

# THIRD FORUM OF NGOs OFFICIAL PARTNERS OF UNESCO

## THE ROLE OF YOUTH FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Sofia – Sozopol (Bulgaria),  
September 28–30, 2014



The NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee has chosen to dedicate one of the Forums of the biennium 2013–2014 – the third of its kind – to the role of youth for the safeguarding of tangible cultural heritage and of intangible cultural heritage

Concerning the tangible, we know how important and popular restoration projects are, so as the commitment of young people around World Heritage sites (cultural and natural) and their contribution to valorising built heritage, notably in the processes of informal education and non-formal education.

Heritage safeguarding federates and gathers populations together through exchange and mutual understanding, with emphasis on the value of sharing and of the promotion of peace.

For the intangible cultural heritage (ICH – 2003 Convention), the bearers of the ICH elements stand at the heart and are at the same time the main stakeholders in

the safeguarding processes (inventory, communication, education, safeguarding, promotion, etc.), be they implemented by the public authorities, by NGOs or by informal civil society organisations (festivals, meetings, research, animation, etc.). It is particularly by centring the safeguarding policies towards young people, holders of ICH, that the goals will be reached.

For one form of heritage as for the other – which incidentally most often happen to be tightly woven – in most cases young people become involved in the framework of an NGO. Many UNESCO official partner NGOs in the field of culture, but also education, and at times communication, are active in programs or projects dealing with safeguarding heritage.

The Forum in Bulgaria intends to gather many NGO representatives, primarily young people, in order to share their experiences in the field and to envision ways to foster their involvement.



# THE EVOLVING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Through the introduction of the notion of intangible, UNESCO and its actions contribute to a broad sensitisation about cultural heritage. Indeed, the Convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage adopted by UNESCO in 2003 reflects a renewal in the way of understanding heritage.

Derived from the Latin *patrimonium* (father's goods), heritage, which in its most rudimentary definition refers to family goods that one has inherited from their ancestors, goes through an important conceptual and semantic

evolution. Throughout the centuries, the patrimony thus shifts from the religious practice and the making of sacred objects of worship, to the admiration of the genius of man through buildings and objects. Then, from the isolated object emerges the areas of protection, granting heritage a spatial dimension that contributes to enriching the patrimonial field.

From monumental heritage to more modest heritage (industrial, rural) the notion feeds itself, evolves and changes, as the result of long periods of thought and the reflexion of contemporary preoccupations.

## BETWEEN TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE, A CULTURAL HERITAGE TO SAFEGUARD FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

As a continuity between past, present and future, it is with and for young people and future generations that cultural heritage must be preserved. Oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, festive rituals and events, knowledge and practices regarding nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills necessary to traditional handicraft, are linked to this heritage in need of safeguarding. The latter contributes to the understanding of the other, the respect between the individuals and the people, which are essential to peace. Youth therefore has a central role to play in order to convey the values of this "heritage triptych": base of the identity of communities and groups, conveyor of sustainable development and tool for reconciliation.

### Youth participation, a key-factor for the protection and safeguarding of heritage

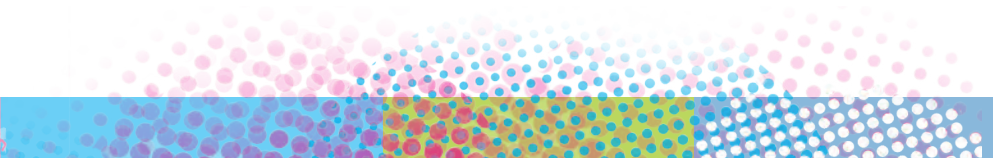
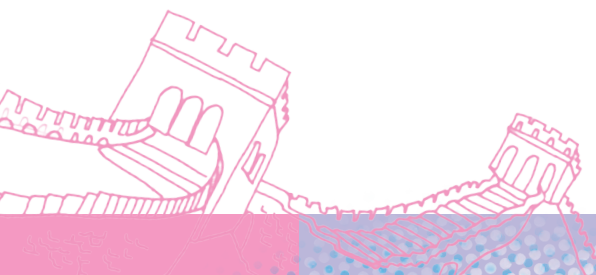
As a driving-force for change wherever, and representing easily more than half of the world population, young people are a factor in their community that recreates and revitalises cultural heritage. They demand the respect of fundamental liberties and rights, better conditions of life, the opportunity to learn, work and to become involved.

It is therefore necessary to increase the financing for research, education, and to create a favourable framework for young people to become involved for their rights, to regain hope and to revive the feeling of belonging to a

community. Thus will they become responsible social actors and innovators, in a spirit of openness and dialogue.

Since its creation, UNESCO has integrated youth in all its programmes and activities. The World heritage centre renews the World heritage volunteers program (WHV) in 2014 on the topic of "Action for Sustainability". The Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) is in charge of the overall coordination of this action since 2008, and the organisation Open Houses for its European coordination since 2014. Since the WHV was launched, some 2500 young volunteers have participated in 165 work camps organised by local organizations and institutions in 36 countries for 73 World Heritage sites. [www.whvolunteers.org](http://www.whvolunteers.org)

Recognising young people as a priority group in the organization's action and in the Strategy of action of UNESCO with and for young people in 1998, the organisation's involvement for youth takes a new impetus, looking for young people to participate in the policies and programmes which affect them and carry out actions in their country and community in order to promote peace and sustainable development (UNESCO Operational Strategy for youth 2014-2021). In that sense, the UNESCO Youth Forum is a privileged place of exchange. <http://www.unesco.org/new/fr/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-forums/>



# HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, A COMMON LOGIC

This is where cultural heritage safeguarding is also a new lever for sustainable development. Not only does it give young people a means to assert their individual and collective identity, but it can also create new opportunities in terms of creative and economic development.

The threats that weigh on environment and cultural diversity are numerous (globalisation, urbanisation, climate change, conflicts, migration, etc.). Faced with this, acting for heritage and for sustainable development share common goals.

Organised around three axes – environmental, economic, and social –, sustainable development is supported by the idea of favouring the environment's durability through the respect of the ecosystem's cyclic renewal among others, without slowing down progress. Acting for heritage and sustainable development pertains to the same management logic insofar as it is a question of maintaining a vital creative force in constant renewal. We thereby recover a specific relation to time. Yes indeed, time since any development implies an initial state evolving towards a desired state. It is about better connecting the present of societies with their past, and heading towards a desired future in a perspective of transmission and intergenerational solidarity.

## CULTURE IN THE POST 2015 AGENDA – A HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY

The cultural capital that local populations have can be a substantial source of income and employment. Culture, as an essential condition for the achievement of sustainable development, also has its place at the heart of the commitment for environment.

To respect an ecosystem one has to know it, cherish it, and shape it. Any sustainable economy is based on the development of the best-adapted skills. However, the correlation between the benefits drawn from a well-managed heritage and the action for economic development is not yet acknowledged by all.

The safeguarding of cultural heritage can therefore help us take up many challenges of sustainable development such as, for instance, social cohesion, education, food security, health or sustainable management of natural resources.

To achieve this, some questions arise:

- ❓ How to develop young people's skills through formal and informal education for the safeguarding of cultural heritage?
- ❓ Which actions, be they public or private, are necessary in order to make the youth participate in the safeguarding of cultural heritage and awareness actions?
- ❓ How to promote cultural diversity and foster intercultural dialogue through the safeguarding of cultural heritage?
- ❓ How to create jobs and income through the safeguarding of cultural heritage, and contribute to sustainable development?

Faced with the necessity to integrate culture in the future Sustainable Development Goals, the year 2015 represents a historic opportunity to think about the future global agenda for sustainable development. Being the set deadline for the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2000, this event coincides with the anniversary of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions which will celebrate ten years of existence.



# UNESCO'S SIGNIFICANT TEXTS FOR CULTURE AND THEIR VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION

## Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its protocols of 14 May, 1954 and 26 March, 1999

- The List of Cultural Property under Enhanced Protection only comprises ten elements so far.
- The Fund for the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict supports preparatory measures in time of peace or protection measures in conflict or post-conflict periods.
- The establishment by the State Parties of a criminal liability in the event of a violation of cultural property in conflict situation is mandatory.

## Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970)

- The ICOM code of ethics for museums.
- 13 ICOM Red Lists of endangered cultural objects at national and regional levels.

## Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)

- The World Heritage list enables the implementation of the Convention's principles and lists the properties of outstanding universal value. To date, 1007 sites forming the cultural and natural heritage are inscribed on this list.
- The World Heritage in Danger List is a fundamental tool. It enables to rapidly provide resources and to take emergency measures when a property is in danger because of a conflict, natural disasters, or carelessness. 46 sites are inscribed on that list, to date.
- The World Heritage Fund with mandatory contributions, supports, at the request of the States Parties, activities to help in the preparation of files for the inscription, training, technical cooperation, urgent assistance, awareness-raising and education.

## Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)

- The 2001 Convention's Annex is a reference document made of 36 detailed practical rules that present a plan of operations which is directly applicable to underwater interventions.

## Convention for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)

- The Urgent Safeguarding list intends to take safeguarding measures suitable for expressions or manifestations of intangible cultural heritage which viability is threatened. 35 elements are inscribed on the list, to date.
- The Representative List is made up of expressions that reflect the diversity of ICH throughout the world. This instrument aims at ensuring a better visibility of the intangible cultural heritage, raising awareness about the importance of ICH and favouring dialogue. In 2008, 90 elements previously proclaimed Masterpieces were incorporated in the Representative List. Since 2009, 192 new elements have been added to the list.
- The Register of Best Safeguarding Practices is made up of programmes, projects and activities that best reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention. 11 programmes, projects and activities appear on this register, to date.
- The Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage with mandatory contributions supports the developing countries in their safeguarding efforts.

## Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)

- The International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) is a voluntary fund for the promotion of sustainable development and the reduction of poverty in developing countries, favouring the emergence of a dynamic cultural sector. Since 2010, the IFCD has already supported 71 projects in 43 developing countries.

The Third Forum of the 2013-2014 Biennium of the International Conference of NGOs official partners of UNESCO was organized by a group of NGOs under the coordination of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, and in cooperation with the UNESCO Secretariat. It was made possible thanks to the collaboration of the Sozopol Foundation in Bulgaria [www.sozopol-foundation.com](http://www.sozopol-foundation.com) and to the support of the Government of Bulgaria. The NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee is thankful to all persons, NGOs and institutions that have contributed one way or another to the Forum.

The Forum is placed under the Patronage of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

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