Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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1949.2019
COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2269 (2019)[1]

Safeguarding and enhancing intangible cultural heritage in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recognises the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH), which includes traditions or living expressions inherited from the past, such as performing arts, social practices, oral traditions, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature or the knowledge and skills used to produce traditional crafts.

2. Industrialisation, urban development, the expansion of mass tourism and the standardisation of lifestyles in towns and villages and of the various forms of knowledge and skills all constitute a context which places ICH in a vulnerable position. Intangible cultural heritage is a "living heritage", the idea of which is not to preserve rigidly entrenched age-old practices, but rather to enable them to develop and evolve with the times, and to encourage practices that are embedded in contemporary society and interact with other cultures.

3. In this respect, the Assembly welcomes a wide ratification of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage ("ICH Convention") of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and recalls that the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, "Faro Convention") promotes a broader understanding of heritage and its relationship to communities and society, and defines an all-embracing framework which is necessary to ensure that cultural heritage and culture in general have their rightful place at the centre of a new vision for sustainable development.

4. Both conventions rightfully emphasise the idea of the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and individuals concerned. The Council of Europe Cultural Routes Programme promotes in practice this participatory approach through its 33 certified Cultural Routes, which integrate both tangible and intangible components of cultural heritage. The Assembly considers, however, that models and methods of participatory governance are needed to address the challenge of setting up fair and feasible community participation. Moreover, it calls for a certain flexibility in managing ICH and highlights a set of 12 ethical principles which were adopted in 2016 to complement the ICH Convention, addressing the fragile balance between respect for the autonomy of communities, groups and individuals concerned and providing an adequate public support framework to intervene in the safeguarding of ICH.

5. The Assembly therefore recommends that the member States of the Council of Europe:

5.1. concerning strategy and policy design:

5.1.1. sign and ratify the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, if they have not yet done so, and develop national strategies for safeguarding and enhancing the role of ICH according to the principles laid down in these conventions;

5.1.2. join the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes, if they have not yet done so, and make best use of the collaborative platform that the agreement offers to implement and co-ordinate local and regional ICH projects in a wider European context;

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 1 March 2019 (see Doc. 14832, report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Andries Gryffroy).
See also Recommendation 2148 (2019).

5.1.3. recognise the influence that intangible cultural heritage can have on society and the economy, fostering the sense of belonging and well-being, underpinning the cultural and creative sectors, and offering a playing field for the micro-economy with small and medium-sized enterprises from local communities;

5.1.4. closely associate the vision of safeguarding ICH with sustainable development policies (including urban and rural planning, redevelopment and rehabilitation projects), as well as with their policies on cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;

5.1.5. develop new and creative approaches to minimise the negative impacts of urbanisation on ICH while maximising the potential of ICH to contribute to a more cohesive society, for example as a factor which could help migrants build bridges with local communities;

5.1.6. identify and analyse the conditions within which traditional craftsmanship exists, to assess relative degrees of endangerment and to determine the future importance of traditional craftsmanship in terms of cultural policy and the economy;

5.1.7. value ICH as a significant resource for traditional knowledge and know-how regarding the sustainable management of the natural environment; for example, initiatives on food traditions that build on local community farming and production and can become a laboratory of civil society engagement for more sustainable ways of producing and consuming;

5.1.8. consider the contribution that ICH can make to sustainable health and well-being, as part of a call in Europe for more locally grounded and culturally sensitive approaches to health;

5.2. concerning policy implementation:

5.2.1. create collaborative and participatory platforms to establish inventories of ICH; in this regard, develop models and methods of participatory governance to address the challenge of setting up fair and feasible community participation;

5.2.2. stimulate transmission of ICH through lifelong learning and education;

5.2.3. foster and support urban, local and regional development projects and strategies, and micro-economy, creative economy and sustainable tourism initiatives that integrate sustainable safeguarding and enhancement of ICH in close co-operation with the communities concerned;

5.2.4. provide incentives and funding for multi-stakeholder co-operation projects and effective platforms for sharing expertise and experience; in this context, provide training and incentives for local ICH stakeholders and ICH mediators to enhance co-operation;

5.2.5. promote closer links between tangible and intangible heritage in order to bring many stakeholders closer together and to provide available expertise and infrastructure in the field of tangible heritage; such partnerships, however, require a certain degree of flexibility;

5.2.6. review legislation, if necessary, to provide a more flexible framework for safeguarding and enhancing ICH to accommodate the informal nature of grassroots initiatives;

5.2.7. ensure wider integration of ICH in the projects that are part of the Council of Europe Cultural Routes Programme.

6. The Assembly invites UNESCO and the European Union to co-operate with the Council of Europe in supporting the effective implementation of the ICH Convention and the Faro Convention, and in particular to:

6.1. facilitate building capacities through: gathering and exchanging insights from ICH safeguarding and enhancement practices and methods; cross-disciplinary co-operation; educational programmes; alignment in digital strategies; ethics; and cross-border co-operation on common ICH elements or safeguarding programmes;

6.2. accommodate digital methods and tools for ICH inventories and for safeguarding practices, so that they can be harmonised in Europe (technically and methodologically) to further stimulate exchange and knowledge sharing;

6.3. seek to resolve questions of ownership and intellectual property rights to provide open data within digital documentation and transmission of ICH.

7. More specifically, the Parliamentary Assembly invites the European Union to:

7.1. integrate ICH policy action into the announced 2020 #Digital4Culture strategy, using the digital potential to enhance the positive economic and societal effects of culture;

7.2. include ICH in the European Research Strategy and the European Union Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020);

7.3. include safeguarding and enhancing ICH in calls, criteria and support measures for European cultural projects and territorial co-operation (Creative Europe; Interreg);

7.4. collaborate with the Council of Europe to implement ICH related initiatives within the Cultural Routes Programme;

7.5. promote ICH in the European Capitals of Culture Programme;

7.6. explore how ICH can be integrated into the scope of European Heritage Days, by moving beyond the classic open door/monument days and by embracing the intangible heritage stakeholders and perspectives.