

CONCEPT NOTE

18th Annual Meeting of the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage

LIVING HERITAGE IN URBAN CONTEXTS

Online, 17 September 2024 / Warsaw, Poland, 9-11 October 2024



In cooperation with:

1. The South-East European Network of Experts on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

The South-East European Network of Experts on Intangible Cultural Heritage (the Network) was established in 2007 under the auspices of UNESCO to support the implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the region. It brings together experts from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Türkiye, as well as observers from Austria and Italy.

The Network aims to enhance a common understanding of opportunities and challenges linked to the safeguarding of living heritage as an integral aspect of South-East European cultural diversity, while serving as a regional platform for sharing knowledge and good practices, as well as for reinforcing networking and cooperation.

The annual Network meetings organised so far¹ focused on different themes spanning community engagement, the role of museums in living heritage safeguarding, periodic reporting under the 2003 Convention, and, living heritage in school education and TVET. Since 2018, these annual meetings have introduced a capacity-building approach on specific subjects and progressively extended attendance to other relevant experts from the region, to contribute more effectively to advancing living heritage safeguarding.

2. 18th Annual Meeting of the Network

The meeting, to take place from **9 to 11 October 2024 in Warsaw, Poland**, will be hosted by the [UNESCO Chair on Intangible Cultural Heritage in Public and Global Governance](#) based at the University of Warsaw and the [City of Warsaw](#) (Culture Department), and organised by UNESCO with the support of the [Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe](#) based in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The workshop in Warsaw will be preceded by an **introductory webinar on 17 September 2024**.

English will be the working language of both events.

2.1 The Overarching Theme

The webinar and the workshop in Warsaw will reflect on the safeguarding of **intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts**, considering the interplay between the implementation of the 2003 Convention and city management and cultural and policies.

Building upon UNESCO's recent developments in this thematic area, the workshop is designed as a "deep dive" into urban living heritage, leveraging Warsaw's experiences as a compelling case study to foster discussions and to inspire innovative approaches and future

¹ Previous annual meetings of the Network took place in Arbanasi, Bulgaria (2007); Safranbolu, Türkiye (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); Cremona, Italy (2019); online (2020 and 2021); Sofia, Bulgaria (2022); and Belgrade, Serbia (2023).

action. To this end, the meeting's programme will incorporate presentations from State Parties and city representatives, interactive exercises, excursions to Warsaw's cultural institutions, hands-on workshops with living heritage practitioners, and informal discussions and networking opportunities.

2.2 Participants

The 18th Annual Meeting of the Network will bring together for the first time the **Country focal points for the 2003 Convention** (CFPs) with **culture/cultural heritage professionals** or other relevant representatives of **city administrations** to reflect on how to strengthen measures for safeguarding living heritage in urban environments. Participating cities (one per country) and their representatives will be selected in consultation with the State Parties concerned considering the respective experiences and country contexts.

To ensure a common understanding of the 2003 Convention and its key concepts among the representatives of the different city administrations, a brief online introductory workshop will be offered on 17 September 2024.

3. Living heritage in urban contexts

Urbanisation is increasingly shaping how societies live and interact, with the UN predicting that 68% of the global population will inhabit cities by 2050.

The unprecedented rates of urbanisation worldwide in urban areas are impacting ways of life and raising questions as to what this means for communities and their living heritage. While cities have always been homes for diverse expressions of living heritage – whether traditional trades, social practices, performing arts, or others – new dynamics, such as the ever-denser population, fast-changing lifestyles, the convergence of multiple communities within new urban contexts, and the pressure they place on urban environments, give rise to the need to rethink how urban heritage can best be safeguarded in such contexts and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable cities.

At a global level, several instruments on culture (including living heritage) and urban development have been produced to offer shared principles and approaches to this issue. Among them, the *UNESCO Creative Cities Network* (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. The *World Charter for the Right to the City* (2005) highlights the importance of the social functions and cultural resources of urban centres as the primary purpose of the city. The *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* (2011) recalls the need to preserve urban heritage, including tangible and intangible components, to achieve a balance between urban growth and quality of life. The *Hangzhou Declaration* (2013) reaffirms why and how culture is critical for achieving sustainable development. UNESCO's *Culture: urban future; global report on culture for sustainable urban development* (2016) provides insight and evidence showing the power of culture as a strategic asset for creative cities. The *UN Habitat New Urban Agenda* (2016), followed by the *World Cities Report* (2022) recognise the correlation between cultural heritage and good urbanisation, integrated urban planning, contemporary identities and appropriate urban sustainability and

resilience. The Jeonju Declaration (2017) on *Intangible Cultural Heritage, a Resource for the City of Today and Tomorrow* recalls the importance of integrating living heritage safeguarding in policymaking for urban contexts. Launched in 2020, the New European Bauhaus is an environmental, economic, and cultural initiative that aims to combine design, sustainability, accessibility, affordability, and investments to create beautiful, sustainable, and inclusive living spaces. The Final Declaration of the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development (MONDIACULT 2022) underlines that culture, including living heritage, must be recognised as a common good, a fundamental right and a key pillar of sustainability. The Davos Baukultur Alliance (2023) promotes a holistic approach to planning, construction and management of buildings, infrastructure, public spaces, and landscapes which emphasises their diverse cultural and natural contexts. The Call for Action that concluded the UNESCO Naples Conference on Culture in the 21st Century advocates for greater integration between nature and culture as well as tangible and intangible heritage, including in urban environments.

Specific developments within the framework of the **2003 Convention** are shaping a thematic initiative to accompany this growing awareness of living heritage's key role in urban contexts. Between 2018 and 2022, UNESCO implemented the project **Intangible Heritage and Creativity for Sustainable Cities**², under which six pilot projects were implemented on community-based inventorying in selected cities³. The project aimed at promoting the role of culture in sustainable urban development, and more specifically, the roles that living heritage can play in building sustainable cities.

Based on the project results, UNESCO initiated a larger initiative resulting on a **Guidance note and policy recommendations for the implementation of the 2003 Convention in urban contexts**. In its first phase, UNESCO mobilized international expertise to outline a methodological framework for integrating living heritage into urban planning that will be accessible to urban planners, policymakers, living heritage communities and other stakeholders. This process has been accompanied by a **global survey on Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts** launched in October 2022 to identify key topics at the nexus of living heritage and urban planning practice. The survey incorporated issues such as ways to identify living heritage and related actors in cities, threats to intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts, methods and challenges when integrating intangible cultural heritage, as well as potential recommendations on how living heritage can contribute to the ecological, economic, and social structures of cities. Key findings included:

- Benefits for incorporating intangible cultural heritage into urban planning and city management contributes to social cohesion and inclusion, well-being, sense of identity, sustainable livelihoods, and inter-generational bonds;
- Urban planning and development provisions can directly threaten the viability of living heritage. Over 50% of survey respondents identified threats related to rapid urbanisation, destruction, or interventions in spaces associated with living heritage;

² Supported by a private donor from China

³ George Town (Malaysia), Harare (Zimbabwe), Kingston (Jamaica), Ayacucho (Peru), Tbilisi (Georgia) and Irbid (Jordan)

- Positive examples of the relationship between urban environments and living heritage especially include cultural practices that take place in public spaces, parks, ecosystems, religious venues, performance spaces, historic city centres, and spaces related to processions, events and festivals. Museums were also mentioned to have a prominent role.

4. Expected outcomes

Building on these efforts, the present workshop aims to advance the regional agenda on how to engage with living heritage for sustainable development in urban environments, practically and conceptually, through:

- i. **Increased understanding** of the complex interplay between living heritage and the evolving urban contexts, including challenges for living heritage safeguarding and opportunities for local sustainable development;
- ii. **Sharing and advancing knowledge** to inspire **innovative approaches** and **future action**;
- iii. **Reinforced regional networking, dialogue** and **cooperation**.

5. Tentative agenda

Introductory webinar – 17 September 2024 (online)

10:30	Opening remarks
10:40	Session 1: 18 th Annual Meeting of the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage: introduction to the concept and programme
11:00	Session 2: The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: key concepts, actors, and processes
12:00	Session 3: Key concepts in practice: case studies of 2003 Convention programmes relevant to ICH in urban contexts
12:40	Question time
13:00	End of works

Workshop – 9 to 11 October 2024 (Warsaw, Poland)

Day 1 – Wednesday, 9 October (various locations)

	Arrival of participants; check-in at the hotel and registration
15:00	Meeting in the hotel lobby – Official start of the programme
15:30	Transfer to the Warsaw Rising Museum
16:15	Understanding ICH in the Warsaw context: visit to the Warsaw Rising Museum
17:40	Transfer to the Old Town / Historic Centre of Warsaw
18:00	Where tangible meets intangible: guided walk through the Historic Centre of Warsaw
19:00	Dinner
20:30	End of Day 1 – Transfer to the hotel

Day 2 – Thursday, 10 October. Venue: [University of Warsaw, Faculty of Political Science and International Studies](#) (Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28)

08:45	Departure from the hotel lobby
09:00	Welcome coffee/tea

09:30	Opening remarks
10:00	Session 1 – ICH in urban contexts: UNESCO key activities and findings, with Q&A (presentation by UNESCO)
10:45	Session 2 – ICH in urban contexts: glancing at real-life experiences (presentation by the workshop facilitators)
11:15	Session 3 – <i>Intangible Warsaw</i> : working with ICH in the city (presentation by the workshop facilitators)
12:00	Lunch
13:00	Session 4 – Integrating ICH into city policies, plans and/or actions: experiences from the region (one joint presentation per country, grouped into 4 subsequent roundtables with breaks)
18:00	Dinner
18:45	Dancing theatre presentation and a workshop around the Polonaise
20:00	End of Day 2

**Day 3 – Friday, 11 October. Venue: the [Praga Museum of Warsaw](#)
(Targowa Street 50/52)**

08:30	Departure from the hotel lobby
09:00	Welcome coffee/tea
09:30	Session 5 – ICH in my city: <i>Metaplan</i> approach (group work)
12:00	Lunch
13:00	Session 5 – Living Heritage in urban contexts: engaging with bearers (parallel workshops with bearers sharing hands-on experiences and discussing how changing urban environments shape their practice and needs)
16:30	Session 6 – Final discussion: impressions and ways forward
18:00	Farewell dinner
19:00	End of workshop

6. Logistics and contacts

Hotel lodging in Warsaw will be provided for up to two participants per invited country, at [Motel One Warsaw – Chopin](#)

The meeting organizers will directly contact the individual participants to assist with their travel arrangements.

Queries on the workshop's concept, agenda and organisational arrangements can be addressed to: veniceoffice-clt@unesco.org (<https://www.unesco.org/en/fieldoffice/venice>).

Main venues in Warsaw:

[Motel One Warsaw – Chopin](#)

[The Warsaw Rising Museum](#)

[Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw](#)

[Praga Museum in Warsaw](#)