



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of
Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe
under the auspices of UNESCO

**РЕГИОНАЛЕН ЦЕНТЪР ЗА ОПАЗВАНЕ НА
НЕМАТЕРИАЛНОТО КУЛТУРНО НАСЛЕДСТВО
В ЮГОИЗТОЧНА ЕВРОПА ПОД ЕГИДАТА НА ЮНЕСКО**

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MINUTES

**OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL CENTRE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SOUTH-
EASTERN EUROPE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
UNESCO**

Sofia, April 19, 2016





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MINUTES

of the General Assembly Meeting of the Association

**REGIONAL CENTRE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE
IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF UNESCO,**

held at the Sofia Grand Hotel in the City of Sofia, Bulgaria, on 19 April 2016

The following full members of the General Assembly took part in the meeting:

1. **Ms. Zhulieta Sina Harasani**, Chairperson of the General Assembly, representative of Albania; Director General of the Directorate of Strategic Planning for Cultural Heritage and Diversity, Ministry of Culture of Albania;
2. **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ventzislav Velev**, representative of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria; Head of Regional Activities Department, Ministry of Culture;
3. **Mr. Vladimir Milanov**, representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria; Head of the political Cabinet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
4. **Ms Véronique Dauge**, representative of the UNESCO Director-General; Head of Culture Unit, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Venice, Italy);
5. **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Margarit Ganev**, Chief Legal Adviser of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences;
6. **Ms. Maria Donska**, Secretary General of the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO;
7. **Prof Stoyan Denchev**, representative of the International Association of National Folklore Federations;
8. **Mr. Hristo Angelichin**, Acting Executive Director of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO; *non-voting member*;
9. **Ms Berisa Mehovic**, representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina; senior adviser with the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
Ms. Marija Radakovic, representative of the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
10. **Ms. Vesna Pascuttini-Juraga**, representative of Croatia; Senior Expert with the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of the Croatian Ministry of Culture;
11. **Dr. Antigoni Polyniki**, representative of Cyprus; officer of the National Commission for UNESCO of Cyprus;
12. **Ms. Marina Taktakishvili**, representative of Georgia; Chief Specialist of the Cultural Heritage Inventory and Documentation Unit of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia;
13. **Ms. Stavroula Fotopoulou**, representative of Greece; Director of Modern Cultural Assets and Intangible Cultural Heritage Directorate, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs;
14. **Dr. Varvara Buzila**, representative of the Republic of Moldova; President of the National ICH Commission of the Republic of Moldova;
15. **Acad. Sabina Ispas**, representative of Romania; Director of the C. Brailoiu Institute for Ethnography and Folklore;
16. **Dr. Miroslava Lukić-Krstanović**, representative of Serbia; Senior Scientific Associate of the Institute of Ethnography of the Serbian Academy for Science and Arts;



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17. Ms. Bojana Rogeli Škafar, representative of Slovenia; Museum Counsellor, Slovene Ethnographic Museum;

18. Prof. Dr. Mehmed Öcal Oğuz, representative of Turkey; President of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO.

Also in attendance in observer capacity were the following guests:

- **Prof. Mila Santova**, Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences;
- **Mr. Emil Pavlov**, Chairman of the National Section of CIOFF in Bulgaria;
- **Mr. Tony Dimov** – legal adviser of the Centre;

The meeting was held to the following agenda:

Opening of the General Assembly

1. Approval of the agenda;
2. Acceptance of new members of the General Assembly;
3. Discussion and adoption of key internal documents of the Centre:
 - 3.1. Annual activities report for 2015;
 - 3.2. Financial report for 2015;
 - 3.3. Work plan for 2016;
 - 3.4. Budget for 2016;
4. Proposals for amendments to the Statutes of the Centre;
5. Adoption of the Internal Regulations of the Centre with Annexes;
6. Election of the composition of the bodies of the Centre;
7. Election of a Chairperson of the General Assembly;
8. Setting the date for the next regular meeting of the General Assembly;
9. Miscellaneous.

OPENING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The meeting was opened by the General Assembly Chair, Ms. Zhulieta Harasani, who welcomed all participants to the fifth consecutive meeting of the General Assembly of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO (RC). She shared with them her positive impressions of a busy year 2015 and thanked everyone who had participated and contributed to the implementation of RC activities. She described the elapsed year as a beneficial and fruitful one and expressed hope that the next [i.e. current] one would be even more productive and intensive contributing to the value added and the visibility of the RC in Bulgaria as well as in the region of South-



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Eastern Europe as a whole. On account of the absence from the meeting of some representatives of the Member States, she asked the participants to take turns introducing themselves so everyone would know who were in attendance.

This was followed by introductions all round.

Ms. Véronique Dauge conveyed the best wishes of the UNESCO Director-General, Ms. Irina Bokova, to all participants in the meeting and thanked the hosts for the good organisation of this latest in a series of meetings.

Words of introduction were offered by Ms. Maria Donska, who greeted all participants in the General Assembly meeting while underscoring the important commitments that remained to be fulfilled by the RC, namely the adoption of amendments to the Statutes of the Association and a set of Internal Regulations that are necessary to provide a solid statutory and procedural basis for the efficient functioning of the RC, which is developing at a rapid pace. During the past year, the RC has significantly invigorated its activity; another positive trend being the increase in the number of its Member States, including some beyond the region of South-Eastern Europe; the RC funded activities initiated by other Member States. The activities implemented under the sign of the UNESCO 70th anniversary have stirred a broad public response and contributed to the visibility of the RC. A good case in point was the Youth Competition of ICH elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is in this way that the RC works for the attainment of one of the goals of promoting and mobilising popular support for the implementation of the 2003 Convention. The speaker expressed her hope that the initiatives for celebrating the 60th anniversary of Bulgaria's accession to UNESCO would also contribute to that end, and that Bulgaria would join efforts with other countries in the region which are in the process of marking a similar anniversary. This would draw more attention to the topics of safeguarding of ICH, to the activities of the RC and the SEE region as a whole. Ms. Donska also dwelled on another important aspect of UNESCO's activity, which is acquiring ever greater significance in the general context of the obliteration of the cultural and historical heritage, cultural cleansing and the refugee crisis. This is the issue of achieving synergy between the 2003 Convention, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict. The speaker also noted the role which the RC can play for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, first and foremost, its Goal No. 11: Sustainable Cities. She cited as an example of the ICH capability of promoting sustainable urban development the Surva folk feast in Pernik region, which was inscribed last year on the ICH Representative list. This holiday contributes to the mobilisation of the creative energies, the cohesion of the community, and to instilling in people a desire to protect their identity, while at the same time making a positive input to the economic development of the city and the region. In conclusion, Ms. Donska expressed her hope that the RC would continue the positive tendency towards stepping up its efforts for enriching and infusing with new content its activities; she also emphasised the role and responsibility of the new management to that end.

ON AGENDA ITEM 1

The Chair of the General Assembly put the meeting's agenda to a discussion and a vote.

All members of the General Assembly (16) cast an AYE vote; there were no NAYS or ABSTENTIONS, whereby the General Assembly



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DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The agenda is adopted as proposed.

ON AGENDA ITEM 2

Ms. Harasani introduced the next item on the agenda: induction of new members to the General Assembly. One application had been submitted by the Republic of Moldova, which had a representative at the meeting; another, by a non-governmental organisation. Ms Harasani asked a representative of the RC to supply more information about the membership applications.

Ms. Donska explained that the RC aims to expand its membership by involving new States in its activities; to that end, back in 2014 it had addressed an invitation for membership to the Republic of Moldova and had received acknowledgment and confirmation to that end. As for the non-governmental organisation CIOFF, she reminded the audience that the application had been submitted last year and is now pending the approval of the members of the General Assembly.

The Chair of the General Assembly put Moldova's membership application to the vote.

All members of the General Assembly (16) cast an AYE vote; there were no NAYS or ABSTENTIONS, whereby the General Assembly

DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The Republic of Moldova is admitted and welcomed as a full member of the General Assembly.
(17 voting members with the Republic of Moldova)

The Chair of the General Assembly put then put to the vote the membership application of the non-governmental organisation CIOFF.

Mr. Angelichin took the floor to make the clarification that, according to the Statutes of the Centre, the RC General Assembly may have up to two non-governmental organisations as its members; therefore, with the possible induction of CIOFF both slots would be filled. In his capacity as the acting Executive Director of the RC, he had always sought to impose a certain pattern in the support granted by the RC to various events, based upon the following principles: regional scope, i.e. the proposed event should involve participants from the SEE region; the topic of UNESCO should feature prominently; so would the intangible cultural heritage; and the event should be non-commercial in nature. His recommendation was that no organisation could be part of the governing bodies of the RC and at the same time apply for funding of its events from the RC budget. He told the audience about the positive experience of the RC in cooperating with CIOFF over the past year and asked the CIOFF representative his personal opinion about the remark he had just made.

Mr. Pavlov presented in brief the activity of the National Section of CIOFF in Bulgaria and his organisation's ties to UNESCO and the intangible cultural heritage. He said the application for RC membership had been submitted the previous year. He was at a crossroads as he was willing to work towards the goals of safeguarding ICH and his NGO offered a number of opportunities in that respect that would merit the support of the RC: festivals, conferences and other events.

Ms. Harasani thanked Mr. Pavlov while underscoring that organisations like CIOFF were always welcome to join in the activities of the RC. In her view, all RC members should be



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encouraged to propose fresh ideas to be implemented with the help of the RC, which, of course, would be subjected to a discussion and then either supported or rejected. She then proposed to put the issue to the vote.

Ms Donska made the clarification that as members of the GA of the RC non-governmental organisations that could be a source of diverse initiatives for the activity of the RC and were therefore encouraged to keep on doing that. But it would be advisable for the proposed activities to be outside the scope of the proposing NGO. She made the clarification that the draft work plan for 2016 included a proposal made by CIOFF and appealed to the applying NGO to withdraw either its membership application or the proposed activity.

In response, Mr. Pavlov expressed his preference for the proposed activities to remain in this year's draft plan and withdrew CIOFF Bulgaria's membership application.

Ms. Harasani thanked Mr. Pavlov for his attendance and expressed her hope for good cooperation with CIOFF Bulgaria in the future already as a member of the GA. She then announced that three GA members were absent from the meeting: the representatives of Armenia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro.

ON AGENDA ITEM 3

Under the **first sub-item of item 3**, the GA Chair invited Mr. Angelichin to present the key documents of the RC for discussion and approval by the GA members. Mr. Angelichin began by presenting the annual activities report of the RC for 2015. He first made a brief clarification that he had assumed his current position towards the middle of the year, in June, but was about to also present activities implemented under the previous Executive Director.

ACTIVITY REPORT 2015

For the Regional Centre, the outgoing year 2015 was full of diverse activities, important regional and global events and the creation of new, operational networks and partnerships in the field of the intangible cultural heritage. A large part of the initiatives supported by the RC were dedicated to, or related to, the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO. The Regional Centre strove to be an active partner of the SEE member states by initiating various invitations for participation in, and supporting training seminars, round tables, conferences, and expert meetings in subject matters pertinent to the intangible cultural heritage.

The activities approved for inclusion in the 2015 work plan were successfully realised. In the course of the year, the RC also tackled unscheduled activities, mostly related to providing support for events marking the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO.

In the medium term, the Centre has set itself several goals, the first among which is *Raising the capacity of the countries in South-Eastern Europe for safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage and for implementing the 2003 Convention at national level*. The Centre has since organised two seminars in the UNESCO Strategy featuring trainers from the network of the Organisation.

The first workshop was organised jointly with the Ministry of Culture of Albania and was intended solely for national experts from that country. The second one had been scheduled to be held in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in October 2015, but was postponed, at the request of the host country, for April 11-15, 2016. The RC had as its partners the Ministry of Culture of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the International Folk Music Council. The purpose of both workshops was to help raise the understanding of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; to discuss policies and practices of its



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implementation at both national and international level; its connection with other UNESCO conventions in the sphere of culture, etc.

Another goal the RC has been setting itself on an annual basis is the *Creation of expert networks and strengthening cooperation in South-Eastern Europe*. The Centre supported the Annual Meeting of the Experts Network on ICH in Venice and the Workshop on Intellectual Property and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Sofia. Some more information about the Venice meeting: the topic was 'Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: Synergy and Coordination between the UNESCO 2003 and 2005 Conventions: the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005 UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The Regional Centre co-organised the event jointly with the UNESCO European Regional Bureau for Science and Culture by covering the entire financial cost. The meeting was appreciated as significant and useful by the participants in it and meetings of that format remain a favourable environment for improving coordination and communication between the countries of South-Eastern Europe. A two-day seminar on 'Intellectual Property, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Medicine' was held in Sofia in April. The Centre hired experienced lecturers from the UNESCO Network and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Participants from 12 countries in South-Eastern Europe took part in the seminar, which provided good opportunities for discussions, for presenting and resolving cases pertinent to intellectual property and the intangible cultural heritage and citing examples at local and national level. The participants underscored the need for training courses on this and related subjects, which would promote cooperation and the exchange of good practices among the countries of South-Eastern Europe.

The next approved activity was improving the interactive calendar and the official web page of the Centre. On account of the disinterestedness and passivity of the member states, the Centre decided to remove the calendar from its web page, in the hope that the concept and the countries' involvement would evolve over the coming years. More than once the member states had been asked to supply, on a regular basis, information about events and initiatives in the sphere of the intangible cultural heritage at national level, which would then be publicised in the *interactive calendar*, but only Cyprus and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia responded by submitting one entry each for the calendar. Nevertheless, the Regional Centre made an effort to improve the design and functionality of its official website, as well as its content.

The third goal underlying the RC's activity planning is *Promoting the intangible cultural heritage of SEE*. The Centre supported the first two days of the International Ethnographic Film Festival held in May, dedicated to films about the intangible cultural heritage by filmmakers of South-Eastern Europe or on subjects concerning the Balkans. The festival featured a selection of 26 films tackling subject matters like cultural heritage, migration, the environment, kinships, globalisation and many others. The audiences were quite diverse and got a chance to familiarise themselves with the variety of ritual practices, folk crafts on the verge of extinction and curious traditions of significance not just for the region but for the entire continent of Europe.

The fourth declared goal of the Centre is *Dissemination and exchange of information in the sphere of the intangible cultural heritage*. The General Assembly approved the activity of putting out a jubilee edition on intangible cultural heritage. In September the Centre initiated an invitation to the member states to collect articles pertinent to the implementation of the 2003 Convention at national level. After numerous reminders and moving the deadline to December, only 5 countries: Albania, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, and Greece, submitted articles as requested. This necessitated their amalgamation into a single tome with the reports of the International Forum held in December. Still, 4 countries: Armenia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Romania, did not submit any material for inclusion in the book and do not appear in it. As you will see for yourselves, this is a multilingual edition comprising 19 articles by different authors, published in their native tongue with an English translation. In the



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course of the year, the Regional Centre produced brochures and other promotional materials designed to publicise its activity among a wider audience.

Other activities approved by the General Assembly were:

- **Convening a General Assembly meeting of the Regional Centre** in Sofia on March 10, 2015 (the highlights of the meeting being the induction of two new member states: Georgia and Greece; the election of a new GA Chair: Ms. Zhulieta Harasani; and welcoming the new representative of the UNESCO Director General to the General Assembly, Ms. Véronique Dauge);

- **Preparation of the Regional Centre for the evaluation procedure to be conducted by UNESCO HQ** (the Centre has budgeted the amount necessary to cover the cost of such performance evaluation);

- **Participation in the Annual Coordination Meeting of Category 2 Centres for the Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO Auspices** held in the city of Guiyang, CHINA, in July 2015. The meeting was hosted by the team of the International Training Centre for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Asia-Pacific Region (CRIHAP). A total of 20 participants represented all Category 2 Centres. The programme comprised six panel sessions, one of which, on 'Approaches to programme planning and budgeting', was moderated by the RC, i.e. by of its Executive Director and Ms. Harasani. The panel sessions were supplemented by interesting discussions on significant managerial and administrative issues that the Centres encounter on a regular basis in their work;

- **Participation in expert meetings organised by UNESCO.** The Centre did not join the session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee in Namibia last December because the dates overlapped with another scheduled event;

- **Participation in expert meetings on ICH in/outside South-Eastern Europe.** As the RC seeks to enhance its communication with Category 2 Centres for the intangible cultural heritage it sent a representative to the International Meeting of Experts in the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Western and Central Asia organised by the Centre in Tehran, which took place on the island of Qeshm, in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The topic of the meeting was 'Exploring concrete measures for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage'. Participating in it were international experts who shared their experience and cited examples of successful practices for the safeguarding of their intangible cultural heritage.

The Regional Centre also participated in a *scientific conference on 'The Folk Dance as an Element of Traditional Culture'* organised jointly by CIOFF® Bulgaria and the Ministry of Culture under the patronage of the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of Bulgaria. The RC team presented its main goals and functions and its planned activities for the current year.

The Regional Centre joined the *11th National Festival of Bulgarian Folklore* and supported the *Round Table of '70 Years of UNESCO: Peace Through Education, Science and Culture'*.

The Regional Centre addressed a formal invitation for representatives of the Member States to visit the National Festival and participate in the Round Table. Representatives of Romania and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia took part in both events. The RC once again took the opportunity to present its activity to the large national and foreign audiences gathered at the festival. To that end, it used the printed brochures and other promotional materials. The round table took place on the day after the closure of the festival and was a joint initiative of the Sozopol Foundation, the National Commission for UNESCO and the National Palace of Culture. The programme included a *panel on intangible cultural heritage, on the subject of 'Living Human Treasures'*, which the Centre supported. Invited to participate were representatives of the UNESCO Secretariat, of governmental and non-governmental, national and international organisations, as well as scholars, academics and eminent experts in the field of culture and education.

The Regional Centre granted its support to the celebration of the 20-year jubilee of the Balkanica Foundation, by assisting in the organisation of the Round Table on 'Myths, Popular Beliefs, Oral Narratives and Legends in Balkan Literature'.



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It also supported financially a *round table on the subject of 'The National Cultures of the Balkans: Parts of a Whole'* hosted in November by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IEFEM-BAS). The participants examined different aspects of the Balkan identity and made an in-depth analysis of the historical and geographical factors as well as the no less significant political factors that have contributed to the shaping up of the national self-awareness of the Balkan peoples in a comparative aspect.

The Regional Centre realised a very interesting youth initiative: a competition under the motto *'Meet and Share the Living Heritage of Bulgaria'* on the occasion of the 70-th anniversary of UNESCO. The participants (aged 15 or over) were required to prepare a poster, postcard, video or multimedia presentation featuring one particular Bulgarian element on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In addition to a visual component, the proposed entry was required to contain a written exposé suggesting how the element was to be conserved and transmitted to the coming generations, and in what way the author envisioned the involvement of young people from the region of South-Eastern Europe in the process. The competition conferred three first prizes for best entry: one for each inscribed element on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. On account of the high interest in the element inscribed in 2014, namely, the traditional Chiprovtsi carpet weaving, and the larger number of entries submitted in relation to it, the panel of judges gave that element two prizes instead of one.

The international forum on *'The Contribution of the UNESCO Member States of South-Eastern Europe to the Dissemination and Implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage'* was a joint initiative of the RC, the Ministry of Culture, the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the University of Library Studies and Information Technology. It was officially opened on December 12 by Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO. Before the opening ceremony the participants and attendees had an opportunity to experience the folk feast *Surva* in front of the National Theatre in the capital city. In that way Bulgaria saluted the inscription of that traditional holiday of the Pernik region onto the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind. Participating in the forum were representatives of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, ICH experts from 14 countries of South-Eastern Europe, representatives of Bulgarian academic institutions and foreign diplomats. Mrs. Bokova conferred distinctions upon the winning entrants of the National Youth Competition for showcasing the Bulgarian sites and elements inscribed on the UNESCO representative lists of the intangible, tangible, and natural heritage dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Organisation. The scientific component of the forum, which took part within the two panel discussions as announced in advance, hosted respectively at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the University of Library Studies and Information Technology, was also a major success. The panel discussions were on the subjects of: *Panel 1: 'Measures taken in the countries from SEE for the implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)'*; and *Panel 2: 'The role of local communities in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage'*. This event marked the conclusion of a series of initiatives dedicated to the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

The Regional Centre supported the *translation of Volume 1 of The Balkan Man by Ivan Velchev*. A monograph conceived on a grand scale and of great literary and historical value for Bulgaria and the Balkans as a whole, it consists of 7 books arranged in three volumes of 1,000 pages each, with numerous illustrations and over 700 explanatory footnotes. Its English translation will facilitate its access to the international literary market and a specialised foreign audience.

The *survey on 'The Intangible Cultural Heritage, Intercultural and Regional Relations. UNESCO's Faces in South-Eastern Europe'* was designed to offer an optimal, in the circumstances, view of public opinion combined with an expert perspective on the subject of the intangible



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cultural heritage and issues inseparably linked to it, in a current context, as well as on the activity of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The objectives of the survey were to establish some tentative levels of public awareness of the topic of the intangible cultural heritage, of involvement in, and extent of commitment to, the subject matter; a study of popular attitudes to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, to belonging and identity; a testing of attitudes to other relevant topics concerning intercultural relations in a national and regional context; and the expert perspective in terms of the issues, prospects and recommendations relevant to the subject matter. The survey provides the guidelines for formulating future long-term goals and strategies of the Regional Centre on the basis of the data obtained by the sociological agency tasked with conducting it.

For the first time in October 2015 the Regional Centre initiated an invitation to the member states proposing the funding of events at national level that they would organise in the context of the *70th anniversary of UNESCO*. Thus the Centre gave its support to the expert meeting organised by the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Science and the National Commission of Cyprus for UNESCO, which enabled the participants to discuss a possible multinational application for the UNESCO Representative List. Regrettably, no other country took advantage of the opportunity.

The activities implemented in 2015 have prompted the following more important conclusions and recommendations:

- With each passing year, one can see a positive tendency in the shaping up of the Centre's profile by better planning, development and implementation of its activities and better positioning in both a national and an international context.
- By expanding its territorial scope (in 2015 it comprised 14 member states), the Centre now commands an important and reliable network in South-Eastern Europe for communication, partnership, exchange of expertise and practices for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.
- The Regional Centre has been making visible efforts to streamline both operationally and financially its activities while at the same time seeking to synchronise them with the strategic goals of UNESCO. That said, it is advisable for the Centre to further improve the planning process and direct its efforts towards the implementation of activities approved by the General Assembly while avoiding involvement in, and granting its support to, a large number of unplanned events and activities.
- In organising events without prior approval by the General Assembly, the Centre must budget enough time to notify the member states in South-Eastern Europe, which can either join in on their own behalf or nominate a stand-in participant.
- In the course of the outgoing year 2015 the Centre has made visible efforts to step up the inclusion of the countries of South-Eastern Europe in its activities. Nonetheless, that process can be improved further by keeping it open to more proposals from the member states, provided that clear-cut funding criteria are enforced and dialogue and communication with them is improved.
- After the successful ICH capacity building seminar held in Albania and the positive feedback on behalf of the hosts, the Regional Centre should strengthen its cooperation with the countries of South-Eastern Europe for organising such seminars on a rotating basis in the member states. Six seminars are planned to be held in the SEE region in the course of 2016.
- The Regional Centre should create proper conditions for continuous exchange of information with the member states about important international events and initiatives in the field of the intangible cultural heritage, with a view to promoting them on its official website.



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The GA Chair thanked the Executive Director for the presentation. The members of the GA unanimously decided to proceed with hearing the financial report for 2015 and then put both documents to a discussion with a view to endorsing them.

Under the **second sub-item of item three**, Mr. Asen Senyov, the RC's financial expert, was asked to present to the attention of all GA members the financial statement for 2015. He explained that the numbers are clearly stated in the circulated documents and speak by themselves about what has been spent in the course of the year. Mr. Senyov drew the members' attention to some of the more important figures and the overall positive trend of the Association spending more money for its activities. The total expenditure for the outgoing year 2015 stands at BGN 425,133. He made some clarifications about the administrative costs: staff remuneration under employment and service contracts and the mandatory social security contributions, office maintenance costs and other external services that the RC has been using throughout the year. Next came the allocations for implementation of the programme and activities of the RC, which amount to BGN 204,000 and are detailed in the package of documents circulated among the members of the GA. One last clarification: the report has been compiled in accordance with the provisions of Bulgarian law and the classification as per the Accounting Act in the form in which it is submitted on an annual basis to the Ministry of Finance and the National Audit Office of the Republic of Bulgaria. Thus, in keeping with the law, the centre issued a public call for proposals whenever purchasing airline tickets or booking hotel accommodation.

The Executive Director thanked the financial expert for a job done perfectly in the course of the year. He went on to clarify that the RC receives allocations from the state budget and it is for that reason that Mr. Senyov keeps the account books the way any government institution, e.g. a ministry, does. Importantly, the financial report shows a decrease in the total payroll cost and an increased in the cost of funding RC activities. It had been a tendency in previous years for the RC to fail to expend its entire annual subsidy. In 2015, the exact opposite has been observed: the cost of activities exceeded the annual budgetary allocations, which clearly indicates a growth in RC activity. Its operation was hindered by the fact that the limits under some budgetary items were exhausted and could not be exceeded without issuing public calls for proposals.

The GA Chair opened the floor for discussion of both RC documents as presented.

Ms. Donska opted to add that the budget plan adopted for 2015 had been very ambitious as it had provided bigger allocations under specific budgetary items, especially for a more active involvement of the member states into the work of the RC. She called upon all the representatives of the SEE member states to consider that this kind of support is to continue also throughout 2016, so their requests for support would be welcomed by the RC.

Prof. Santova noted that the past year 2015 had been a particularly difficult one after the far from easy General Assembly meeting last March. Nevertheless, the RC managed to emerge from the crisis and made steps that are worthy of note towards overcoming the tendency of staging events for events' sake, events that get left in a lurch of time and space, and moving towards events that are meaningful and have a lasting impact. She congratulated the acting Executive Director who, in her view, takes much of the credit in that respect. She expressed her hope that the tendency of the Centre establishing a steady presence in the SEE region would continue in the future. As for the prospects, she said she wished to make a proposal that had been realised in part, yet not in full, in the region: there was an acute need for the UNESCO capacity building programme to be replicated at national level. According to her observations, capacity-related trainings were delivered at random, which in most cases was not, in her view, a good practice. If a more clear-cut concept shapes up, to the effect that the views coming from UNESCO about the implementation of the Convention at regional and national level could be



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transmitted to subsequent larger groups of people working in the actual field, that would be extremely beneficial and would help realise in practical terms the idea of capacity building.

The Greek delegate, Ms. Fotopoulou, began her intervention by congratulating the team of the RC: the Executive Director and the entire staff, on the successful year for which they had just reported numerous activities. She agreed with the proposal of Prof. Santova to place an emphasis on capacity building and the implementation of the 2003 Convention in the region as a whole. In that context, she wanted to make two observations: firstly, she was pleased to see in the conclusions of Mr. Angelichin's report that one positive point had already been taken on board, namely, that activities needed to be planned in advance and that everyone was to be kept informed in due course in order to have enough time to respond and join in. Another observation she wanted to share was that there had already been talk about national cultural symposia and festivals, but here it is ICH that is the issue, and these two concepts do not add up very well. She recommended that whenever the RC decided to support an event organised by other partners, this should be put to a discussion. Has the General Assembly or the members of the Executive Board been consulted, they would surely have raised that issue. The concept of *national cultures in the Balkans* should be re-formulated, say, into local culture expressed in a Balkan context. This should by no means be taken as criticism, but whenever other activities are planned and included in programmes it would be best to consult first the General Assembly or members of the Executive Board, as this would help avoid a lot of misunderstanding. Lastly, she said she respected the requirement for financial statements to be formulated in accordance with the national standard, yet it would be desirable for the members of the General Assembly to understand what costs correspond to what activities. If this would require some additional description of financial operations, then such a description should be made. The current pattern of presenting financial reports makes it impossible to match activities to budgetary items, whereas it is necessary for each allocation to be traceable to the respective activity. Apart from those critical remarks, she once again congratulated the RC, in the person of its Executive Director, the Executive Board and the entire team, for the successful year and expressed hope that in the current year, the Centre would accomplish even more.

The Serbian delegate, Ms. Lukić-Krstanović, congratulated the RC on its fruitful work and noted that the Centre was making progress with each passing year, as Mr. Angelichin had also mentioned in his conclusions. The RC is turning into an important network for the exchange of ideas, practices, and expertise. The activities report demonstrated that significant efforts had been made to achieve coordination with the member states, as well as for strengthening communication with the other Category 2 Centres. On the other hand, greater mobility and involvement is required from the member states; Ms. Lukić-Krstanović said she had caught a hint of criticism towards them in the introductory part of the report, together with a suggestion for them being a more pro-active network in the overall activity of the RC. Regarding the financial report, she commended the inclusion of the monies spent in the textual part of the report, as had been done this year, which contributes to transparency. She emphasised section 4 of the financial report: expenditures on organising seminars and training activities, as extremely important and said that, considering the expanding number of member states, it would be advisable to increase allocations under that budgetary item. Ms. Lukić-Krstanović congratulated the RC on the jubilee edition, which was a very important tool for the exchange of experience among experts of the region.

The Turkish delegate, Mr. Oğuz, presented his congratulations to the RC and the Chair of the Executive Board for the extremely successful work of the Centre during the past year. He saluted the Centre on the jubilee edition dedicated to the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO. He had some remarks about one of the reported activities: in his view, the *Round Table on the National Cultures in the Balkans*, which in his view should be re-formulated as 'regional cultures' or, in



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accordance with the suggestion of the Greek delegate, as 'local cultures in the Balkans'. One thing that could be added as a subject for discussion was the possibility for preparing multinational nominations for the UNESCO lists. Last year, several multinational nominations were submitted by countries in the region, yet none was approved by UNESCO. The case in point was the joint nomination of the celebrations of March 1 in the region and the one related to the feast of Hidrellez (or St. George's Day). Mr. Oğuz suggested that the RC should take an interest in the preparation of those files and help the countries of the region with their improvement. After all, he said, this was a Centre with a regional mandate and should contribute to maintaining multicultural dialogue and cohesion among cultures. He expressed his hope for a successful multinational nomination in the near future. He congratulated the new member state joining the GA of the RC and wished for Ukraine and Azerbaijan to also be invited to join in the Centre's activities. Lastly, he congratulated the RC on the youth ICH competition organised by it, but said he would be glad if such competitions would also include other countries in the region. He underscored the importance of any organisation within the UNESCO system using both official languages: English and French, and said he hoped that next year, sufficient funding would be provided for the GA meeting to have a French booth as well. Before the GA would proceed with the approval of the annual report, he wished to suggest to the RC to send a circular letter to the member states in the region asking for information about activities undertaken by other countries, as they had many events that could be organised in cooperation with the RC.

The Romanian delegate, Acad. Ispas, congratulated the RC on growing up over the years, before her very eyes. The discussions and seminars cover important subjects such as intellectual property, methods of safeguarding ICH, authentic vs. commercial; the process of change of the traditional model; the importance of preserving the characteristics of the local identity. She voiced her regret that Romania is not featured in the jubilee edition because of insufficient time for preparing its own entry. She seconded the Greek proposal about the terminology to be used in reference to "national cultures"; the countries should coordinate the relevant terms by email. She found the work of the Centre in 2015 quite impressive. She promised that Romania would join more actively in its activities and referred, by way of example, to a seminar on the safeguarding of ICH scheduled to be held in her country this coming June, in partnership with the Centre.

The Slovenian delegate, Ms. Bojana Rogeli Škafar, made a request on behalf of all of her colleagues at the Museum in Ljubljana. Regarding the issues of intellectual property in audio-visual materials they encounter in their daily work, they had consulted colleagues at UNESCO HQ, but without success. So she proposed the setting up of a platform on the website of the RC with the contact details of experts in different ICH-related subjects throughout the SEE region, who would be available for consultations whenever the need arose. The platform would look something like a FAQ virtual help desk.

The GA Chair urged the countries of the region to prepare a detailed database of names and contact details of their relevant experts and forward these to the RC, which would in turn post them on its website.

Ms. Donska took the floor to make the clarification that invitations had been sent already last year for Ukraine and Azerbaijan to join the Centre, yet so far there had been no response or confirmation by either of them.

The GA Chair addressed a question to the financial expert of the RC about the unplanned activities implemented in the course of the year, activities that have not been discussed and endorsed by the GA in the 2015 meeting. The GA chair asked about their percentage ratio vis-a-vis the planned ones and their share of the 2015 approved budget. She also added that it is



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normal for great project ideas to pop up during the year, but it was necessary to develop a procedure that would clearly prescribe which of the governing bodies of the RC had the authority to approve such activities and define some criteria to it.

The representative of the UNESCO Director General, Ms. Véronique Dauge, seconded the question raised by Ms. Harasani while adding that she was interested to know more about the correspondence between allocations cited in the financial report and the respective activities. In her view, if the GA is mandated to approve planned activities, they should have a rough idea about their financial value. Or the GA may authorise a lump sum to cover any and all unplanned activities throughout the year. She accepted the need to give the RC an opportunity to fund ad hoc activities as the need may arise in the course of the year, yet deemed it imperative to have a balance between approved activities and the relevant planned expenditures.

The RC financial expert made the clarification that the state tax authority wanted to know about funds spent in the course of a calendar year. Larger resources available to the RC made it possible to make compensatory changes, i.e. there was leeway to introduce changes in the course of the year. If a certain amount of money is earmarked for contingencies, there may appear a surplus that can either increase or decrease. The state exercises control to make sure that the government subsidy is expended for its intended purpose, whereas the GA decides on the allocation of funds to cover specific costs.

The GA Chair reminded the participants of the importance of the GA as the supreme governing body of the RC, which should also be responsible for approving the total expenditures of the Centre. She said she had some remarks about the programming and planning process; it was for that reason she asked about the percentage ratio between planned and unplanned activities. If funds spent on unplanned activities exceed those spent on planned ones, this is not good and a clear-cut procedure must be designed to sort things out.

Mr. Angelichin expressed his readiness to make the calculation by the end of the day. He clarified that the financial report contains 3 pages. Page 1 has two columns: budget as approved by GA and monies actually spent. On p. 2 and p. 3 are listed the events and the expenditures made to fund them.

The GA chair thanked him for that clarification and recommended that the process of financial accounting be improved for next year. The textual portion of the report should be accompanied by a breakdown of expenditures that would indicate what funds have been spent on each specific activity. With regard to a possible increase or decrease of individual budgetary items, there was a question about the reduced payroll cost and where the difference came from. That was an important issue as it pertained to the cost efficiency of the RC.

Mr Angelichin accepted her critical remark about the financial accounting and said it would be reflected in next year's financial report. The reduced payroll cost came from the fact that one member of the team had resigned. No new employee had been hired to replace her, pending the appointment of the next Executive Director, who could nominate another candidate to fill the vacancy.

Ms. Véronique Dauge said more information was needed about staffing levels and job descriptions at the RC, as well as about any changes in those. This is important as it gives a clear idea about the workload of each member of the RC team. She expressed appreciation at the good work of the RC with so few staff, who had managed to prepare all the documents nonetheless. The staffing level must be raised as soon as possible to handle an increased workload of activities. While congratulating the RC on everything it had accomplished in the course of 2015,



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she recommended to both the GA and the EB to make the necessary steps and fill the gaps in staffing in the course of the year.

Mr. Angelichin explained that the RC has started spending more money out of its annual budget in order to reduce the budgetary surplus of previous years. As soon as that surplus is minimised or completely eliminated, there will be caps on the allocations made for supporting activities proposed by member states, and many such activities will not be supported. In the years to come, the member states could consider making a financial contribution to the budget of the RC, provided that the Centre would continue the current positive trend in its development.

Ms. Vesna Pascuttini-Juraga, the Croatian delegate, congratulated the RC on its successful year. She shared her view that the issue of intellectual property is a very important one and the workshop had provided a good opportunity for clarifying some of its aspects. She agreed with the Greek delegate that all planned activities needed to be time-bound in advance, so that more countries could join in and work on multinational projects.

This concluded the discussion and both documents were put to the vote.

All members of the General Assembly (17) cast an AYE vote; there were no NAYS or ABSTENTIONS, whereby the General Assembly

DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The annual activities report and the financial report for 2015 are approved as presented.

The afternoon session proceeded with deliberations on the third sub-item of agenda item 3, whereby the GA Chair gave the floor to Ms. Iliyana Ruseva to present the work plan for 2016.

SUMMARY OF THE WORK PLAN FOR 2016

The work plan for 2016 comprises diverse activities and initiatives with an emphasis on the inclusion in those of the countries of South-Eastern Europe. As was already made clear in the report, the No. 1 goal of the Regional Centre is *Raising the capacity of the countries in South-Eastern Europe for safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage and for implementing the 2003 Convention at national level*. In the context of the UNESCO capacity building strategy for the safeguarding of ICH, the Regional Centre continues its activities in organising training workshops in member states from South-Eastern Europe. The workshops planned for 2016 are to take place in countries that have expressed readiness to act as partners in such events. Their duration will be 5 days each, and the recommended number of participants, 20-25, including representatives of central and local government institutions, research institutes, NGOs, living heritage practitioners, etc. **Funding:** The *Regional Centre* will provide two lecturers from the UNESCO network by covering their fees, transportation and accommodation costs and meals in the relevant country. The *host country* will cover costs at local level: of training room, coffee breaks and catering services, interpretation to/from English, as well as of meetings with ICH practitioners. **Three of the workshops** will be on the subject of: 'Implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at national level'. These are as follows: **Activity 1.1. Workshop in Romania**, organised in partnership with the *Romanian Ministry of Culture*, to be held in Bucharest on June 12-17, 2016; **Activity 1.2. Workshop in Serbia**, organised in partnership with the *Serbian Ministry of Culture* and the *Centre for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Serbia at the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade*, scheduled for October 2016 in Belgrade. **Activity 1.4. Workshop in Croatia**, organised in partnership with



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the *Croatian Ministry of Culture*, scheduled for October 2016, in Zagreb. The remaining **two workshops** are on different subjects. Since Albania has already passed the first subject, about the implementation of the Convention, it will continue with the next one (**Activity 1.3**): 'Compiling and inventory of ICH with the participation of the local communities', to be organised in partnership with the *Albanian Ministry of Culture*. The workshop is scheduled for June or September. The other **workshop (Activity 1.5)** is planned to be held in Montenegro in partnership with the *Montenegrin Ministry of Culture*, and is scheduled for November 2016. The lecturers for the workshops are to be determined shortly by UNESCO. **The expected results of the workshops referred to for the Regional Centre are as follows:**

- Increased knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;
- Stronger support for the countries of SE Europe in the process of implementation of the 2003 Convention at national level;
- Identified national training needs with a view to planning future capacity building activities.

The Regional Centre has also planned **two round tables: Activity 1.5**. Round Table on the visibility of the intangible cultural heritage, in partnership with the *Slovenian Ethnographic Museum* and the *Bulgarian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum (IEFSEM/BAS)*. This round table will enable discussions related to the capabilities of a museum to showcase ICH in the best possible way; the danger of 'museefication' (de-vitalisation) of the ICH, etc. The *Regional Centre* will host a meeting in Sofia in the autumn of 2016. Invitations for participation will be sent out to experts from South-Eastern Europe with proven experience in the subject. The *Regional Centre* will cover the costs of international transport and accommodation of the participants from South-Eastern Europe, of conference equipment (if necessary), and catering. Our partners (IEFSEM) will provide the conference venue (room). **Activity 1.7. Round Table** on 'Cultures and Communities in South-Eastern Europe', to be organised in partnership with the NGO *Brain Workshop Institute*. The *Regional Centre* will provide the funding for organising and conducting the round table. The expected results are:

- Elaboration on aspects of the theoretical platform of the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage and its visibility;
- Clarification of the methodological set of tools through which museums in the region partake in the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, as well as the ways of ensuring its visibility;
- Enhanced interest in, and understanding of, the similarities in the South-Eastern European cultural space.

Prof. Stoyan Denchev proposed that the meeting would proceed straight with the discussion of the proposed work plan, as the participants were already familiar with its text.

Mr. Ventsislav Veleв started out by commending this year's plan for being a lot more ambitious and meeting the requirement, formulated the previous year, to involve almost all counties in the region. Then he asked about the inclusion of yet another event under Goal 1 of the plan: a traveling academic seminar on the general subject of 'Exchange of ICH-related (Islamic) knowledge among the countries of SEE'. According to his proposal, the seminar was to have two focal points: one in Edirne, Turkey, where it would be conducted jointly with the Thracian University, and one in Nis, Serbia, to be delivered in partnership with the local university; this would be followed by a concluding round table held in Albania and Bulgaria. The main idea of the event would be to get young people, and especially college and university students, directly involved in the subject matter. Mr. Veleв then asked why this proposal made



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by the Deputy Director of the Institute for Cultural and Historical Heritage, which itself is part of the University of Library Studies and Information technology (UniBIT), Prof. Vasileva, and supported by the Ministry of Culture, with a budget of BGN 67,000, (38,000 Euro) was not included in the work plan.

Mr. Angelichin supported the non-inclusion of the proposed event with three arguments:

1. The logic that he had shared all along was to support more events with smaller amounts, rather than a couple of events with large amounts of money, and to seek to involve more countries and more participants;
2. There was insufficient understanding as to who would be organising the event on behalf of Bulgaria: is it a university that will be included in the partnership or an NGO, and who is to be responsible for communication with the universities in Turkey, Macedonia and Albania;
3. Prof. Denchev is a member of both the GA and the EB; there is no way that a person who proposes an activity to be funded would then be in charge of that same activity,

To that Prof. Denchev objected that by the same token, not a single member of the GA should be taking part in the implementation of the work plan of the RC, e.g.: the Ministry of Culture of Albania (in Activity 1.3.: the capacity building workshop), the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences or the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or anyone seated around this table; in other words, he did not accept Mr. Angelichin's argumentation about a conflict of interests.

To that Mr. Angelichin replied, explicitly speaking on his own behalf without making his views binding for anyone around the table, that there is nothing in common between a private university, which ultimately strives to make a profit, and the MFA of Bulgaria or the Ministry of Culture of Albania, which are not-for-profit government agencies, or the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, which has a totally different subject of activity. He then added that should there be a single dissenting opinion around the table, the event would be included in the work plan.

Prof. Denchev remarked that UniBIT is no more private than the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or the Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria. He assured the audience that his university, founded back in 1950 as a State Institute of Library Studies, has always been and is a state-run institution. He then insisted on having his proposal discussed, then accepted and the relevant institute participating in the project

Ms. Harasani clarified her position that there was no analogy between the Albania case and the one under discussion. Firstly, the Ministry of Culture of Albania benefitted from the Regional Centre the two international experts who stayed in Albania for a period of 5 days. All the local costs were covered by the Ministry of Culture of Albania. The latter was not in charge of managing any funds from the RC. Secondly, she said she did not want any double standards here (referring to the case of CIOFF, which was given a choice: to sit at this table or be a beneficiary). And thirdly, she asked if there was a co-financing option whereby universities could contribute funds from their own budgets since the amount sought was considerably higher than the allocations for all the foreseen 2016 activities.

The Serbian Delegate, Ms. Lukić-Krstanović, said she saw no problem with including that activity in the work plan; as for the proposed workshop in Serbia (under Activity 1.2), she asked for the subject matter to be refocused, the monitoring and transmission of elements being more important topics for such a workshop than the convention itself or the definitions of cultural heritage.



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The Romanian delegate, Acad. Ispas, voiced a similar opinion: that the subject matter for the proposed workshop in Romania, as formulated in the work plan, was too general in terms of working technique and performance of the activity and asked if there were any more specific proposals.

The GA Chair, Ms. Harasani, suggested adopting the Albanian experience with UNESCO-prepared training modules and described the steps of taking one module at a time, in an effort to raise their capacity in relation to the 2003 Convention. The first workshop would be on the implementation of the 2003 Convention, the next one, on compiling inventories based on communities, etc., with the permanent option of adjusting and customising any further content in accordance with the audience profile.

The Greek delegate, Ms. Fotopoulou, said she found it very convenient to empower the national organiser to decide what the content of such trainings is going to be.

The Slovenian delegate, Ms. Bojana Rogeli Škafar, asked about the procedure of planning such a workshop and Ms. Iliyana Ruseva, an expert with the RC Secretariat, explained at great detail.

Ms. Véronique Dauge, the representative of the UNESCO Director General, proposed a slight re-formulation of Activities 1.6 and 1.7 to avoid any ambiguities. Another proposal she made concerned the terminology used: instead of *deliverables* [implying a physical product] she thought it better to use *expected results* [as more general]. Lastly, she asked what had been the criteria for selecting the NGOs that act as partners in conducting the round table, since they did not appear as related to intangible cultural heritage.

Mr. Angelichin declared his acceptance of all stylistic remarks; he replied to the questions raised during the morning session by Ms. Harasani regarding the events that had not been pre-approved by the previous GA meeting, saying that they constituted about 30% of the total value. These were events that were deemed to bring positive publicity to the Centre without costing all that much in terms of money and effort. One example of such an event was the RC's joint project with the Brain Workshop Institute, who had requested our support and for the money spent the event enjoyed both a wide public response and broad media coverage. Mr. Angelichin further clarified that all his efforts had been directed towards organising events that were collaborative rather than requiring effort and funding solely from the RC.

Ms. Véronique Dauge recommended that the work plan would contain cost estimates for each proposed activity, if one were to figure out whether 30 percent unplanned activities was too little or too much, or just about right. In her own opinion, it was a little too much.

Ms. Donska explained that the financial expert would provide a cost estimate for each planned activity verbally, as they had not been prepared in writing.

The GA Chair gave the floor on the **fourth sub-item of item 3** to Mr. Senyov, who made the clarification that the numbers he was about to present were tentative and would become final once the GA pronounced its judgment on the proposed activities. He then presented the following breakdown of costs by activity:

- 5 workshops of a total value of EUR 35,000, to be co-financed from the budget of the RC, which would pay the lecturers' fees, travel and accommodation expenses;
- Two round tables @ EUR 5,000 each = EUR 10,000;
- Meeting of experts in ICH in Croatia: EUR 7,000 for international transport;
- International conference on '110 Years of Ethnographic Museum in Bulgaria': EUR 5,000;



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- Business trips of ЮНЕСКО experts to/from Paris for training workshops: 4-5 trips total + one expert's trip to Ethiopia: EUR 10,000;
- International conference of the Balkan UNESCO clubs: EUR 6,000;
- Production of 3 or 4 documentaries about ICH: 5,000;
- International Easter Festival in Bosilegrad – promotional materials: EUR 2,000;
- International Folklore Festival in Veliko Tarnoco: EUR 5,000;
- GA meeting and meetings of the EB: EUR 14,000;
- Meetings with partners from SEE: EUR 10,000;
- Funding for participation in meetings of Category 2 centres: EUR 10,000;
- Support for initiatives launched by member states: EUR 10 000;
- Participation in events marking the 60th Anniversary of Bulgaria's UNESCO membership: EUR 10,000;
- And lastly, one significant allocation, which is non-negotiable because it is mandatory: EUR 37,000 for the Centre's performance evaluation by UNESCO.

In conclusion, Mr. Senyov made the provision that everything was tentative and subject to adjustment as long as the GA would deem it necessary to increase or decrease the proposed allocation for any given activity; only then would the RC have a final version of its budget for 2016.

This was followed by a discussion on Activity 3.1: Films about ICH, in which:

- Ms. Donska proposed an increase in the budgetary allocation;
- Véronique Dauge asked who would be producing those films and how, and what would be the selection criteria for the elements to be included in them;
- Prof. Denchev expressed an opinion that the proposal should be more focused in terms of who is to implement it and with what funding;
- Ms. Donska clarified that the proposal had come from a producers' studio working in collaboration with Nova TV; that it was currently under discussion of terms of whether it was of interest to the Centre and what funds could be allocated for its production; and that its production would be entrusted to professionals working collaboratively with fellow professionals from the relevant member state;
- Prof. Santova reminded the audience that this was not the first time the issue of making documentaries about ICH from a perspective that was not competent enough was being raised; this came as evidence that it was high time to do something in that respect. In her view, a reasonable approach would be to start with one country and to gradually move on to the next ones, which would be helpful also in terms of budgetary planning, as the budget obviously cannot exceed the available capacity for that activity, as well as in terms of the complete coverage, perhaps in alphabetical order, of all the countries involved. To that end, a slight increase in the budget would be in order;
- Ms. Fotopoulou proposed a doubling of the budget as this was a key means of increasing the visibility of our heritage; she also proposed for the member states to cover part of the expenses, perhaps a larger part, for the relevant national film while being free to choose their own ICH element as the subject matter for the film. She insisted that this was the best way to implement the proposed activity. It was imperative to first find out how many and which countries would be covered by the initial productions, whether they were prepared to co-finance them and what human resources they were ready to provide.

Prof. Denchev once again brought up the ULSIT proposal, with small modifications: the leading theme of the traveling seminar would be 'Exchange of Expertise on ICH in SEE'; he then proposed that two seminars be held, one in Edirne (Turkey) on the subject of: 'Safeguarding the



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Islamic ICH in the territory of SEE'; the other in Nis, on 'Safeguarding the Christian ICH in the territory of SEE'; the final seminar in Albania could then be dropped or held in Sofia, which would reduce the total amount to EUR 9,000 for each of the first two seminars and EUR 5,000 for the concluding seminar in Sofia, or EUR 24,000 [sic!] total. He insisted that the proposed activity would be included in the work plan as modified.

Prof. Santova reminded the audience that the Convention itself was about cultures, not confessions, and that it was highly advisable to avoid any confessional aspects when dealing with a country's cultural peculiarities. In her view, the new formulation was counterproductive and would not contribute to promoting the values of ICH among a broader audience.

Prof. Denchev said he accepted Prof. Santova's arguments yet added that in view of the steady wave of refugees he believed that learning about the peculiarities of ICH associated with both the Islamic and the Christian confession would be useful in motivating young people for safeguarding their cultural heritage.

Ms. Fotopoulou emphasized that the 2003 Convention does not cover elements like confession or language. She suggested that ICH should be regarded in terms of a link between communities; she advised Prof. Denchev to reconsider once again the formulation of the subject matters and to re-submit his concept to the Executive Board.

The GA Chair proposed that the GA proceeded with the discussions about the project ideas proposed by the Centre and Executive Board and express their opinions around them;

This concluded the discussion and both documents were put to the vote.

All members of the General Assembly (17) cast an AYE vote; there were no NAYS or ABSTENTIONS, whereby the General Assembly

DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The Work Plan and the Budget for 2016 are approved.

The GA Chair summarised on behalf of everyone present that the GA was expecting Prof. Denchev to re-formulate the title and content of his proposal in line with the 2003 Convention and reduce its budget in line with the RC principle in supporting ICH related project ideas (serving to more people and issues with reasonable budgets) and to submit it to the Executive Board for review and approval.

Prof. Denchev said he agreed with the remarks made by the Greek delegate and Prof. Santova. He specified that while the academic leadership of the Institute under ULSIT could make the required adjustments to his proposal, he did not accept the argument that his position as member of the Executive Board barred him from proposing activities for inclusion in the work plan of the RC.

Mr. Veleв then made a procedural proposal: to empower the Executive Director, in coordination with the Executive Board, to make proposals, whenever savings are made from one budgetary item, for transferring the surplus money under another item or items. Of course, such proposals should be well-reasoned and have the sanction of the EB, something that was missing at present.



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ON AGENDA ITEM 4

The GA Chair gave the floor to Ms. Donska, who led the discussion towards the subject of the Statutes of the Regional Centre. She reminded the audience that, for various reasons, the RC had failed to file for registration of its Statutes with a court of law, which would make the document legally binding. She then pointed out it was time to make some amendments to the text. The floor was given to Mr. Tony Dimov, jurisconsult of the RC, to brief the participants on the proposed amendments.

Mr. Tony Dimov said that the President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences would be represented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Margarit Ganev. Regarding the court registration of the Statutes, he pointed out that the procedure could not have been completed in 2015. The new Statutes provide that the Executive Director be elected by the General Assembly upon delegation of this power by GA. She expressed hope that the new Statutes would be successfully registered with a court of law in the course of the present year.

The new proposals concern the *Executive Board* and the *Executive Director*: the Executive Board is to include representatives of all stakeholders that are part of the RC since its inception, i.e. 7 entities: members of the three founding institutions; one representative of the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of Bulgaria; two representatives of the member states and one representative of the non-governmental sector. Regarding the two representatives of the member states, Mr. Dimov proposed that the countries would be rotated alphabetically and elected from the countries present in the GA meeting, excluding those which have already had a representative in the governing bodies of the RC. *His proposal was appreciated as a constructive one.* Tony Dimov then proposed two options: one, for the alphabetical order to be applied starting with Armenia, but only after the Armenian position on the matter has been made known; in that case, the two countries with representatives on the EB would be Armenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Should Armenia disagree, then the two countries represented on the EB would be Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Following a discussion between Ms. Dauge, Ms. Fotopoulou, and Acad. Ispas, the EG united around the idea that members of the EB would be appointed for a two-year term. Mr. Dimov clarified that the rotation would only apply to representatives of the SEE member states; the remaining members of the EB would be permanent. Once a second NGO is inducted as a full member, the two would also need to rotate, because there is only one slot for an NGO on the Board. The participants in the meeting accepted the idea of a seven-member EB with a two-year term of office.

The General Assembly approved without objections Art. 27 of the Statutes of the Association, to read as follows:

Art. 27. (1) The Executive Board is the executive and supervisory body of the Centre.

(2) The Executive Board shall consist of 7 (seven) persons and shall have the following composition:

- 2 (two) persons as representatives of the Member States of the Centre, except Bulgaria;*
- 1 (one) person as representative of the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO;*
- 1 (one) person as representative of the intergovernmental and international organisations that are members of the Centre;*
- 3 (three) persons in the capacity of representatives of each of the founding institutions of the Centre.*



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(3) The members of the Executive Board shall be elected by the General Assembly for a term of 2 (two) years.

Mr. Dimov presented the proposed amendment to **Art. 28: Powers of the Executive Board**, as follows: [The executive Board shall:] 1. Execute the powers vested in it and shall oversee the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly; 2. Elect and dismiss the Executive Director of the Centre.

The General Assembly approved without objections Art. 28 of the Statutes of the Association.

Regarding **Art. 31: Chairperson of the Executive Board**, Mr. Dimov recalled that with the very inception of the RC, it had been decided that the Chair would rotate between the three founding institutions. Upon the insistence of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, this principle also applies to the Executive Board. Pursuant to Art. 31, its Chair is elected on a rotating basis among the representatives of the three founding institutions. There is no problem for the rotation principle to apply from 2017 onwards.

Prof Mila Santova asked that the sequence of such rotation of the Chair be explicitly written down in the founding documents and reminded the audience that following the present GA meeting, it was the turn of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to take over the chair.

Tony Dimov clarified that the position of BAS was clearly expressed in all three requests submitted by Dr. Ganev earlier that morning, namely that BAS wished to keep its role in the functioning of the RC; that the Chair would be held on a rotating basis either from the current or from the following year; and that BAS insisted on transparent procedures in the election of Executive Director. He added that in purely procedural terms Prof. Santova did not, for the moment, speak on behalf of BAS or its leadership.

Prof. Santova clarified that Mr. Ganev had attended the GA meeting in his capacity as legal adviser to Acad. Vodenicharov and that she had received no written directions stripping her of her representative functions.

Ms. Harasani opined that with a view to the upcoming performance assessment of the RC for renewing its Agreement with UNESCO, it would be preferable for the rotation principle to come into force starting next year (as of GA 2017), i.e. after the external evaluation of the RC.

Ms. Dauge agreed with that proposal adding that by the same token, the composition of the EB should also remain unchanged.

According to Mr. Dimov, practice in recent years has shown that the present composition of the EB, namely three foreigners vs. two Bulgarians, does not work well and must therefore be changed.

The GA united around the following formulas: 7-strong EB, the EB Chair remains in place; the rotation principle kicks in from the next GA meeting in 2017 onwards.

This concluded the discussion on **the proposed amendments to the statutes** and they were put to the vote.

All members of the General Assembly (17) cast an AYE vote; there were no NAYS or ABSTENTIONS, whereby the General Assembly

DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:



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The amendments to the Statutes of the Association are approved as proposed.

ON AGENDA ITEM 5

The participants proceeded with **Agenda Item 5: Adoption of Internal Regulations**. Mr. Dimov started out by presenting the prepared general document 'Internal Regulations', to which there are the following annexes: 'Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly' (adopted 2012); 'Internal Rules for the Executive Board' and 'Rules for Election of Executive Director' (both new documents and the focus of the debate). He suggested that the GA would review the proposed last-minute amendments to Annex 2 and Annex 3, which differed from the draft documents circulated in advance.

Regarding the queries made by Ms. Dauge about 'associated members' (Art. 4. (1)) and 'programme committee' (Art. 5. (2)), the answer was that in either case that was an optional working group, rather than a permanent governing body. Then Ms. Dauge made the following proposals: In Art. 9 (1) for '*governing body*' to be replaced by '**managing body**'; in Art. 9 (2) 3, for '*periodically*' to be made more specific: '**once every 3 or 4 months**', or '**on a monthly basis**'.

Mr. Angelichin explained that the Executive Board has the authority to require at any point in time a performance report from the Executive Director; the Executive Board supervises the Executive Director at all time, i.e. that is a continuous process. At the same time the Director reports to the General Assembly once every year, when he/she submits the annual activities report. He then hypothesized that the Executive Board should likewise report to someone, e.g. once a year to the General Assembly.

Ultimately it was decided to add to Art. 7 of CHAPTER II. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRE, language about the Executive Board's reporting obligation, namely: Art 7, subpar. 4 should read as follows: 'The Executive Board shall report once every year to the General Assembly.'

The participants in the meeting went on to discuss Art. 9 (2) subpar. 4. It was decided to delete the phrase 'periodic public events' and instead stipulate the obligation 'to keep the public informed'. In addition, there is mention at many places throughout the text of '*the people of the Secretariat*', should be re-phrased to '*the staff of the Secretariat*' (Art. 11 (4)).

Art. 14 (3) is amended to read as follows: '*The General Assembly Meeting shall be held not later than March 31*'.

Art. 16 is supplemented with the following text: '*The Executive Director signs the contracts of the Secretariat staff, which stipulate their specific duties. By the same token, the Chair of the Executive Board signs the contract of the Executive Director.*' If deemed necessary, the phrase '*pursuant to the laws of the Republic of Bulgaria*' may be added.

Ms Harasani made a remark about the English translation of Art. 18, the text that reads: '*gratuitous spending of the property of the Centre*'. Actually, what is meant here is '*disposal of the assets of the RC*'. The assumption was made that this was not an issue that should be decided by the GA, but by the Executive Director.

Mr. Angelichin noted that a collective body such as the GA cannot be held accountable or assume pecuniary liability; all accountability and pecuniary liability should lie with the Executive Director.



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Mr. Dimov clarified that this was so under Bulgarian law and that one of the prerogatives of the GA was to delegate powers to the EB. Therefore, if such a power is delegated, then the EB can adopt such a decision. If, for its part, the EB judges that such an issue can be delegated to the Executive Director, it has full discretionary powers to so do.

In conclusion Ms. Harasani directed that all amendments be reflected in the new Internal Regulations and that copies of the endorsed version thereof be circulated among all GA members.

The General Assembly approved the proposed changes to the Internal Regulations of the Association.

The GA Chair proposed that the meeting would then consider Annex 2, as Annex 1 had already been dealt with.

Ms. Dauge proposed amending Art. 14. (2) of Annex 1 as follows: 'The members of the General Assembly shall receive a copy of the Minutes automatically within 14 days from the General Assembly meeting,' and deleting paragraph (3) altogether. Mr. Dimov explained that the 14-day time limit was indeed prescribed in paragraph (1) of the same article. Ms. Dauge went on to propose amending Art. 6 (2) to read as follows: 'The Draft Agenda for the General Assembly meetings must be **circulated not later than 30 days** prior to the meeting, whereas the meeting of the General Assembly must be announced 14 days prior to that.' Mr. Dimov made the clarification that the same was provided in Art. 21 (4) of the Statutes, which says: at least 15 days prior to the date of the meeting'. **These time limits were appreciated as realistic. The amendments are to be reflected in the updated version.**

The GA Chair proceeded once again towards *Annex 2: Internal Rules for Operation of the Executive Board of the Association*, and the proposed amendment to Art. 4: Composition of the Executive Board. She said that **the AG had accepted the proposed rotation principle and the nominated representatives of member states**. She then proposed for the record that the rotation principle would come into force as from the next GA meeting in 2017.

Prof. Denchev proposed that the following text be added to Art. 4, first indent: '2 (two) persons, representatives of the member states of the Centre, **with the exception of Bulgaria**.' The proposal was accepted without objections.

The General Assembly adopted *Annex 2: Internal Rules for Operation of the Executive Board of the Association* with the amendments as proposed. The final version of the document will be circulated to all participants.

Ms. Harasani proceeded towards the discussion of *Annex 3: Rules for Election of the Executive Director of the Association*. In her view, in the English translation the word 'election' should be replaced with 'appointment', 'selection' or 'nomination'.

According to Prof. Santova, the selection must be public, i.e. by a competitive procedure.

Ms. Harasani once again recalled the procedure and conditions for the appointment of an Executive Director: these must be publicly announced on the official website of the RC and by a notice published in at least two daily newspapers with nation-wide circulation. The Executive Boards conducts the steps of selecting the best available candidate for the position. Also described are the documents to be presented in support of the application. Art. 4 of CHAPTER IV: MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE POSITION prescribes the minimum requirements eligibility for candidates. This was followed by proposals made by GA members about Art. 4.



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Ms. Dauge suggested that the Secretariat would develop terms of reference for the position of Executive Director with more detailed requirements, i.e. the proposed minimal requirements should be taken a step further. With respect to Art. 3 (2), she expressed an opinion that the Executive Director should be hired on an employment contract.

Acad. Ispas suggested adding the requirement that the candidate should have at least a master's degree **in a relevant field of study**, and not, say, in the natural sciences. About the language skills she was of the opinion that the requirement should not be so specific and restrictive.

Prof. Denchev clarified that subpar 6 of Art. 4. (1) posits the requirement of 'management skills and knowledge in the fields of activity of the centre and experience in project management'.

Ms. Dauge asked for a more focused re-phrasing of '*experience in the system of UNESCO*' in Art. 4 (2), which reads as follows: '*Preference shall be given to candidates who have a proven track record in sectors such as intangible cultural heritage, the system of UNESCO, culture, international cultural cooperation, NGO management and others.*' She also reminded the audience that the two working languages of UNESCO are English and French.

Ms. Harasani summarised that the terms of reference must specifically formulate the duties of office and the requirement of educational background of the candidate. In addition, the functions of the Executive Director must be spelled out in more specific terms. Regarding the language and communication skills required of candidates, the successful candidate for the position of the Executive Director should have proper command of two languages, i.e. Bulgarian, English, and preferably a third language i.e. French. The selection procedure should be announced publicly on the official website of the RC and published in at least two daily papers of nation-wide circulation.

The GA then proceeded with discussing **CHAPTER V. ELECTION PROCEDURE**, where Ms. Dauge suggested replacing, in the English version, 'election' with 'selection'.

The GA Chair read out the following proposal: To form a commission to conduct the procedure of selecting and appointing the Executive Director; said commission should comprise no fewer than three members and no more than seven. Ms. Harasani explained that the GA is responsible for the selection of ED and that the GA itself may either decide whom to appoint to that position or delegate that responsibility to the EB. For its part, the EB would then follow a procedure approved by the GA.

Mr. Angelichin opined that a 7-member commission would simply duplicate the Executive Board; the number of commission members must in his view be determined in such a way as to avoid possible disputes and contradictions.

Ms. Harasani stated for the record that either the EB would select the ED itself or would assign that responsibility to a commission comprised of at least 3 of its members; it is the established practice that a commission is appointed by a collective body; she also said she believed that all 7 members of the EB, including the member states, would be interested in participating in the commission.

Prof. Denchev said he accepted Mr. Angelichin's opinion and made another suggestion: that the commission be 5-strong and that it would only comprise the Bulgarian members of the EB, since the foreign members would not be able to familiarise themselves with the documents of the candidates.



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Ms. Harasani made the clarification that the GA should consider the possibility that one of the 5 members would be unavailable and whether this would hamper the procedure.

Mr. Dimov explained that it is not the commission that makes the ultimate selection; it simply nominates several candidates for approval by the EB.

Ms. Dauge asked whether the powers of selecting and appointing the ED were in fact given to the EB, as this is not clearly stipulated in the text; also, it is not quite clear that the commission is tasked with selecting the candidates for approval by the EB. EB convenes a meeting, adopts the rules and assigns the practical work of shortlisting the candidates to the commission, whereas it is the EB that makes the final decision.

Ms. Harasani proposed that Art. 5 (2) would stipulate explicitly who was in charge of carrying out each concrete step in the procedure; who was to review the documents, conduct the interviews and select the candidates.

Mr. Angeliching suggested the insertion of paragraph (5) with the additional stipulation that the commission, having conducted the preliminary selection and interviews, would present the results to the EB and the EB would make the ultimate decision.

Ms Dauge voiced her opinion that it would be advisable to consider different scenarios, even the worst-case, e.g.: if she were a member of the commission and proposed to disqualify a candidate favoured by another member of the commission; the selection should be carried out by an impartial body;; she shared the practice adopted by UNESCO: for the Secretariat to do the screening of applications (over 250) and allows about 10-15 candidates to proceed to the interview; an appointed commission conducts the interviews and shortlists the best three candidates, and then presents them to the Director general; in this particular case, she suggested adding to the text that the commission would prepare the short list of candidates for the Executive Directorship.

Mr. Dimov asked whether it would be OK to put it on record that the 7-string EB selects the ED without a commission.

Ms. Harasani put Mr. Dimov's suggestion to a debate; there were no objections.

Prof. Denchev suggested setting a deadline by which to complete the procedure.

Mr. Dimov proposed that the deadline for selection of an ED be put on record without being stipulated in the procedure itself.

Ms. Harasani then took the floor and shared with the audience that she had received a letter from H.E. Minister of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Vezhdi Rashidov, in which he expressed his high appreciation for the work of the GA and the RC for promoting ICH in Bulgaria; in his letter he was proposing a specific name for consideration as the next Executive Director.

In his capacity as representative of the Minister of Culture to the GA, Mr. Ventsislav Veleв informed the GA of the letter that had been sent to the RC on April 18, 2016, proposing the candidacy of Ms. Ilieva for consideration and approval by vote by the GA for the position of Executive Director.

Ms. Harasani sent thanks to the Minister for his message and suggested, once the rules for selection of an ED were adopted, and in light of the circumstances, for the GA to ask the EB to conduct the selection procedure within 20 days, and for the nominee of the Ministry of Culture to be included on an equal footing with all other candidates.



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Mr. Velev reminded the audience that the GA was empowered to vote on the nomination of the EB and insisted that the GA would rule on the matter by putting to the vote the proposal of the Ministry of Culture, or alternatively, that the GA would relinquish its power to select the ED and leave that responsibility to the EB.

Mr. Angelichin clarified that the correct term was not 'relinquish' but 'delegate' its power to the Executive Bureau and asked that this be put on record as a separate clause by each GA.

Ms Donska came up with the proposal for the GA to decide whether it would be the body selecting the ED or would delegate those powers to the EB. Should the GA decide to proceed with the selection, then it should have the floor to each of the attendees in turn to make their nominations and reminded the audience that, in her capacity as Chair of the EB, she had received last year the nomination of Ms. Milena Ivanova for that position and forwarded it to the Centre, so that nomination, too should be put to the vote.

Mr. Dimov made the clarification that the GA is the supreme governing body so if there were any nominations, it could conduct the interviews and selection on the spot.

Acad. Ispas said that no such thing was on the agenda and the members of the GA were not prepared to discuss that matter. The Serbian delegate seconded that. Ms. Rogeli Škafar also remarked that this was preposterous and impossible.

Mr. Velev reminded the GA that Agenda item 6 was exactly 'election of the governing bodies', so it was not a new item introduced in the last minute.

Ms. Harasani summarised on behalf of everyone that there were no valid grounds for making such a decision at this juncture; the GA was delegating to the EB the power to conduct the selection procedure within one month. This would enable them to test the procedure by inviting everyone qualified for the position. She put it to the vote for the GA to delegate powers to the EB with a time limit by May 31, 2016, at the latest.

Mr. Velev asked that his NAY vote be put on record with respect to the proposal for the GA to delegate its powers to the EB, because he thought that the GA should not miss the opportunity given to it by both the previous and the newly adopted Statutes to make its choice. (His NAY only concerned this part of the proposal; for the other, regarding the time limit, he was voting in favour).

Mr. Angelichin once again asked that the EB be given the authority to act in emergencies in between annual meetings of the GA so that the system would work smoothly without blocking the operation of the RC.

Mr. Velev proposed that in emergency circumstances the EB Chair would take over the duties of Executive Director.

Of all the members of the General Assembly (17), 16 cast an AYE vote; one cast a NAY; there were no ABSTENTIONS, whereby the General Assembly

DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The GA will delegate to the EB to launch a procedure for the selection of a new ED of the Centre not later than May 31, 2016.

Then the GA proceeded with voting on the member states to be included in the composition of the Executive Board.



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All members of the General Assembly (17) cast an AYE vote; there were no NAYS or ABSTENTIONS, whereby the General Assembly

DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The new members of the Executive Board are Bosnia and Herzegovina (with two representatives but one vote) and Croatia, elected for a 2-year term.

ON AGENDA ITEM 7

Prof. Denchev proposed that Ms. Harasani would remain Chair of the General Assembly for another year, whereas from 2017 onwards the Chairperson of the GA would be elected for a two-year term in order to be able to plan his/her time accordingly.

Ms. Dauge remarked that there should be no fixed number of terms of office and that the GA Chair is usually elected for one year.

All members of the General Assembly (17) cast an AYE vote; there were no NAYS or ABSTENTIONS, whereby the General Assembly

DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Ms. Harasani is re-elected as Chair of the GA for another 1-year term.

Ms. Harasani accepted mostly on account of the forthcoming performance evaluation of the RC and thanked the GA for their vote of confidence.

Mr. Dimov clarified that since according to the Statutes, the composition of the GA must be renewed every 4 years, those of its members who have served out their 4-year terms must either present credentials from their respective organisations authorising them to serve another term or the GA should elect a replacement. As the first meeting of the General Assembly was in 2012, in 2016 the representatives of Serbia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the NGO must renew their credentials.

Ms. Harasani concluded that the Agreement with UNESCO was already expiring and up for revision.

ON AGENDA ITEM 8

All members of the General Assembly (17) cast an AYE vote; there were no NAYS or ABSTENTIONS, whereby the General Assembly

DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The next General Assembly meeting is to be scheduled between **13th and 17th March, 2017.**

ON AGENDA ITEM 9: There were no questions or further proposals.

Ms Harasani finished by expressing her gratitude for this latest in a series of meetings, for the delegates' active participation, their constructive ideas, their overall attitude. She said she was encouraged with respect to the performance evaluation of the Centre because the outgoing year had been a productive one and she hoped for a constructive collaboration with the new Director and that also Mr. Angelichin would support him or her; she expressed her hope that the



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selection of the new Director would be a fruitful and healthy process for the RC. She made a point of saying that the amended documents of the RC and the draft minutes should be circulated for approval in order to become official. After giving thanks to the Secretariat, to everyone who worked on the documents, the logistics people, and the interpreters, and after conveying warm greetings to everyone from Mr. Proschan, former Chairperson and Representative of the Director-General of UNESCO, now retired, she closed the meeting.

Chairman of the meeting:

Ms Zhulieta Sina Harasani

Record taker:

Ms Diana Tokadzhieva