

14th Annual Meeting of the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intangible Cultural Heritage in emergencies responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

*Addressing questions of
ICH and resilience in times of crisis*

Online, 26 June 2020



REPORT

Acknowledgments

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©Vilma Matulic/PIXSELL - The procession of Za Krizen ('following the cross') on the island of Hvar, Croatia, took place this year with participants wearing masks and the number of spectators being drastically reduced in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

©UNESCO - Video mosaic of part of the participants to the meeting

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Executive summary

In 2020, as the world was struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic, the 14th annual meeting of the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) focused on ICH in emergencies and on responses to the pandemic.

The meeting, held online on 26 June 2020, created an occasion to bring together for the first time both experts representing ICH national authorities as well as the UNESCO-trained facilitators from the countries concerned. This combination of different expertise enriched the exchange of ideas and strengthened the cooperation between different actors across the region. In preparation to the meeting, a survey was conducted among participants in order to have an overall view of the experiences and the impact of COVID-19 on ICH and its safeguarding in the region. In two countries in the region the impact of the crisis was compounded by the occurrence of other natural disasters: the earthquakes that hit Albania in 2019 and Croatia in 2020.

The meeting was attended by 64 participants, including 25 governmental experts and 11 facilitators, giving all attendants a space to share their experience on this global pandemic's impacts on living heritage and responses developed to this crisis and to learn from each of the participants' reflections.

The preparatory survey and the exchanges during the meeting highlighted the numerous creative initiatives and adaptations developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by ICH practitioners and bearers. The diversity of responses was impressive, and highlighted both negative impacts and positive experiences and responsiveness.

Governments all over South-East Europe undertook measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to safeguard heritage or specifically ICH elements. The main measures consisted in governmental support such as financial subsidies (e.g. grants and soft loans, wage compensations for sectoral workers, layoff, etc.), postponed taxes and rents, methodological guidelines and recommendations, and generic sanitary measures such as social distancing. Other organizations related to ICH put place different initiatives supporting ICH activities through vouchers, online/virtual practices, facilitating 'at home' experiences, educational programs, etc.

The meeting also vividly illustrated the resilience of the living heritage, and how ICH can reinvent itself. It showcased the many creative initiatives adopted by ICH practitioners and bearers, such as online networks of knowledge sharing, online programs to cooperate with governments, digitization of ICH, increase of 'at home' practices, online performances by musicians and other practitioners, etc. Radio and TV stations came up to help by transmitting ICH through their channels, while museums organized virtual tours or digital exhibitions on living heritage. Others organized calls for projects to popularize ICH, created platforms to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the cultural sector, or took advantage of the lockdown to plan governmental programmes for the years to come or document ICH, including most vulnerable elements and good safeguarding practices.

While in some cases the pandemic disrupted contexts and channels necessary for expressing, safeguarding and transmitting living heritage, the meeting showed that the crisis – unless it continues for a long time – may not bear a lasting negative impact on ICH practices. On the contrary, this unprecedented situation in some cases strengthened the bonds between ICH communities, created a new impetus, provoked the involvement of new users and revitalized local interest.

Nevertheless, participants expressed concern that, beyond the limit of the culture sector, the COVID-19 sanitary emergency provoked a decrease of interest about ICH on a policy and decision-making level, as other areas took an almost exclusive priority in terms of funding

and attention (especially those more directly related to public health and relieve from economic crisis). In addition, several cases emerged in which the impossibility of continued ICH practices created problems for communities both from the social and the economic points of view; this was especially felt in the case of those ICH elements that are directly related to income generation, as the impossibility of regular practice was combined with the negative effects of emergency sanitary measures in terms of economic crisis and restrictions to social interaction.

To support the reactivation of ICH and its long-term safeguarding after the COVID-19 pandemic, relevant priorities that need to be addressed by a variety of key stakeholders came to the fore. These entailed among others to:

- carry out community-based needs assessments and ensure that ICH is incorporated in all levels of risk reduction and emergency preparedness and response
- create a favourable environment to ensure the continued practices and the transmission of ICH elements, respecting their dynamic and adaptive nature
- provide resources and support for ICH bearers and communities to develop and undertake safeguarding plans/measures to enhance the resilience of their living heritage, especially when ICH practices are directly related to community livelihood
- facilitate information sharing on ICH safeguarding in emergency situations within and between affected States Parties and other stakeholders, such as NGOs, charities and humanitarian actors
- leverage the opportunity provided by the listing mechanisms under the 2003 Convention for promoting and enhancing the visibility of those ICH elements that contribute to preparing for, responding to and recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, the 14th annual meeting of the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage provided for a precious mutual learning opportunity in which participants could exchange their experiences on the dual role that intangible cultural heritage plays in emergencies. The meeting highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has brought disruptive but also creative transformations in our human relations, creating a 'new together', cherishing social interaction in new ways, and introducing innovative virtual modalities for ICH practicing and safeguarding that may result in more extended and inclusive ways of participation and exchange.

Introduction

The South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) was established in 2007 by UNESCO, through its Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, in order to support the implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the region.

The annual Network meetings¹ contribute to enhance a common understanding of opportunities and challenges linked to the safeguarding of ICH as a key asset of South-East European cultural diversity, promoting the sharing of knowledge and good practices on national measures to implement the Convention, and serving as a platform to develop regional and cross-border cooperation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 14th annual network meeting was adapted to an online format. It included a specific focus on intangible cultural heritage in emergencies and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the region.

As illustrated by the 2020 UNESCO survey on living heritage experiences and the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of the crisis stretches beyond physical health, and has caused profound disruptions in the social and cultural lives of people. Many festivals and cultural events scheduled for 2020 have been cancelled or postponed, and cultural practices and rituals restricted. This has also resulted in the loss of income for many bearers and practitioners of intangible cultural heritage, many of whom largely operate in the informal sector and risk to be excluded by the measures and packages offered to cultural professionals and entrepreneurs at the national levels.

For some countries in South-Eastern Europe, the impact of the crisis was compounded by the occurrence of other natural disasters, such as the earthquakes that hit Albania in 2019 and Croatia in 2020.

Yet, as intangible cultural heritage is also adaptive in nature, many communities are turning to their intangible cultural heritage to help respond to and cope with the crisis. Intangible cultural heritage has shown to be a source of social cohesion, inspiration and creativity that can give hope and solidarity during such difficult times. Local and traditional knowledge, particularly regarding agriculture and the environment, can furthermore provide a source of resilience for many communities who face social and economic precarity.

The 14th annual meeting provided an opportunity to explore the diverse ways intangible cultural heritage has been impacted by the pandemic and how communities respond to help strengthen the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in this context. At the same time, the pandemic also presented a critical moment to reflect on and discuss the roles of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, in an area that is also vulnerable to seismic and hydrogeological hazards.

The meeting was organized by UNESCO (Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, in cooperation with the Culture Sector / Living Heritage Entity), with the support of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe (Category 2 Centre operating under the auspices of UNESCO, based in Sofia, Bulgaria), and thanks to the annual contribution of Italy to the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe.

¹ Annual meetings took place so far in Arbanasi, Bulgaria (2007); Safranbolu, Turkey (2008); Zagreb, Croatia (2009); Râmnicu-Vâlcea, Romania (2010); Belgrade, Serbia (2011); Athens, Greece (2012); Sofia, Bulgaria (2013); Limassol, Cyprus (2014); Venice, Italy (2015); Supetar, Croatia (2016); Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017); Ljubljana, Slovenia (2018) and Cremona, Italy (2019).

Learnings of the meeting

Responding to COVID-19 crisis

I. The UNESCO framework on ICH and emergencies

UNESCO has been increasingly called upon in recent years to provide assistance to Member States affected by the rising number of emergencies, including both conflicts and disasters situations. To this end, there has been an ongoing reflection at the intergovernmental level on the role of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, and the subject has been addressed at the Committee sessions from 2016 until 2019.

This work also contributes to UNESCO's wider action to protect culture in emergencies, fully in line with the Strategy for the reinforcement of UNESCO's action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict² and its Addendum concerning emergencies associated with disasters caused by natural and human-induced hazards, and also seeking to foster greater cooperation and collaboration across the fields of heritage safeguarding.

Highlights of the Discussions

- The first time intangible cultural heritage in emergencies was examined at a Committee session in 2016, the Committee underscored the dual nature of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies – both as being under threat and as a powerful tool for recovery and resilience – and requested that the Secretariat gather more knowledge and experience on the topic ([document ITH/16/11.COM/15](#); [Decision 11.COM 15](#)).
- The following year, at its twelfth session in 2017, the Committee examined the results of several activities undertaken by the Secretariat in both conflict and disaster situations. This included [a survey among displaced Syrians](#), [a desk based study on ICH and disasters](#) and several projects funded under the emergency international assistance mechanism (i.e. Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, and Niger). Based on this work, it pointed to a future direction that privileges community-based needs identifications and asked the Secretariat to enhance awareness raising and capacity building on the topic and to strengthen cooperation with relevant United Nations entities ([document ITH/17/12.COM/15](#); [Decision 12.COM 15](#)).
- In 2018, building on this experience, the Committee felt that the time had come to define operational modalities for safeguarding ICH in emergencies and requested the Secretariat to organize an expert meeting on the topic in 2019 with the aim to transform the knowledge and experience acquired into methodological guidance for State Parties and other relevant stakeholders. ([document ITH/18/13.COM/11](#); [Decision 13.COM 11](#)).
- To this end, the Secretariat organized an expert meeting on intangible cultural heritage in emergencies at UNESCO Headquarters on 21 and 22 May 2019, with the aim to define **methodological guidance** for the safeguarding of ICH in emergencies. Following two days of discussion, the experts reached agreement on a set of operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies.³

² <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000235186>

³ All information related to the expert meeting on ICH in emergencies is available online:

- working document ([document LHE/19/EXP/2](#)),
- meeting report ([document LHE/19/EXP/5](#)), and

- The intergovernmental process resulted in the development of operational principles and modalities for safeguarding ICH which were presented and endorsed by the Committee at its fourteenth session in Bogota, Colombia, in 2019. ([document LHE/19/14.COM/13 Rev.](#), [Decision 14.COM 13](#))⁴.

Introducing the operational principles and modalities

The operational principles and modalities comprise **six overarching principles**, complemented by **action-oriented modalities**, and organized around **three main stages of an emergency management cycle** — namely preparedness, response and recovery.

They address the question of how best to safeguard and engage intangible cultural heritage in various types of emergencies in line with the principles of the 2003 Convention, responding to **both conflict and disaster situations**, and recognizing the full complexity of different types of emergencies.

The principles and modalities are not suggesting that there is a one size fits all approach, or attempting to define an exhaustive list of actions, but present an overarching framework of issues at stake when safeguarding ICH in emergencies. The operational modalities are important for our work as they provide for a standard setting framework, and play a role for enhancing advocacy and awareness raising around ICH and emergencies.

The operational principles and modalities:

- emphasize the **dual nature** of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies: emergencies directly threaten the transmission and viability of intangible cultural heritage, on the one hand, and can be harnessed as a resource to support preparedness, response and recovery processes on the other.
- underscore the **usefulness of community-based needs identifications and approaches**, and that communities should be involved at all stages of the emergency management cycle.
- address a **broad range of stakeholders** both States Parties and heritage specialists along with those involved in emergency management, including disaster preparedness and relief specialists, humanitarian actors, non-governmental organizations and armed forces.

UNESCO technical and financial assistance and other tools:

- **Emergency international assistance mechanism supported by the ICH Fund**

Under the 2003 Convention, there is the **emergency international assistance mechanism supported by the ICH Fund**. Under this mechanism, States Parties who find themselves in a situation of emergency can make a request for international assistance, and this request, regardless of the amount, can be fast tracked and

- and summary records ([document LHE/19/14.COM/INF.13](#))

⁴ After the present meeting, new operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies were adopted, by the 8th session of the General Assembly of State Parties to the 2003 Convention, in September 2020. The new operational guidelines can be found in the annex of Resolution 8 GA.9: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/8.GA/9>.

approved by the Bureau. In recent years there have been several examples of projects that were implemented in emergency situations, including in Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Vanuatu, Niger, Colombia.

This type of funding mechanisms may be particularly useful to support preparedness and recovery activities, whereas activities requiring a rapid response may be suited to funding under the UNESCO Culture Sector's Heritage Emergency Fund.

- **Heritage emergency fund**

The Heritage emergency fund is a multi-donor and non-earmarked funding mechanism, established by UNESCO to enable the Organization to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies affecting cultural heritage. It is a flexible mechanism because it is non-earmarked, and it is conceived as a rapid intervention tool - it takes approximately one week for emergency response, and two weeks for emergency preparedness activities.

The Fund works crosscutting, financing activities within the domains of the UNESCO [Culture Conventions](#) (cultural and natural heritage, movable cultural heritage, cultural repositories, underwater cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage and the diversity of cultural goods, services and expressions). Hence, one project can address multiple dimensions of cultural heritage. The Fund became operational in 2016 and has supported 55 countries and 15 activities notably related to ICH.

- The Fund covers emergencies resulting from both conflict and disasters.
- It can be used for response, but also for preparedness activities.
- It can be submitted at any time of year to a maximum of US\$100,000.
- The activity implementation period cannot exceed 12 months.
- Requests should be submitted by UNESCO Headquarters or a Field Office in consultation with national authorities.

- **Listing mechanisms:**

UNESCO's listing mechanisms can also be useful to enhance visibility of ICH elements relating to emergencies. The Urgent Safeguarding List calls the attention of the international community to elements particularly threatened by a disaster or conflict, while the Representative List enhances the visibility of elements that contribute to preparing for or mitigating the effects of a disaster or conflict. A recent example that was inscribed in 2019 is Avalanche risk management, submitted by Switzerland and Austria.

The 'Dive into ICH' online tool also provides to explore connections of concepts linked to emergencies on the Lists, such as epidemics, disease, natural disasters earthquakes etc. <https://ich.unesco.org/dive/>

- **Capacity building – disasters/conflict**

UNESCO furthermore can provide support through its capacity-building programme, which is being developed to accommodate for the implementation of the operational principles and modalities in diverse contexts in the coming years. Existing units are being updated, and new capacity-building materials on the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and disaster risk reduction are being finalized.

II. UNESCO's role in addressing challenges related to the safeguarding of living heritage during the COVID-19 crisis

UNESCO's actions concerning ICH in the context of the 2020 pandemic are to be seen as part of the Organization's broader response to Culture and COVID-19. In particular, the UNESCO Culture sector developed an action plan structured around four key pillars:

1. Communication, advocacy and awareness raising

- e.g. the 'ShareOurHeritage' awareness campaign, comprising World Heritage and living heritage elements

2. Impact assessment of the cultural sector and support for public policies

- Different key online meetings help on COVID-19's impact on the Culture sector
- Weekly [Culture & COVID-19: Impact & Response Tracker](#), looking at the culture sector as a whole.

3. Support for artists, culture professionals and communities

- [ResiliArt Movement](#), which successfully focused on mobilizing creators and creative professionals around the world to raise awareness on the impact on the culture sector. Several of the Resiliart debates in 2020 also touched on issues related to living heritage, i.e. crafts industry.

4. Capacity-building and resources to safeguard cultural heritage

- Capacity building materials have been made open access online

Within this framework, the **Living Heritage Entity** set up the initiative '**Share your living heritage experience**'.

Within the Living Heritage entity, an online survey and platform was launched inviting partners to #ShareYourLivingHeritage experience: through the online survey people can tell about how their living heritage has been affected; what role their living heritage has played in this context; what safeguarding initiatives have been put in place.

The aim was to create accessible online platform for people to share information, exchange experiences, learn from each other and draw inspiration. It has been developing into a rich resource of both primary and secondary materials and recording in some ways a living memory of what people are experiencing with regard to their ICH through the challenging COVID-19 time. In this way, it may also develop into an important awareness raising tool in the future.⁵

Given that the pandemic is ongoing, the survey remains open and so far responses have been obtained from close to ninety countries; they are from non-governmental

⁵<https://ich.unesco.org/en/living-heritage-experiences-and-the-covid-19-pandemic-01123>

organizations, bearers and practitioners of living heritage, universities and researchers, national authorities and museums.⁶ Out of some 300 responses received, 197 submissions figure on a dedicated [web platform](#) to share and exchange experiences of living heritage in the context of the pandemic as well as to promote dialogue among communities.⁷ The results of the survey have been disseminated through a [video](#) on social media, examples on the [UNESCO COVID-19 Response website](#), a 'Spotlight on living heritage' in the [Culture & COVID: Impact & Response Tracker](#) (Issue 4, 6 May 2020) and an article in the forthcoming issue of the *World Heritage* magazine (no. 95).

III. impact-mitigation measures undertaken by governments and mediators

Governments all over South-East Europe undertook measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to safeguard heritage or specifically ICH elements. The main measures consist in governmental support such as funding, grants, wage compensations, technical unemployment or postponed taxes and rents, making life a bit easier for professionals, practitioners or bearers of living heritage in these hard times. Like most countries, social distancing measures were put in place, such as a limited number of people during events and other safety measures. Some governments went further and created methodological guidelines and recommendations for cultural institutions.

Organizations related to ICH also undertook measures to help safeguarding intangible heritage during the period of crisis. From an economical point of view, some offered pre-payment of tickets even though events were cancelled, others offered vouchers instead of refunds so that organizations could keep going during this difficult time. Many switched from live to online/virtual practices or experiences with their bearers and practitioners, which resulted in a huge 'at home' experience, and some created educational programs for children and adults. Although many measures emerged during this health crisis, some festivities were still practiced in secret, which can be interpreted as a spirit of resistance and resilience when it comes to their cultural practices.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

Facing multiple emergencies: Earthquakes in Albania and Croatia

Earthquake in Albania: 26 November 2019

By Bendis Pustina, representative of Albania

"[...] the Earthquake situation in Albania affected the normal activity of the cultural institutions by interrupting onsite events and causing loss in the cultural entrepreneurship. Major damages were reflected in the build heritage sector and minor

⁶. As the survey is ongoing, the figures presented in this document reflect the data available as of 10 August 2020.

⁷. Africa (8 experiences); Arab States (9 experiences); Asia and the Pacific (43 experiences); Europe and North America (82 experiences); Latin America and the Caribbean (65 experiences).

damages in the ICH sector. Nevertheless, from March 2020 with the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis the ICH sector was largely affected and mitigation activities were put in place:

- cultural events and activities were suspended onsite and they had to transition into an online process
- support for craftsmen/ artisans was given through new forms of online market
- new policies for the formalization and registration of the ICH independent craftsmen/ artisans was developed
- supporting the digitalization process of new upcoming projects with a focus on digital culture”

Earthquake in Croatia: 22 March 2020

By Vesna Pascuttini Juraga, representative of Croatia

“[...] A 5.5 Richter scale earthquake hit Zagreb affecting reduction of financial support and activities for ICH. However, the heritage itself is not endangered nor is its preservation in question. Many ICH activities and customs were postponed or not held, but it is planned to continue with those later this year or regularly next year. For financial support by the Ministry of Culture this year, as a basic criterion, the financing of intangible assets inscribed on the UNESCO lists (23 programs) and several programs that were almost completed (7 programs) have been approved.”

The project “Multimedia presentation of original cultural and artistic societies on the internet”

By Aleksandra Mihić, representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina

“[...] In the conditions of the coronavirus pandemic, this way of working and presenting the activities of societies that nurture cultural heritage is gaining in importance and is becoming even more relevant. This project envisages digitization of multimedia content related to traditional cultural heritage and presentations via the Internet. The processed materials must provide a complete insight into the work of a cultural and artistic society, festivals or individual. In cooperation with the CIOFF-Section for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Society for Digitization of Cultural Heritage has expanded the project of collecting, processing and presenting data on certain elements of traditional cultural heritage to the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. [...] There are two conceived dimensions of this project. The first relates to the preservation of traditional cultural heritage and its transmission to future generations. Another dimension of the project is to promote the engagement of youth who make up a large part of membership in associations and who are a guarantee for continuous and long-lasting work. It is their interest and familiarity with Internet communications that gives this project special importance.”

Online forum with the government

By Sylva Hacheryan, representative of Bulgaria

“During the period, a meeting of the National Council for Intangible Cultural Heritage – an expert advisory body to the Minister of Culture was held to discuss current problems in the field of safeguarding of this part of cultural heritage. A special meeting of the Minister of Culture with the Union of National Community Centres – the national representative organisation of the country’s community centres - chitalishta - was held to discuss the problems of the community centres in the context of the crisis, given that these local cultural centres are the basis for preserving the vitality of intangible cultural heritage in Bulgaria and are entered in the UNESCO Good Practice Register. A meeting of the National Council on Community Centre Activities – an expert advisory body to the Minister of Culture - was also held to take measures to restore the activity of the community centres in the country.”

Call for grants of crafts related activities and tourism program

By Mariana Mischevca, representative of the Republic of Moldova

“One of the most important actions taken by the Government of the Republic of Moldova, through the Agency for Intervention and Payments for Agriculture, is the call for grants related to the improvement of living and working standards in rural areas, aimed to diversify the rural economy through non-agricultural activities. The call supports projects on safeguarding development and diversification of crafts in the rural area. The craftsmen are encouraged to create and develop educational and training centres. In addition, the call finances construction/reconstruction/equipment works for the commercialization of their own products. The call helps the craftsmen and practitioners to exceed the negative effects produced by the restrictions and lockdown. They are encouraged to continue their activity during the pandemic.

[...] In order to support the internal tourism, MECR launched the educational program ‘We Discover the Republic of Moldova Together’, where elements of ICH and their practitioners and bearers were promoted among children.”

IV. Creative adaptations by ICH practitioners and bearers

The preparatory survey and the exchanges during the meeting highlighted the numerous creative initiatives and adaptations developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by ICH practitioners and bearers. Some created networks online, making possible to share practices and social knowledge, or online programs and forums to cooperate with government branches in this difficult period. Others used this lockdown period to document and digitize ICH, which then raised awareness on local practices. Communities shared material necessary for ICH practices between them, created a new normal by practicing at

home, without a public audience. Sometimes, local radio station or television networks helped by transmitting ICH through their channels. Museums decided to assist their public via email, kept working with schools and organized virtual tours or digital exhibitions. Musicians had online concerts and created videos about their art. Others organized calls for projects in order to popularize ICH, created platforms to monitor the effect of COVID-19 on the cultural sector, took this time to plan governmental programs for the years to come or document not only ICH, but its preservation, its most vulnerable elements and the good practices around them.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

The face mask fabrication of the Färbermuseum Gutau with indigo hand block printing techniques and the launch of the “Virtual Salon Intangible Cultural Heritage”

By Gabriele Detschmann, representative of Austria

“The Färbermuseum Gutau, which plays an important role in the safeguarding of the element ‘Indigo hand block printing in the Mühlviertel region’ [...] had to close its doors and the traditional, international market for dyers was cancelled this year. After the Austrian government recommended wearing face masks, the Färbermuseum started to produce masks made from local, indigo-dyed material. They would distributed masks in the region in exchange for donations to the museum. Shortly after, a regional bank ordered masks for more than 800 employees. This shows a successful collaboration between a regional institution and traditional craftsmanship. Actions like this promote solidarity in times of crisis.

[...] The Austrian Commission for UNESCO launched a new format, the ‘Virtual Salon Intangible Cultural Heritage’ with a view to fostering exchange and dialogue among and with ICH stakeholders in Austria. Community representatives of the 124 elements inscribed on the National Inventory of the ICH in Austria were invited to come together online [...] The first edition of the Salon focused on the impact of the pandemic on the intangible cultural heritage in Austria. ICH stakeholders shared their efforts, concerns and initiatives with each other. The Austrian Commission for UNESCO collected all measures and reactions and shared them with the communities after the meeting.”

Digital initiatives and adaptation of the festive customs

By Danijela Filipovic, representative of Serbia

“At the same time, the pandemic has caused the need to start and improve activities in the Internet and social media. An example is the Pipe-playing competition was conducted and settled on Facebook. [...]

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in some cases the bearers of the elements inscribed

in the National Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Serbia have adapted their activities, particularly those festive customs related to the Easter and St George celebration: Ritual of making and lighting farmer candles [...] was held in changed circumstances, but ensuring continuity of the ritual. The process of making candles and processions this year was restricted to a limited number of participants and celebrated was held with provided measures of coronavirus prevention [...]"

Adaptation, continuity, *retraditionalization* and governmental initiatives

By Ioana-Otilia Baskerville, representative of Romania

"Though the Orthodox Christians could not take the candle lights from the church for Easter Eve, the traditional fires [...] were performed this year exactly as they were every year before. Given the fact that these are not activities that are regulated by the local administration and they are by definition secretive, also having a magical role of dissipating the evil from within the community, they escaped any regulations. People performing them were probably motivated by the need to offer hope and a feeling of normality to their peers in the community. [...] A similar situation was noticeable for this year's performance of the first Romanian element inscribed in the UNESCO Representative List [...] The Căluș Ritual was interdicted by the administration of the counties where the custom is an important part of the local cultural identity. Nevertheless, the Căluș men were still being seen at Whit Sunday on central streets of the town where they tried to demonstrate that they are determined to keep the tradition alive. Though the administration cancelled the extensive yearly stage festival of the Căluș, it is apparent that the smaller performances that go back to the actual traditional presence of this healing ritual within the community could not be stopped. I would characterize this phenomenon as a specific retraditionalization.

The Ministry of Culture has launched the ACCESS Online 2020 financing project, dedicated exclusively to the private sector, as a tool to support cultural projects that can be fully implemented in the online environment. [...] Among these projects, some were dedicated to digital promotion of ICH elements. [...] The National Institute for Cultural Research and Training launched "Culture in Quarantine" – an online open platform designed to monitor the effects of the lockdown over the cultural sector in Romania."

Heritage professionals and accredited NGOs: letters to the government in response to ministerial initiatives

By Valentina Zingari, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Italy

"Two letters from accredited NGOs and heritage professionals were addressed to national institutions by heritage professionals and museums professionals, linking their voices and experiences as mediators of community based experience in heritage. The first one has been written by the president of Simbdea, ICH NGO accredited, and is titled "From the side of communities". [...] the letter is to situate in the context of the ministerial initiative 'Culture do not stop/La cultura non si ferma'. This letter expresses

the will to support communities in the practice of their living heritage, [...] This letter focuses on the concept of resilience and creative response of civil societies but also express the concerns of heritage professionals on this social distancing imposed as an emergency measure. The second letter was sent from a museum director and recall and reflect on the role and social function of local museums as community centres. The letter's title is "Reopen museums, museums never closed" and this letter identifies, stresses the local museums role as presidia for local cultural life, needs and claims of communities, groups and individuals together with professionals. [...] These two initiatives express two main aspects: the effectiveness of ICH NGOs accreditation's system as tool to reinforce NGOs in their effort addressing safeguarding challenges at the national level; the COVID-19 emergency context is opening a new space of dialog which is innovative, connective, and adaptive, a space of reflexion on ICH improving the collective awareness of what does ICH means for both communities and civil societies, heritage professional and artists and institutions."

The culinary art and culture of Il-Ftira at home and the traditional Maltese village feast

By Melanie Ciantar Harrington and Mario Azzopardi, representatives of Malta

"Through local and social media the bakers communities were sharing the ftira recipe and encouraging people to try it at home through. Reflecting the Maltese people's desire to keep enjoying this type of bread at home, social media ended up with an exhibition of home-made ftira, resulting to a nationwide shortage of yeast. [...] Community organisations involved in the organisation of the village feast, including band clubs, traditional fireworks and feast decorations amongst others, had to abruptly halt their ongoing preparations, and come to terms that their year long expected social tradition and all the material prepared was going to be lost or unused. Most of the organisations suffered a terrible loss of financial income usually gathered through social activities for fundraising. The Ministry for National Heritage, the Arts & Local Government has committed to support these organisations and community with the following measures: Government launched a special fund of €3 million for voluntary community centres as part of the government's economic regeneration plan. Recording from feasts from previous years were transmitted on local television stations and community radios."

Traditional dances at home

By Anja Jerin & Nina Židov, representatives of Slovenia

"Every year, Easter dances and games are performed by local folklore group Ivan Navratil on Easter Monday in the medieval centre of the town of Metlika. They involve the folk dance known as Kolo, it's a kind of circle dance and local games. Due to the coronavirus, this year they couldn't perform as a group. So each dancer, dance couple or family danced in front of their house. The music was played through loud speakers so that all the members of the folklore group could hear it."

V. Impact of COVID-19 crisis on ICH beyond the emergency phase

The impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on ICH were assessed both negative and positive for professionals, practitioners and bearers of living heritage. The overall experience is that while the pandemic has disrupted contexts and channels necessary for expressing, safeguarding and transmitting living heritage, the crisis - unless it continues for a long time - should not bear a lasting negative impact on the ICH practices. On the contrary, this unprecedented situation in some cases strengthened the bonds between ICH communities, created a new impetus, provoked the involvement of new users through the Internet and digital social media, and revitalized local interest and curiosity.

Nevertheless, participants expressed concern that, out of the limits of the culture sector, the COVID-19 sanitary emergency provoked a decrease of interest about ICH on a more general level, as other policy areas took an almost exclusive priority in terms of funding and attention (especially those more directly related to public health and relieve from economic crisis). In addition, several cases emerged in which ICH communities found themselves at a loss without continued practices, both from the social and the economic points of view.

In an overall reflection, the connection was also made from the experience the 2020 disruptive crisis COVID-19 has caused in our world, towards questions around what 'the new normal' will become after COVID-19, questions of sustainability, and constructing/transforming future perspectives for our world. It will be a man-made question whether to construct future-proof new ways of bringing people together and staying connected. Computer literacy will be very important to allow ICH bearers to use the new digital platforms, to exchange, to practice and/or to sell their goods.

COVID-19, in a certain way, paused our world and offers the opportunity for its reinvention. How we want it to be, in a sustainable way, and how to invest in infrastructure is up to our generation to imagine and construct.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

Corona-provoked practices

By Naila Ceribašić, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Croatia

"Think of a range of, so to say, 'Corona-provoked new musical genres', such as balcony performances and concerts for neighbourhood, or live-online concerts, or bottom-up participatory composing of new pieces, or above mentioned puzzle-type recordings, or music events in the name of solidarity with distant co-humans. Significantly, musically and socially these genres often (although not exclusively) rely on traditional templates of already recognized ICH elements. [...] As we all know, one of the major shifts during lockdown in heritage communities was a shift from live (face to face interaction) to mediated online conditions that permitted possibilities for exchanges. [...] During the lockdown, another paradigmatic situation emerged: puzzle-type performances. It is when musicians placed in different locations, provide a joint performance. We, as audiences, experience them as live happenings posted online.

What is actually behind is production, and sometimes complex and hard labouring post-production. So, musicians around the globe, have creatively build with these long mediated live and therefore I argue that music domain is important to think along, that it represent a good practice or a good domain to be taken into account when discussing the present and future of ICH communities around the globe. And these puzzle-type recording are just one of the things the Coronavirus provoked.”

Will the forms of digital culture soon be considered ICH (the example given of Demoscene in Finland and Germany) ?

By Saša Srećković, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Serbia

“No doubt that digital contents from social media and various apps are playing the increasingly important role in the world of today, in particular given the actual pandemic of COVID-19 where digital apps became for a while almost the only available tools for communication between the ordinary people. Are some of these contents going to be regarded as ICH in the near future? No doubt that some of potential elements have dedicated communities (Demoscene has a relative clear profile of supporting community). No doubt that some content has clear social and cultural functions, such as relief and relaxation in the time of big crisis, especially if distinguished by humour or just timely and precise information in the time of big global distrust in ”official versions”. And how about the very nature of elements of digital culture – will they soon be ICH? Demoscene certainly has some uplifting features for our spirit and soul while creatively using image and sound. Many a digital content, being mostly produced in high end technological manner can convey powerful messages. [...] On one hand we should surely give due attention to digital culture and its possible entry into domain of (intangible) heritage. On another hand i think that digital culture is more or less somewhere halfway between the real human creation and artificial intelligence. Do those products owe more to a real spontaneous human creativity or to a perfection of a machine? I would draw an analogy with crafts here. Is an item 100% processed by human hand and brain or is it partially processed on a lathe? And even if processed by machine can it still be considered ICH?”

ICH threatened in emergency situations and the need to develop targeted measures for the future

By Nikolai Vukov, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Bulgaria

“In my view, the pandemic and its being in the focus of public attention may leave aside many of the important issues about ICH safeguarding, particularly of elements that are endangered of losing viability. The social tensions related to the pandemic and the economic constraints as one of the follow-ups of the crisis will not only add to the disturbance within local communities, but may also lead to a decreased awareness of ICH and the need of wide societal attention for its importance. [...] In situations of emergencies, ICH tends to be more threatened than usually. This finds expression both on the level of disturbances of the social networks, the troubled local

communities, the established modes of transmissions. [...] In such situations, ICH becomes even more vulnerable and there needs to be a separate set of specifically targeted measures and policies to keep ICH in the spotlight particularly in such critical contexts. In my view, the current situation [...] can be host to a very convenient point, to initiate approaches that will make us more prepared for future crisis and to approach these situation as an opportunity to develop sustainable legislative, administrative, economic, social development measures that are targeted to ICH in the long run.”

Unadapted help programs and status of the bearers

By Naila Ceribašić, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Croatia

“All measures undertaken by the Croatian government are directed to professionals, while bearers of ICH are in principle amateurs who are organized in civic cultural groups (with regular activities such as rehearsals supported by local governments, and more specific programmes such as festivals and educational workshops supported from the fund within the Ministry of culture) and/or operate independently on the market, primarily in tourism. As such, they were not included in governmental measures.”

Fear threatening the transmission of ICH

By Milica Nikolić, representative of Montenegro

“Values of ICH are not threatened but the transmission is. The question of fear and how the transmission will look in the future is important because we don't know what the pandemic will provoke. The transmission is an essential part of the safeguarding of ICH.”

VI. Priorities to support reactivation of ICH and long-term safeguarding⁸

The COVID-19 crisis confirmed that the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage plays a dual role in the context of various types of emergencies: on the one hand, ICH can be directly threatened by them; on the other, it can effectively help communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

To support the reactivation of ICH and its long-term safeguarding after the COVID-19 pandemic, several priorities emerged that are to be addressed by a variety of key actors and stakeholders. These include, in particular, the need to:

- carry out community-based needs assessments and ensure that ICH safeguarding is incorporated in local, national, sub-regional and regional risk reduction and emergency preparedness and response processes
- create a favourable environment to ensure the continued practices and the transmission of ICH elements, taking into account and respecting the dynamic and adaptive nature of ICH that is especially embodied in its constant recreation by bearers and communities in response to their changing environment, including emergencies
- provide resources and support for ICH bearers and communities to develop and undertake safeguarding plans/measures to enhance the resilience of their living heritage, especially when ICH practices are directly related to community livelihood
- facilitate information sharing on ICH safeguarding in emergency situations within and between affected States Parties and other relevant players, such as NGOs, charities and humanitarian actors, etc., to determine the nature and extent of the disruption to ICH and the scope for engaging it in emergency preparedness and response processes
- leverage the opportunity provided by the listing mechanisms under the 2003 Convention for promoting and enhancing the visibility of ICH elements that contribute to preparing for, responding to and recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and/or to draw the attention of the international community to elements particularly threatened by the crisis.

⁸ To consult the new operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies adopted by the 8th session of the General Assembly of State Parties to the 2003 Convention, in September 2020: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/8.GA/9>.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

Lasting impact of the pandemic on ICH related assets. Safeguarding manuals/guides for the communities and adaptability strategies and special training on safeguarding

By Benedetta Ubertazzi, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Italy

“The emergency phase of the pandemic required short-term measures and the provision of immediate relief to facilitate the continued living heritage practices of ICH communities. However, in my opinion, the pandemic is to leave a lasting impact on the practice of many ICH communities including the Cremonese violinmaking community. As such, there are two key priority areas which must be addressed in the longer-term:

- The creation and implementation of safeguarding manuals and guides for communities which cannot easily transition from offline to online
- Specialised training for communities on the utility of intellectual property rights for the long-term safeguarding of ICH.”

Identifying the needs, creating programs for vulnerable ICH and popularization through tourism

By Maglena Zlatkova, UNESCO-accredited facilitator of Bulgaria

“Among the priorities that can be raised as a means of reactivating ICH after the pandemic are: close interaction with communities and bearers for identifying the needs they have in the safeguarding of ICH; eliciting state and regional programs targeted at the most vulnerable elements and communities; maintaining high social sensitivity about ICH related issues despite the challenges ensuing from the pandemic situation.

It is clear that the link between ICH as a resource for communities and local resource is not connected with strategies for tourism at regional and national levels. ICH elements are important for the communities in certain places, but people talked about what they involved as touristic activities are using mainly cases with historical heritage, objects with a great importance. Besides, they underestimate the variety of ICH elements, traditions, festivals, crafts, food, etc. that they have at the local level. So I think it could be one of the measures.”

Digital and infrastructure investment

By Adina Ciubotariu, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Romania

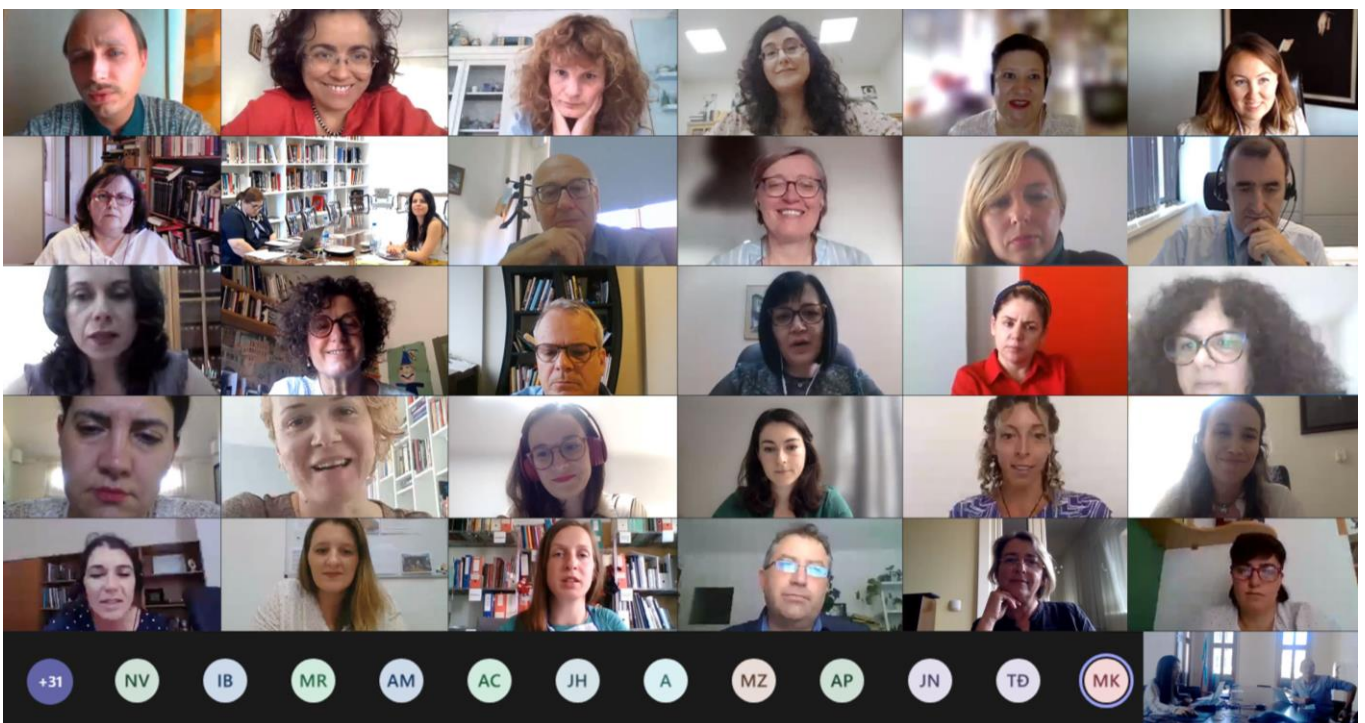
As it happened in many more fields, it became obvious that infrastructure that allows remote participation to all social activities needs to be built. Internet databases on traditional products and platforms that allow craftsmen to continue selling their products will develop faster from now on. Decision makers have to prioritize promotion

of bearers and, at the same time, to invest in rural technology that would allow free expression of traditions on vast distances.

The possibilities of virtual communication

By Andrei Prohin, UNESCO-trained facilitator from the Republic of Moldova

“People have not fully used the possibilities of virtual communication. Up till now, schools and universities mainly experienced the learning process through Internet. It proved to be quite difficult, but not impossible. Maybe it could offer solutions also for ensuring the practice and transmission of ICH elements. People could learn how to design items of folk art by means of video tutorials etc. Although the COVID-19 spread seriously affected the life of the society, I am convinced that it can lead to many creative answers, including in the field of ICH safeguarding.”



Annexes

I. General overview of the preparatory survey

In the preparatory phase of the meeting, a survey was conducted among confirmed participants in order to have an overall view of the experiences and the impact of COVID-19 on ICH and its safeguarding in the region. Answers to the preparatory survey collected from both country representatives and facilitators are summarized as follows.

Question 1. Please shortly describe maximum three measures undertaken by the government / your organization in response to the COVID-19 pandemic aimed at safeguarding ICH (either generic measures, or related to specific ICH elements). Please include comments on the impact of the mentioned measures, if assessed.

Governments all over South-East Europe undertook measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to safeguard heritage or specifically ICH elements. The main one was a governmental help such as funding, grants, wage compensations, technical unemployment or postponed taxes and rents, making life a bit easier for professionals, practitioners or bearers of living heritage in these hard times. Like most countries, social distancing measures were put in place, such as a limited number of people during events and other safety measures. Some governments went further and created methodological guidelines and recommendations for cultural institutions.

Organizations related to ICH also undertook measures to help safeguarding intangible heritage. In an economical point of view, some offered pre-payment of tickets even though events were cancelled, others offered vouchers instead of refunds so that organizations could keep going during this difficult time. Many switched from live to online/virtual practices or experiences with their bearers and practitioners, which resulted in a huge ‘at home’ experience, and some created educational programs for children and adults. Although many measures emerged during this health crisis, some festivities were still practiced in secret, which can be interpreted as a spirit of resistance and resilience when it comes to their cultural practices.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

- The project “Multimedia presentation of original cultural and artistic societies on the internet” by Aleksandra Mihić, representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Online forum with the government, by Sylva Hacheryan, representative of Bulgaria
- Call for grants of crafts related activities and tourism program, by Mariana Mischevca, representative of the Republic of Moldova

Question 2. Do you have knowledge of ICH elements in your country that are being affected by the current Pandemic to such extent that their viability is jeopardized? Has any action been taken for urgent safeguarding and, if yes, what and how? What was the impact of such measures, if assessed?

This survey showed that not many countries or organizations consider that the COVID-19 crisis had such an impact on ICH elements that it jeopardized their viability. Of course, some practitioners got faced with new challenges such as a lack of technological assistance or no internet connection. The cancellations, postponements, and rescheduling of major events

related to ICH caused disturbances and loss of material, and, as bearers could not benefit financially from their practices anymore (from sells or performances for examples), some had major losses of financial incomes.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

- Unadapted help programs and status of the bearers, by Naila Ceribašić, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Croatia

Question 3. Are you aware of any ICH practices and communities in your country that adapted in creative ways in response to the pandemic? Please, describe.

Almost every country representative or facilitator mentioned in their answer that creative measures were adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some created networks online, making possible to share practices and social knowledge, or online programs and forums to cooperate with government branches in this difficult time. Other used this lockdown period to document and digitalize ICH, which then raised awareness on local practices. Communities shared material necessary for ICH practices between them, created a new normal by practicing at home, without a public. Sometimes, local radio station or television networks helped by transmitting ICH through they channels. Museums decided to assist their public via email, kept working with schools and organized virtual tours or digital exhibitions. Musicians had online concerts and created videos about their art. Others organized call for projects in order to popularize ICH, created platforms to monitor the effect of COVID-19 on the cultural sector, took this time to plan governmental programs for the years to come or document not only ICH, but its preservation, its most vulnerable elements and the good practices around them.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

- The face mask fabrication of the Färbermuseum Gutau with indigo hand block printing techniques and the launch of the “Virtual Salon Intangible Cultural Heritage”, by Gabriele Detschmann, representative of Austria
- Digital initiatives and adaptation of the festive customs, by Danijela Filipovic, representative of Serbia
- Adaptation, continuity, retraditionalization and governmental initiatives, by Ioana-Otilia Baskerville, representative of Romania
- Heritage professionals and accredited NGOs: letters to the government in response to ministerial initiatives, by Valentina Zingari, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Italy
- The culinary art and culture of Il-Ftira at home and the traditional Maltese village feast, by Melanie Ciantar Harrington and Mario Azzopardi, country representatives of Malta
- Traditional dances at home, by Anja Jerin & Nina Židov, representatives of Slovenia

Question 4. Based on your experience and opinion, what will be the impact of the pandemic on the ICH in your country beyond the emergency phase? What are the priorities to support the reactivation of ICH and its long-term safeguarding after the pandemic?

Impact of the pandemic on the ICH

The impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on ICH are assessed both negative and positive for professionals, practitioners and bearers of living heritage. The overall experience is that - unless the pandemic continues for a long time- it will not bear a lasting negative impact on

the ICH practices. On the contrary, it has strengthened the bonds between ICH communities, the interest about ICH has never been greater, it created a new impetus and provokes the involvement of new users via internet practices, space for practicing has been easier to access for practitioners, and ICH has or will revitalize local interest and/or tourism. Nevertheless, a concern was also raised that the context of crisis has provoked a decrease of interest about ICH generally, and that some communities are at loss without their practice.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

- Corona-provoked practices, by Naila Ceribašić, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Croatia
- Will the forms of digital culture soon be considered ICH (the example given of Demoscene in Finland and Germany)? by Saša Srećković, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Serbia
- ICH threatened in emergency situations and the need to develop targeted measures for the future, by Nikolai Vukov, UNESCO-accredited facilitator from Bulgaria

Priorities to support the reactivation of ICH and long-term safeguarding:

To support the reactivation of ICH and its long-term safeguarding after the pandemic, relevant priorities that need to be addressed came to the fore, as well as examples and ideas in order to support the reactivation of ICH. These entailed among others:

- to secure (public) accessibility of materials used for ICH practices;
- to focus on creating a safe environment for the practitioners and maintain the safeguarding of their practice;
- to ensure the transmission of ICH elements;
- to assess the situation after the crisis (in a coordinated approach through UNESCO);
- to provide platforms for exchange;
- to consider new inscriptions of ICH elements on national lists and inventories, as well as for the UNESCO lists and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

- Lasting impact of the pandemic on ICH related assets. Safeguarding manuals/guides for the communities and adaptability strategies and special training on safeguarding, by Benedetta Ubertazzi, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Italy
- Identifying the needs, creating programs for vulnerable ICH and popularization through tourism, by Maglena Zlatkova, UNESCO-trained facilitator of Bulgaria
- Digital and infrastructure investment, by Adina Ciubotariu, UNESCO-trained facilitator from Romania
- The possibilities of virtual communication, Andrei Prohin, UNESCO-trained facilitator from the Republic of Moldova

II. Programme

10.00 – 15.00 CEST, 26 June 2020

Opening Speeches

Ms. **Ana Luiza M. Thompson-Flores**, Director, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe

Mr. **Timothy Curtis**, Chief, Living Heritage Entity, UNESCO

Ms. **Irena Todorova**, Executive Director, Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible

Framing the meeting

ICH in emergencies / Latest development in the life of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Ms. **Helena Drobna**, Programme Specialist, Living Heritage Entity, UNESCO

Ms. **Juliette Hopkins**, Associate Programme Specialist, Living Heritage Entity, UNESCO

Facing multiple emergencies (earthquakes/COVID-19); case studies from Croatia and Albania

Moderator: Jorijn Neyrinck

Ms. **Bendis Pustina**, Albania

Ms. **Vesna Pascuttini Juraga**, Croatia

Session 1

Reacting to emergencies: innovative adaptations and impact-mitigation measures undertaken by practitioners, governments and mediators

Moderator: Jorijn Neyrinck

Introductory Case: Ms. **Gabriele Detschmann**, Austria

Ms. **Aleksandra Mihić**, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ms. **Silva Hacheryan**, Bulgaria

Ms. **Elena Sinibaldi**, Italy

Mr. **Mario Azzopardi**, Malta

Ms. **Ioana-Otilia Baskerville**, Romania

Ms. **Danijela Filipovic**, Serbia

Ms. **Anja Jerin & Nina Židov**, Slovenia

Ms. **Ahu Uçar Sever**, Turkey

Open-floor discussion

Session 2

Discussion: How to re-start activities after COVID-19, and other possible future action based on lessons learned during the emergency.

Moderator: **Tamara Nikolic Deric**

Introductory Case: Ms. **Benedetta Ubertazzi**, UNESCO-accredited facilitator

Ms. **Thekla Papantoniou**, Cyprus

Ms. **Stavroula-Villy K. Fotopoulou**, Greece

Ms. **Mariana Mischevca**, Republic of Moldova

Ms. **Milica Nikolić**, Montenegro

Ms. **Meri Stojanova**, North Macedonia

Experiences and reflections from facilitators

Open-floor discussion

Wrap-up

Ms. **Helena Drobna**, Programme Specialist, Living Heritage Entity, UNESCO

III. List of Participants

For the first time, this annual meeting of the Network brought together experts representing ICH national authorities with the UNESCO-trained facilitators from the countries concerned, in order to enrich the exchange of ideas and strengthen cooperation between different actors across the region.

Experts were invited to participate in representation of ministries of culture and/or other relevant authorities from the Member States covered by the geographical mandate of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Albania; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria, Croatia; Cyprus; Greece; Malta; Montenegro; North Macedonia; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Serbia; Slovenia; and Turkey), plus Austria and Italy as observers.

The meeting being organized online, also the trained facilitators from the UNESCO Global capacity-building network working in the Region were invited to participate and were entirely present.

Country representatives

Albania	Meri Kumbe	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Culture
	Bendis Pustina	Ministry of Culture
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Aleksandra Sorajić	Senior cultural specialist, Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina
	Mirela Šečić	Senior Adviser, Coordinator for Intangible Heritage, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
	Božena Đuzelović	Ministry of Education and Culture, Republika Srpska
Bulgaria	Venzislav Velez	Adviser to the Minister of Culture
	Silva Hacheryan	Head of Regional Activities Department, Ministry of Culture
Croatia	Vesna Pascuttini Juraga	Head of Conservation Department, Ministry of Culture
Cyprus	Loukia Loizou Hadjigavriel	President, Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO
	Thekla Papantoniou	Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO
Greece	Stavroula-Villy K. Fotopoulou	Director, Modern Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture

	Iannis Drinis	Modern Cultural Heritage Directorate, Ministry of Culture
Malta	Mario Azzopardi	Director of Culture, Ministry of National Heritage, Arts and Local Government
	Melanie Ciantar Harrington	Intangible Cultural Heritage Office, Ministry of National Heritage, Arts and Local Government
Montenegro	Milica Nikolic	Secretary General, National Commission of Montenegro for UNESCO
North Macedonia	Meri Stojanova	National Representative in the General Assembly of the Regional Centre for Safeguarding of ICH in South-Eastern Europe
Republic of Moldova	Mariana Mischevca	Main consultant, Cultural Heritage Department
Romania	Ioana-Otilia Baskerville	National Commission for the Safeguarding of the ICH
Serbia	Danijela Filipovic	Senior Expert, Center for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Serbia
Slovenia	Anja Jerin	Museum counsellor, Coordinator for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Slovene Ethnographic Museum
	Nena Židov	Museum counsellor, Department of social culture, Slovene Ethnographic Museum
Turkey	Evrin Olçer Ozunel	Member of the Specialized Commission of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Turkish National Commission of UNESCO
	Ahu Uçar Sever	Expert at the General Directorate for Research and Training, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey
Austria*	Gabriele Detschmann	ICH Specialist and Facilitator, Austrian Commission for UNESCO
Italy*	Elena Sinibaldi	Focal point for the 2003 Convention, Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism

*Observer country

UNESCO-trained facilitators

(in addition to those participating as country representatives)

Jorijn Neyrinck (<i>Meeting facilitator</i>)	Belgium
Tamara Nikolic Deric (<i>Meeting facilitator</i>)	Croatia
Panayiota Andrianopoulou	Greece
Chiara Bortolotto	Italy
Naila Ceribašić	Croatia
Adina Ciubotariu Hulubas	Romania
Andrei Prohin	Republic of Moldova
Saša Srećković	Serbia
Velika Stojkova	North Macedonia
Benedetta Ubertazzi	Italy
Nikolai Vukov	Bulgaria
Valentina Zingari	Italy
Meglana Zlatkova	Bulgaria

UNESCO

Ana Luiza Thompson-Flores	Director, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
Timothy Curtis	Chief, Living Heritage Entity
Sinisa Sesum	Head of Antenna in Sarajevo, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
Matteo Rosati	Programme Specialist, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
Helena Drobna	Programme Specialist, Living Heritage Entity
Juliette Hopkins	Associate Programme Specialist, Living Heritage Entity
Yue Shen	Associate Project Officer, Living Heritage Entity
Zhi Ye	Trainee, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe

Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe (Sofia, Bulgaria)

Irena Todorova	Executive Director
Nadejda Ilieva	Expert
Iliyana Rousseva	Expert
Mirena Staneva	Expert
Chayana Istatkova	Expert

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