

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF SAFEGUARDING LIVING HERITAGE

TÜRKİYE

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage strongly emphasizes individuals, communities, and their active involvement in heritage-safeguarding processes. Community participation, both at local and national levels, in the planning and execution of the Convention, remains a pivotal concern for the next two decades. Achieving a harmonious balance between individuals, groups, communities, and the States Parties, while reinforcing community engagement in decision-making and implementation processes, will play a crucial role in the success and sustainability of safeguarding efforts.

Furthermore, integrating education into the safeguarding process is imperative in terms of documentation and in realizing the plans. This will bolster the Convention's future relevance, significance, and effectiveness. To this end, it is essential to cultivate long-term, comprehensive projects that involve a wide range of stakeholders, including not only the ministries of culture and education but also those related to agriculture, development, environment, and trade. This integration of intangible cultural heritage into education is paramount.

In addition, aligning with UNESCO's recent priorities on urban, environmental, and economic dimensions, it is imperative to incorporate these aspects into conservation plans and practices, aligning them with the Sustainable Development Goals and the evolving needs and aspirations of communities. This holistic approach will promote the transmission of heritage in the coming years and positively impact the appreciation and safeguarding of living heritage.

Notwithstanding recent advancements, a primary challenge that necessitates resolution pertains to the heightened prioritization of groups, individuals, and communities within the operational frameworks of the Convention in the forthcoming years. Additionally, there exists an imperative to persistently fortify endeavors aimed at mitigating the prevailing proclivity for the Representative List to overshadow the registration of elements on the lists. Furthermore, it is evident that the role played by UNESCO-accredited non-governmental organizations and UNESCO chairs in decision-making procedures requires augmentation and enhancement.

Over the ensuing decade, there arose a compelling need to underscore the role of civil society organizations in the strategic planning and execution of safeguarding initiatives. This extends

to their involvement in monitoring the ongoing safeguarding processes pertaining to listed heritage, as well as in the mitigation of potential adverse impacts. Notwithstanding the manifold challenges posed by the geographical dispersion of NGOs, financial resource disparities, and variations in the interpretation of civil society's role, it remains imperative that these entities strengthen their relationships with pertinent government ministries and educational institutions. Central to this endeavour is the pivotal function of civil society organizations as facilitators of dialogue between the implementing body of the Convention and the affected communities. It is imperative, however, to underscore the extent to which States Parties are willing to delegate powers and responsibilities to civil society organizations to foster a collaborative and effective approach to heritage safeguarding.

In the forthcoming years, concerted efforts will be dedicated to the development of educational projects that not only underscore their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals but also encompass a comprehensive consideration of the multifaceted dimensions associated with heritage. These projects will extend beyond the cultural and social aspects to encompass economic, legal, urban, and environmental dimensions. A primary focus will be placed on primary and secondary education institutions, which are deemed pivotal in this context. This strategic emphasis harmonizes with UNESCO's prevailing national priorities. Initiatives within this framework will be instigated through the auspices of our UNESCO Chair and our UNESCO-accredited non-governmental organization. Moreover, our objective entails the deepening of collaborations with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the executive agency responsible for heritage management. This collaborative approach aims to catalyze a more active engagement of universities and civil society organizations in shaping and executing the Convention's plans, as well as the conservation action plans spearheaded by the Ministry.

The UNESCO Chair on Intangible Cultural Heritage in Formal and Informal Education, established in 2017 at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, along with the Intangible Cultural Heritage Association accredited to UNESCO in 2018, has significantly bolstered Türkiye's engagement with UNESCO's mechanisms from the vantage points of higher education and civil society. Since its inception in 2017, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Winter School organized by the Chair has made substantial contributions to enhancing awareness among various stakeholders, including universities, civil society organizations, as well as key ministries, such as those responsible for culture, education, and development, and local governments. These remarkable developments have prompted the Council of Higher Education to designate intangible cultural heritage as one of the 100 priority areas deserving of support. As a result, there has been a notable increase in the number of individuals aspiring to pursue postgraduate

education in this field. The Ankara Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum, established in 2013, has played a pivotal role in organizing numerous workshops and commemorative/celebratory programs in collaboration with practitioners, researchers, local authorities, academics, experts, and community representatives. Over the past decade, this museum has evolved into a prominent centre for raising awareness and offering experiential learning, having welcomed approximately 80,000 students from school groups. The success of this museum has inspired other universities and local governments in Türkiye to establish new intangible cultural heritage museums in diverse regions, thus contributing to Türkiye's burgeoning museological expertise in this domain.

Established in 2004, the Experts Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage, operating under the auspices of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO, plays a pivotal role by providing consultative support to pertinent ministries. It serves as an essential contributor to enhancing the quality of the national implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Concurrently, the Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage, operational within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism—Türkiye's competent body overseeing the Convention—assumes a leadership role in ensuring that Türkiye fulfills its obligations as a party to the Convention with unwavering commitment, thereby achieving both excellence and consistency in the planning and execution of related initiatives. Since 2018, notable sub-working groups have been instituted within the Experts Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO. These sub-working groups have embarked on comprehensive inquiries, focusing on critical facets, including education, safeguarding in emergencies, and legislative dimensions of the Convention. Furthermore, they have diligently crafted reports through active consultation with relevant units. These reports are instrumental in aiding Türkiye's accumulation of invaluable experience, particularly in domains deemed as priorities by UNESCO. Equally significant, these reports serve as a valuable source of guidance for public institutions through a transparent sharing mechanism with the pertinent ministries. The collective activities orchestrated within the National Commission not only enable Türkiye to maintain a close alignment with UNESCO's global agenda but also significantly bolster the efficacious implementation of national practices in the realm of intangible cultural heritage.

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