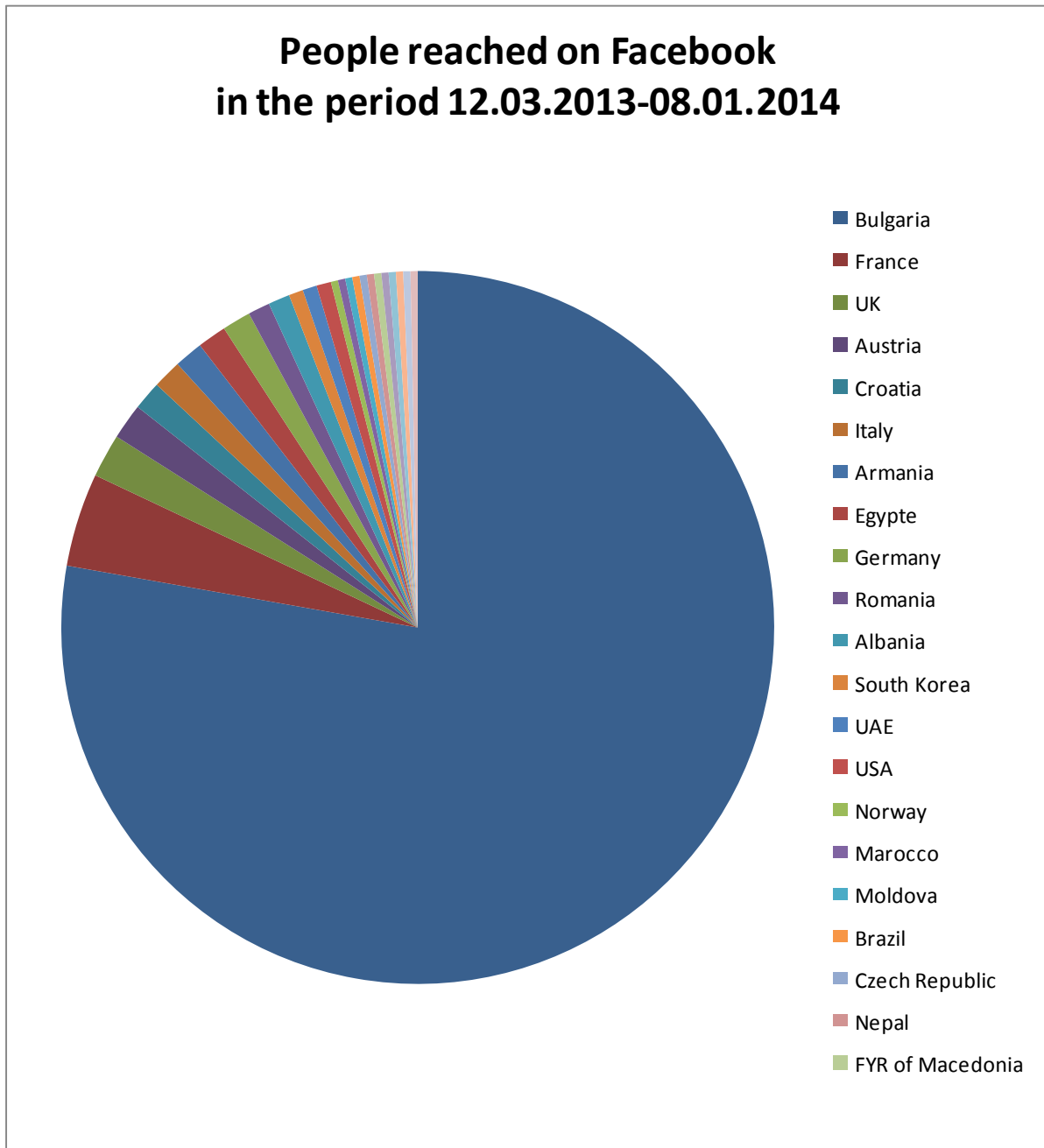


## ANNEX II





ANNEX III



*The pie chart is based on the statistics of the Regional Centre's page provided by Facebook. The total amount of fans of the page is 308 persons (within 08.01.2014), while all the people reached by the news of the Centre are 631 within the same period of time.*