

Paraguay

In implementing the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the National Culture Secretariat, the authority responsible for culture in Paraguay, has scored many successes, in particular the creation of opportunities for dialogue with civil society. Accordingly, the Meeting of Coalitions was held in Asunción from 20 to 22 May 2009. The 2005 Convention, ratified in 2007, was included among the strategic goals of the National Culture Secretariat, informing all of its ongoing programmes and the establishment of its Directorate-General for Creation and Cultural Diversity.

“Diversity” has been the criterion for the acknowledgement of all cultural expressions throughout the national territory, in particular – but not only – during events held to mark the bicentenary of the independence of the Republic of Paraguay, through programmes designed to disseminate, preserve, enhance and protect the cultural expressions of 18 indigenous peoples (broken down into four language families), the cultural expressions of the Paraguayan people itself and of more than one dozen immigrant peoples (descendants of Africans, Mennonites, Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, Asians, Arabs and others). The Cultural Benchmarks programme was launched in 2009.

Working meetings of art and culture representatives and local-authority representatives were convened in 2010 in order to organize the participation of civil society in ceremonies (Vy’a Guasu) held to mark the bicentenary of the country’s independence. As a result of this participatory mechanism, the National Culture Council was established in November 2011.

In the context of regional cooperation through MERCOSUR, the second Guarani Meeting was held from 23 to 25 March 2011 in Amambay Department, on the land of the Pai Tavyterâ people’s Jaguati community, whose wish to have a ceremonial area built was granted.

The National Culture Secretariat extended its presence throughout Paraguay in 2011, by becoming active in the 17 departmental capitals and in many villages, thus making one additional step towards the deconcentration and decentralization of the management of culture in Paraguay.

This hard work has revealed the extent to which citizens, their traditional authorities and public officials still know too little about the potential of various cultural expressions. For 2012, the Secretariat therefore scheduled 2005 Convention-related awareness-raising workshops that will be led by local-authority representatives, workers from the world of culture and artists from the country’s various departments.