



Islamic Republic of Iran  
Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage,  
Tourism & Handicrafts  
Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage

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*In the name of God*

**Mr. Tim Curtis  
Secretary, Convention  
for the Safeguarding  
of the Intangible  
Cultural Heritage  
Chief,  
Living Heritage Entity**

7, place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris 07, France

*Sub: I.R. of Iran's Concerns on Nomination File No. 1684 submitted by the Republic of Turkey*

Dear Sir,

As we are aware, the nations of our region, over centuries of cohabitation, coexistence and human exchange, have shared common heritage which has made the culture of our region so rich. I believe we should follow the spirit of the 2003 Convention not only to avoid creating an atmosphere of divergence and separation, but also to prepare files which create friendship and cooperation among the population while respecting their common heritage more strongly. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a State Party to the 2003 Convention, has always tried to act in harmony with the spirit of the Convention. The Nowrouz file forms an example of the best practices of this Convention. Equally, the Islamic Republic of Iran has enjoyed excellent collaboration with the Republic of Turkey on a number of joint nomination files.

Concerning nomination file No. 1684, "Hüsn-i Hat, traditional art of Islamic calligraphy" submitted by the Republic of Turkey for possible inscription on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity for the 2021 cycle, while respecting the standpoints of our neighbouring country, I wish to express the concerns of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the consequences of this inscription. Accordingly, I would like to highlight that the reference to the geographical range of the element mentioned in this nomination file - "*all over the world especially in the countries where the Muslim population intensely lived*" - results in the geographical over-inclusivity of the nomination file. In this regard I would like to recall some articles of the 2003 Convention including Article 1(b),

on respect for the ICH of others; Article 1(d) on providing international cooperation; and Article 3(b), on respecting the rights and ... the intellectual rights... of state parties.

Furthermore, I would like to note that the element is currently based on a living heritage, on Persian and/or Arabic and similar scripts, and not on a hypothetical “Islamic” alphabet. Diverse collections of calligraphic styles have been created over the centuries in different Islamic countries all around the globe, which reflect their own cultural and social characteristics. It is worthy of note that calligraphy is widely used in other applications which are essentially of a non-religious nature, such as in decorative art or literary works. Most interestingly, there are a large number of religious texts of other religions which have been written by calligraphers who have employed the same alphabetic systems. For this reason, it is highly recommended that the term “Islamic” should be omitted.

Moreover, this nomination file includes a vast variety of styles, techniques and terms, some of which could in fact be nominated as separate nomination files by one or several countries. For example, the “Nastaliq” style, which was developed and practiced in Iran more than in any other Islamic country, is technically, stylistically, socially and culturally rich enough to be separately treated as a single nomination file. It is worth mentioning that the “Thulth” script was the one mainly used in the official, religious, literary and royal texts of the Ottoman Empire until now and is still the most used script in Turkey for calligraphic purposes. In addition, it should be mentioned that the “Diwani” script has been mainly used in the African Islamic countries and constitutes an integral part of their identity, as does “Nastaliq” for the Iranians. Consequently, this nomination file is technically a clear example of an over-inclusive nomination.

In conclusion, nomination file No. 1684 should be jointly re-prepared and re-submitted by at least a number of countries who share the heritage referred to therein the most, such as Iran.

Thank you in advance for your kind attention to this matter.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Mohammad Hassan Talebian  
Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage  
The Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage,  
Tourism and Handicrafts



Cc:

- H. E. Dr. Ali Asghar Moonesan, Minister of the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts (MCTH);
- H. E. Dr. Jalali, Permanent Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO;
- H.E. Dr. Ayoubi, Head of the Iranian National Commission of UNESCO, Tehran.