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**Results of the
2nd consultation (2010) on the implementation at national level of the
2003 Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage (ICH)**

proposed and coordinated by the Swiss Commission for UNESCO

Context

Implementation of the 2003 Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage is planned, organized and carried out with a common objective, but with different approaches and procedures in individual countries, which adds to its diversity and interest.

Therefore, after a 1st consultation launched in March 2008 – when Switzerland was preparing to ratify the Convention and taking the first steps towards its implementation, – this 2nd consultation is devoted to exploring the different **ways in which it is being implemented**, based on initial experience in a number of countries. The consultation has also been broadened to include a larger number of countries.

As an extension of the 1st consultation, this 2nd consultation therefore aims to:

- gather elements helpful for reflecting on the implementation of the Convention, with the focus on the inventory
- engage in an exchange of knowledge and good practice at the international level, in particular among National Commissions for UNESCO, on implementation of the Convention, by disseminating the results of the consultation
- contribute to an assessment of these experiences as important elements in reflecting on, learning from and, if necessary, making adjustments to the measures currently adopted.

The full results are available at www.unesco.ch (français / English)

Approach

This consultation was conducted in French and English on the basis of a questionnaire (annex 1). It took the following form:

- an introductory question on the ratification of the Convention and whether or not an inventory already existed
- an initial series of five specific questions regarding the inventory and the way it is developed, realized and updated

- a second series of two specific questions regarding the participation of bearers in formulating the inventory
- a third section regarding the inventory as a tool for information, awareness-raising and promotion of the ICH
- a fourth section on how the inventory can be perfected as a tool
- an open question on other aspects of interest
- a request to send in any material of interest.

The questionnaire was sent to about fifty National Commissions: on the one hand, those of Member States of the Intergovernmental Committee; on the other, those of other States, whether or not parties to the Convention, with which we have had sustained contact on the issue of the ICH. Whenever their contact details were available to us, we consulted experts from the countries concerned at the same time as the National Commission.

Twenty countries responded to this consultation: Austria, Belgium (French-speaking community), Brazil, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Peru, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland and Vietnam.

The Swiss Commission for UNESCO expresses its warm thanks to those persons and institutions that have participated for their valuable cooperation and their contributions.

Results:

The results are presented in the order of the questions posed in the questionnaire. For each question, the “*In general*” part summarizes the responses received with indication of countries as example; the “*In detail*” part specifies the content of these responses, in particular the elements which, though individual, appear to us to be of interest.

1. Ratification and pre-existence of an inventory

In general

In some countries (**Brazil, Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Hungary, Lithuania, Peru**), an inventory providing a general survey – in some cases (**Denmark**) broadly based and long established – of expressions of the ICH existed before the Convention was ratified. In most countries, ratification stimulated thinking on how the Convention should be implemented and led to the formulation of an inventory.

In detail

Among the countries not having ratified the Convention: In **Germany**, there were discussions in the Bundestag (parliament) in 2009 on the aspects needing to be taken into account with a view to ratification. It was felt necessary to continue the consultations at the federal level and at the level of the Bundesländer (federal States). In the **Netherlands**, ratification is planned for 2010, together with a series of supporting measures (an international conference on the ICH, a pilot project on inventories, and support for strengthening capacities to safeguard the ICH in developing countries).

2. Part 1: Development, realization and updating of the national inventory

The five questions relating to Part 1 are set out below.

- 1) **What is the distribution of tasks between the national, regional and local levels in the development, realization and updating of the national ICH inventory?**

In general

The distribution of tasks is connected with the state structure of each country. Where a distinction is made between levels (national, regional, local), these are represented by interlocutors from administrative, institutional, scientific and professional circles, National Commissions, and local communities and civil society. Generally speaking, the ministry which assumes normative responsibility at national level (by legislation, decree, circular, etc.) acts directly with the support of a consultative body – a “beefed up” existing body or an ad hoc committee/advisory council/group. This consultative body consists of representatives of the circles concerned. It is tasked with guiding the development of the inventory and, in most cases, registering the various elements. In addition to developing and realizing the inventory (or inventories), it plans or conducts information, awareness-raising and mobilization activities at the regional and/or local level in the circles concerned, which sometimes take charge at local level. While community participation, and therefore local responsibility, is an essential aspect of the distribution of tasks, in some cases (**Austria, Brazil, Estonia, Hungary, Peru**) it is the very foundation of the whole process, from identifying an item to applying for its registration.

In detail

In the case of **Brazil**, the guiding principle is that the ICH is a social construction in which the inventory is realized through sharing within all social groups interested in identifying and safeguarding their cultural heritage by entering it in the National Inventory of Cultural References (INCR).

In **Cyprus**, the inventory is based largely on the Archive of Oral Tradition developed by the experts of the Cyprus Research Centre, who are also tasked with developing the inventory.

Latvia's national inventory takes two components as its starting point:

- the List of National Values of Folk Traditions, concerned with expressions of the ICH
- the Cultural Map of Latvia, concerned with communities and bearers.

In addition to the national inventory, for which the Ministry of Culture is responsible, there are regional and local initiatives conducted by various institutions. Also of interest are some inventories developed by particularly active communities, for example the Suiiti.

In **Switzerland**, culture falls within the remit of the cantons, which are therefore responsible for identifying and inventorizing items of ICH on their territory. It is the responsibility of the Federal Government, acting through the Federal Office for Culture (FOC), to draw up the national inventory (list), which involves defining the registration criteria, then receiving and assessing applications for registration from the cantons. It has entrusted this task to a project group, which it advises and supervises.

In **Vietnam**, the creation of the national inventory is governed by a circular issued by the Ministry for Culture, Sport and Tourism. The Department for Cultural Heritage has set guidelines and supports a participatory process. In each province, the Department for Culture, Sport and Tourism is the executive body. Its task is to work closely with the institutions and NGOs concerned, with researchers, and with the bearers and local communities, to which special importance is ascribed. The president of the provincial government addresses applications for registration to the Ministry, which takes the final decision.

2) Is the inventory updated on an on-going basis, or has it been fixed for a certain period of time with further periodical up-dates?

In general

The responses show that the inventory is always under development, and in this sense it being permanently implemented. Registrations and/or updates are performed at varying intervals, ranging from annually (**Austria, Czech Republic, Vietnam**, for example) to as and when necessary (**Cyprus, Croatia, Latvia**). In several countries, the regularity and procedures for updating have still to be decided on. Where an updating process has been established, it is experimental, with the possibility of adjustments being made at a later date.

In detail

In **Brazil**, the methodology of the National Inventory of Cultural References (NICR) has a dual objective: on the one hand, to identify and inventorize items of the ICH; on the other, to generate knowledge about the ICH.

In **Estonia**, keeping the inventory up to date is part of a wide-ranging process of safeguarding the ICH.

The **Czech Republic** is planning to conduct regular monitoring, at least once every seven years from the date of registration; if major changes are noted, updating may take place more frequently.

3) Have you specified a maximum number of elements to be included in the inventory? If so, why? And what is the specified limit? Can this be changed? Is it fixed for a certain period (i.e. so many elements a year)? Does a maximum number of elements apply at the regional level (i.e. so many elements per region)?

In general

Most countries have not specified, or are not thinking of specifying, a maximum number of elements, either nationally or per region. The inventory is, in some cases, also intended to be selective or representative (**Czech Republic**) and, with this in mind, a limit has been set for the national inventory (**Switzerland**) or might be envisaged (**Kenya**). Generally speaking, the elements featuring in the regional/local inventories are not limited in advance or when they are placed on the national inventory.

In detail

In **Brazil**, the inventory process is conducted in three phases: the aim of the first is to identify all the elements (called cultural references); the second consists in discussing the cultural references thus identified with their bearers, so as to acquire a broader and deeper knowledge of these references; the third is concerned with the documentation and formatting of the information gathered in this way. These phases are conducted with the direct participation of the bearers; the number of references depends on various factors, in particular the time, funding and human resources available.

While saying that it does not envisage specifying a maximum number of elements, either nationally or locally, **Lithuania** recognizes that its national inventory cannot be completely open-ended. The number of elements to be processed also depends on the human and financial resources available. At present, given the complexity of the data demanded for the purpose of registration, and the exhaustive supporting documentation required, it is reckoned that roughly twelve applications can be processed each year.

In **Switzerland**, a two-year pilot phase is in progress, during which some 125 elements will be placed on the national inventory as a way of introducing the concept of ICH to the general public and satisfying a concern for equal representation. The cantons' proposals for the inclusion of entries in the national inventory will be limited on a regional basis, which should also promote intercantonal cooperation at regional level. The cantons have grasped the opportunity of the national inventory to establish their own cantonal inventories, which may well be linked to the national inventory.

4) What is your approach with respect to the inclusion of elements that exist in different regions of your country in similar but not necessarily identical forms?

In general

Approaches depend on a country's concept of the national inventory and the way it relates to regional/local inventories, where they exist. The tendency is to include a specific element and complete the entry with notes on any significant regional or local variants. The simultaneous inclusion of similar forms of one and the same element may be envisaged when there are major differences in its specific characteristics. Albeit for different reasons, some countries (**Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Switzerland**) plan to include regional/local variants of the same element in

their national inventories; in some cases (**Hungary, Switzerland**), similar elements from different regions may be the subject of a single entry in the inventory.

In detail

The inventory implemented in **Austria** provides not only for the adding of elements to a list, but also for their integration into a database where they can be identified using several parameters, which will make it possible to show similarities, differences and variations between them.

In **Estonia**, an element is not included in the inventory because it is unique, special or representative, but because a community or group wants it to be included. The inventory may therefore include similar elements.

The **Czech Republic** intends that regional inventories shall include only local variants of an element, while the national inventory will feature a selection of the more important elements. If an element is included in the national list, it features automatically in the inventory of the region to which it belongs, provided there is an inventory for the region concerned.

5) Do you have any elements of intangible cultural heritage in common with other countries? Have you established any cross-border partnerships for listing common elements, or do you intend to do so?

In general

Most countries where the inventory process is sufficiently advanced for there to be an awareness of common elements would like to establish such partnerships, but have not yet been able to do so. Some partnerships do exist, in particular for the "giants carried in procession" in **Belgium** and **France**, the "Baltic Song and Dance Celebrations" in **Estonia, Latvia** and **Lithuania**, and the heritage of the Aymara communities in **Peru, Bolivia** and **Chile**. **Austria** and the **Czech Republic** are waiting for falconry to be included in the national plan¹, so that they can be included in the multinational list submitted by the United Arab Emirates, in which **Slovakia** is also involved.

In detail

Brazil notes that the project to evaluate M'Byá Guarani culture was developed in the countries where these indigenous people are present, notably Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay, and the work is being done at regional level through the Regional Centre for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Latin America (CRESPIAL).

Latvia reports that partnerships are developing among communities in the Baltic States, not only in relation to inventories, but also with a view to introducing safeguards. This is true of the Sui community in Estonia, and of the Kihnu and Seto communities, also in Estonia.

Hungary is in the process of planning a joint inventory with neighbouring countries which will make it possible to identify and deal with common cultural characteristics, as well as unique phenomena. Regional cooperation is essential to take into account the minorities living in the different countries.

In **Kenya**, some communities are established on either side of the national border but share and practise the same heritage. This is particularly true of the Maasai community. Kenya is hoping to form a partnership with Tanzania, when the latter has ratified the Convention.

¹ Austria included falconry in its national inventory in the spring of 2010

3. Part 2: Involvement of representatives in the development of the inventory

6) Are the bearers of ICH informed about the development of the inventory? If yes, how? Are they included as experts or in some other form? For the identification of elements? For selection where appropriate?

In general

It is generally claimed that bearers are informed as to the development of inventories and are involved in their realization. Their actual involvement is variable, but is always seen as desirable and is promoted. This happens at different levels or stages:

- at the time of the ratification process;
- when the element of which they are the initiators is formally proposed, though in most cases the form presenting the element for registration is completed in cooperation with other – normally institutional – partners;
- in the development of the inventory;
- in the composition of the body which advises or decides on whether an element should be included in the national inventory;
- in the gathering of information and documentation regarding the element concerned.

Bearer involvement may take the form of participation in meetings to inform people about the objectives of the Convention, practical workshops on the establishment of inventories, or ceremonies celebrating the registration of an element.

In detail

In the participatory approach adopted by **Brazil**, if the bearers themselves do not ask to develop the inventory, an information campaign is organized to ensure that they are included in the process. When possible, persons nominated by the social groups participate in the research group, either as experts on inventory-related topics, or as collaborators in identifying cultural references, or as mediators between the researchers and the communities concerned.

In **Kenya**, local communities are involved in the process of identification and definition. As the creators and bearers of their heritage, they are also invited to decide on the most appropriate means of safeguarding it. They are also involved in workshops, open-air forums and in-situ meetings, where their members contribute as living treasures, practitioners, experts, guardians, etc., depending on their specific competences and the nature of the element concerned.

In **Latvia**, from the time of ratification, information seminars have been organized and bearers' opinions have been sought throughout the country. The National Commission for UNESCO has published and widely distributed the text of the Convention, with an explanation of the nature of the work to be done. This campaign has been effective in raising the awareness of communities, which have become active themselves and have activated other communities. The communities concerned have launched a series of varied activities at local and regional level, without necessarily involving State institutions, which is seen as a sign of success. Finally, bearers have played a key role in identifying suitable elements. Therefore information concerning the inventory is updated with the cooperation of local communities.

The policy in **Peru** is that not only the enlightened consent of bearers is required, but also their direct involvement in the choice and presentation of elements.

7) Are you aware of any ICH elements that their bearers have asked not to be included in the inventory? If so, do you know why?

In general

Where experience is sufficient to give a reply, there have not been any cases of this kind. Respondents pointed out that if initiatives originate from local communities, this situation will not arise or will be sorted out from the very beginning. However, if such a situation has arisen, or is in danger of arising, it will have been due to a misunderstanding as to some of the underlying factors.

In detail

Latvia pointed out that some knowledge and know-how is handed down from generation to generation within a family. When such knowledge or know-how also has an economic value for the bearers, the related information is not made public in a detailed way but only a general description is provided. Latvia points out that the Soviet occupation has affected its heritage and the practice of cultural traditions, which now makes it even more important to promote and disseminate knowledge relating to the ICH.

4. Part 3: The inventory as a tool for information, awareness-raising and promotion of the ICH

8) How do you envisage using the inventory for promoting intangible cultural heritage at the national, regional or local level (publication, electronic access, exchanges between bearers, education)?

In general

Generally speaking, the objectives of the inventory are documentation and reference, knowledge and awareness-raising, networking, and the promotion of the elements and their bearers. For this reason, a public electronic database is the chosen format. This tool is normally supplemented by monographs, research papers, books, DVDs, television programmes, colloquia, exhibitions and festivals. Museums play an important communicating role, as do schools, where efforts are made to raise young people's awareness by including ICH topics in the curriculum.

In detail

To emphasize the importance of the national inventory, **Hungary** has instituted an annual celebration: Cultural Heritage Days. In addition, it has set up a network of communities which have, or will have, an element included in the inventory.

In **Latvia**, "Schools of Traditional Skills", launched in 2009 and intended for the general public are enjoying considerable success. It is reported that the inventory has also served as a political instrument and point of reference in the defence of communities' right to decide on their own futures, i.e. it has acquired a political and economic – as well as purely cultural – influence. The role of a national inventory is therefore more than purely cultural, as the enhanced visibility of communities and their traditions may be an important factor in decisions relation to development initiatives.

For **Switzerland**, it is important that the inventory of ICH be an instrument of communication in a pluralist society, that it contribute to social integration.

5. Part 4: Tools for the inventory

9) Which mechanisms have proved to be particularly useful or effective for the setting up and development of the inventory? And vice versa, which ones have failed to yield the desired results?

In general

Where experience is sufficient to draw conclusions, it is recognized that cooperation between the different players concerned, especially local communities, is a very important factor in successfully implementing the Convention by means of inventories.

In detail

Brazil regrets not having created a substantial, easy-to-access database, that would include the issues and problems raised when existing inventories were established, so that social groups could refer to it and update them.

For **Croatia**, as well as good cooperation with bearers, two positive aspects have been the relevance of the application form for registration and the contribution of scientists working in different fields of cultural heritage, who have brought their expertise to bear in the assessments leading to formal decisions.

As well as excellent cooperation with local communities, **Estonia** reports that cooperation with academic and research institutions has been fruitful in establishing the structure of the inventory and the general principles governing its operation. The fact that the inventory is understood as a process involving persons from different backgrounds engaged in open discussion has proved useful and effective.

In **Kenya**, site visits, workshops, seminars, research projects, festivals and open-air forums are mentioned as being particularly useful in identifying, defining and developing inventories. There needs to be more sharing of experience where regional inventories are concerned.

In **Peru**, four factors are regarded as being useful and effective:

- the “bottom-up” approach,
- the fact that local communities are therefore motivated to systematize their knowledge, resulting in greater awareness of their heritage,
- the fact that the inclusion of an element is seen by the bearers as an effective way of protecting and safeguarding it,
- the fact that the State is developing the inventory with the consent of the bearers and thus ensuring that, when an element is included, their needs and wishes are taken into account.

For **Vietnam**, one aspect that has not yielded the desired results is “unilateral” inventorization, i.e. instances in which elements are registered independently by the bearers, by State bodies at central or local level, or by researchers. Cooperation between all three “players” is essential.

Other interesting aspects you may wish to share with us

In **Denmark**, where ICH has long held an important place in the educational system, many people, including ICH professionals, have reservations as to the usefulness of an inventory which creates a “hierarchy” of ICH elements. Hence little interest has been shown in the representative international list.

In **Croatia**’s opinion, the measurements, methodology and criteria for monitoring and protecting elements are not yet sufficiently developed.

In 2008 and 2009, **Latvia**’s National Commission for UNESCO worked on an action plan entitled “Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Formal and Non-formal Education”, which benefited from UNESCO support under the Participation Programme. This plan comprised a series of initiatives which were much appreciated by the communities involved.

Follow-up to the consultation

Everywhere, National Commissions for UNESCO are part of a network which is both national (with governmental institutions, research organizations, civil society, NGOs, et.) and international (with other Commissions, UNESCO Member States, the UNESCO Secretariat). It is important that these networks be drawn on actively, continuously and in a combined way in order to safeguard the ICH.

Any ideas or concrete proposals for improving, deepening, intensifying and broadening cooperation with regard to this dossier are therefore welcome.

The Swiss Commission for UNESCO will continue to exchange information and share knowledge on its implementation of the 2003 Convention as the UNESCO dossier and the measures taken by the party States progress.

Annex:

I. Questionnaire on which the consultation is based

Documents provided by different countries:

Belgium

- Recognition of a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of the French Community of Belgium
- List of the 17 masterpieces of the intangible heritage recognized by the French Community

Estonia

- Summary of the workshop on inventorizing the ICH (Local Knowledge and Open Borders: Creativity and Heritage), held at the University of Tartu on 3 August 2009
- Information on the international seminar Principles and Experiences of Drawing up ICH Inventories in Europe, held in Tallinn in 2007:
http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=EN&meeting_id=00076 - meet 00076

Czech Republic

- Concept for more effective management of traditional folk culture from 2003 to 2010
- Ministry of Culture Order no. 41/2008 instituting a "List of intangible assets of the traditional and folk culture of the Czech Republic".
- Methodological directive on keeping the List of intangible assets of the traditional and folk culture of the Czech Republic
- National cultural policy on Czech Republic, from 2009 to 2014
- Concept of more effective support for artistic activity for the years 2007 - 2013

Slovakia

- Draft Concept for Care of Traditional Folk Culture

Vietnam

- ICH registration form

**Second survey (2010) concerning the implementation at the national level
of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)
Proposed and co-ordinated by the Swiss Commission for UNESCO**

Country: Information provided by: Name: Function: Co-ordinates: Date:
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Ratification	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
If yes, in which year?		
If no, why not? Is ratification planned?		
Inventory	<input type="checkbox"/> Exists	<input type="checkbox"/> Is in preparation
Did ratification lead to the development of an ICH inventory, or did such an inventory already exist before the Convention was ratified?		

Development, realisation and implementation of the national inventory
1. What is the distribution of tasks between the national, regional and local levels in the development, realisation and implementation of the national ICH inventory?
2. Is the inventory the subject of a permanent implementation process, or has it been fixed for a certain period of time with further periodical up-dates?
3. Have you specified a maximum number of elements to be included in the inventory? If so, why? And what is the specified limit? Can this be changed? Is it fixed for a certain period (i.e. so many elements a year)? Does a maximum number of elements apply at the regional level (i.e. so many elements per region)?
4. What is your approach with respect to the inclusion of elements that exist in different regions of your country in similar but not necessarily identical forms?
5. Do you have any elements of intangible cultural heritage in common with other countries? Have you established any cross-border partnerships for listing common elements, or do you intend to do so?

Involvement of representatives in the development of the inventory
6. Are the bearers of ICH informed about the development of the inventory? If yes, how? Are they included as experts or in some other form? For the identification of elements? For selection where appropriate?
7. Are you aware of any ICH elements that their bearers have asked <u>not</u> to be included in the inventory? If so, do you know why?

Inventory as a tool for information, awareness-raising and promotion
8. How do you envisage using the inventory for promoting intangible cultural heritage at the national, regional or local level (publication, electronic access, exchanges between bearers, education)?

Tools for the inventory
9. Which mechanisms did prove to be particularly useful or effective for the setting up and development of the inventory? And vice versa, which ones failed to yield the desired result?

Other interesting aspects you may wish to share with us:
