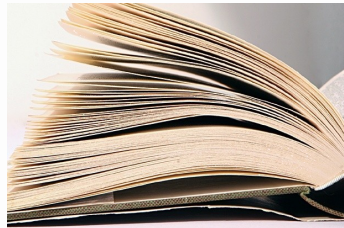


Common borders. Common solutions.

Project “Black Sea Cultural Animation Program”
Pilot model for mobilizing the common cultural characteristics for creative destination management in the Black Sea Basin



Bulgaria: Cultural Policy & Cultural Animation



2011



Black Sea Cultural Animation Program
Pilot model for mobilizing the common cultural characteristics for creative destination management in the Black Sea Basin (BS CAP)

Project 1.3.1.67283.26 - MIS ETC 306

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Bulgaria: Cultural Policy & Cultural Animation

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Common borders. Common Solutions.

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Introduction

Bulgaria is a country with rich historical heritage and cultural variety. The country is on third place in Europe - after Greece and Italy - in number and diversity of the cultural monuments discovered on its territory. The registered cultural monuments in Bulgaria are more than 40 000, and more than 5 million artefacts are kept in the national and municipal museums in Bulgaria. Seven cultural and two natural sites are listed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The Bistritsa Babi and the Nestinarstvo (Fire-dancing) included in the Intangible Heritage List.¹

The preservation of Bulgaria's historical and cultural variety is essential to preserving the national identity of Bulgarians, his relationship with the land and traditional culture as an essential part of their lives. Nowadays, Bulgaria as a member of the European Union is part of the global economic and not only social but also cultural market. This dependence despite offering many opportunities also poses a significant number of hazards. Among the most significant ones is the infusion and the blurring of cultural identity of the EU countries. This is a completely natural process considering the wide acceptance and practice of the cultural characteristics of different countries in a way that meets the cultural needs of European society.

As a result of these processes, the limits of national cultural identity of the member states over time become more culturally indistinguishable. As a result, traditionalism is shifted to the periphery of public life and has become a part of the life and economic practices of small, less economically engaged societies. This fact turns them into media and repositories of traditional practices and cultural diversity, which in the dynamics of the competitive societies are used as a competitive advantage in the form of cultural attractions.

The changes occurring in the cultural diversity and its traditional practice for the purposes of its economic exploitation pose many risks. For this reason, it is important to create a well-functioning system for the protection of intangible cultural heritage².

According to UNESCO intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is:

¹ <http://www.unesco-bg.org/culture/bul-ich/?language=bg>

² Borisova, V. 2008. Bulgaria and Its Intangible Cultural Heritage. Media and PR. University of National and World Economy. Retrieved from <http://media-journal.info/index.php?p=item&aid=14>

- Traditional, contemporary and living at the same time: intangible cultural heritage does not only represent inherited traditions from the past but also contemporary rural and urban practices in which diverse cultural groups take part;
- Inclusive: we may share expressions of intangible cultural heritage that are similar to those practiced by others. Whether they are from the neighbouring village, from a city on the opposite side of the world, or have been adapted by peoples who have migrated and settled in a different region, they all are intangible cultural heritage: they have been passed from one generation to another, have evolved in response to their environments and they contribute to giving us a sense of identity and continuity, providing a link from our past, through the present, and into our future. Intangible cultural heritage does not give rise to questions of whether or not certain practices are specific to a culture. It contributes to social cohesion, encouraging a sense of identity and responsibility which helps individuals to feel part of one or different communities and to feel part of society at large;
- Representative: intangible cultural heritage is not merely valued as a cultural good, on a comparative basis, for its exclusivity or its exceptional value. It thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or to other communities;
- Community-based: intangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it - without their recognition, nobody else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage.³

While the artistic heritage of a community plays significant social, spiritual and cultural roles, it can also, as a source of creativity and innovation, play a role in economic development.

The use of traditional cultural materials as a source of contemporary creativity can contribute towards the economic development of traditional communities through the establishment of community enterprises, local job creation, skills development, appropriate tourism, and foreign earnings from community products.

Traditional cultural manifestations are also a source of inspiration and creativity for cultural industries, such as the entertainment, fashion, publishing, crafts and designs industries. Many businesses today, small, medium and large, in

³ <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00003>

developed and developing countries, create wealth using the forms and materials of traditional cultures.

The relationship between tradition, creativity and the market-place is not always perceived to be a happy one. What is creativity from one perspective may be seen to erode traditional culture from another⁴.

Legislation

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria is the authority responsible for the issues connected to the Cultural Heritage of the country.

These issues are regulated by the Act on Cultural Heritage. Other relevant national regulations are the Act on Protection and Development of Culture, the Act on Community Centres “National Tchitalishte”, the legislative acts connected to the intellectual property.

As per the description provided by article 2 in the Act on Cultural Heritage “Cultural Heritage encompasses the intangible and tangible heritage as a combination of cultural values which convey the historic memory, national identity and have scientific and cultural value”. Therefore, the stipulations of the law generally cover the issues concerning the intangible cultural heritage.

The state policy on protection of cultural heritage is held by the Minister of Culture in cooperation with the competent state and municipal authorities, the Holy Synod of Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the central leadership of other registered religious denominations, and with the assistance of civil society.

The state policy on cultural heritage is managed and implemented by the Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers adopted a strategy for management and conservation of the cultural heritage and plan for a period of seven years on the proposal of the Minister of Culture after extensive public consultation of concerned scientific, cultural and governmental organizations.

The Council of Ministers:

1. grants status to group immovable cultural sites of national significance;

⁴ Intellectual Property and Traditional Cultural Expressions/Folklore, Booklet n 1, World Intellectual Property Organization, Retrieved from http://www.wipo.int/freepublications/en/tk/913/wipo_pub_913.pdf

2. adopts plans for the conservation and management of immovable cultural property;
3. grants concessions on cultural sites;
4. founds state cultural institutes on proposal by the Minister of Culture.

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The Holy Synod of Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the central authorities of other registered religious groups can make a proposal to the Minister of Culture for the registration of cultural sites that are important for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and other denominations registered in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Cultural Heritage.

By 30 June each year the Holy Synod of Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the central authority of other registered religions present to the Minister of Culture a report on the protection of cultural property for the previous year.

The Minister of Culture:

1. makes proposals for registration of real cultural property in the World Heritage List;
2. grants status to real cultural property;
3. provides the status of national treasures of movable cultural property;
4. issues permits for conducting archaeological field research;
5. issues permits for the establishment of private museums;
6. issues certificates of registration of persons engaged in trade with cultural values;
7. issues permits for making copies and replicas of cultural values;
8. issues permits for cultural property in national and international exhibitions;
9. assigns and adopts plans for conservation and management of real cultural property;
10. organizes and operates the grants of concessions on real cultural property and the implementation of concession contracts under this Act
11. issues export licenses under Regulation (EC) № 116/2009 of the Council of 18 December 2008 concerning the export of cultural goods (OJ, L 39 / 1 of February 10, 2009), and permits for temporary export of movable cultural property;

12. coordinates, organizes and controls:

- a) the return of illegally exported cultural goods - national wealth;
- b) the protection of cultural heritage related to Bulgarian history and culture outside the Republic of Bulgaria;
- c) the monitoring of real cultural values
- d) the processes of determining the methodology and procedures for the protection of real cultural property and its environment;

The Ministry of Culture creates an Inspectorate to protect cultural heritage.

The Inspectorate supervises compliance with the requirements of the Act on Cultural Heritage and the acts issued on its basis

The Municipal Mayors organize and coordinate the implementation of the respective policy on the protection of cultural heritage on the territory of their municipality.

The articles in the law directly connected to the intangible cultural heritage are the following:

Article 42 (1). The intangible cultural heritage is manifested inter alia in the following domains:

- a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- b) performing arts;
- c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
- d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- e) traditional craftsmanship.

(2) The Ministry of Culture keeps a Registry of the intangible cultural heritage through channels set with a regulation by the Minister of Culture.

Article 43. (1) A National Counsel on Intangible Cultural Heritage is established with the Minister of Culture which

1. supports the development of a strategy for preservation and promotion of the traditional Bulgarian culture and folklore;
2. proposes measures for the implementation of the international regulations in the sphere of the intangible cultural heritage which are applicable to Bulgaria;

3. proposes measures for improvement of the systems for preservation and safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage;
4. gives recommendations on issues connected to the problems of the preservation, safeguarding and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage;
5. proposes to the Minister of Culture the elements of the intangible cultural heritage which could be included in the National Representative List of intangible cultural heritage.

(2) The members, functions and the activities of the Counsel is defined in an internal regulation issued by the Minister of Culture.

Article 44. The organizations which have been created for the purposes of safeguarding and preservation of the intangible cultural heritage and have acquired the status of UNESCO centres are entitled to subsidies from the state budget.

A close inspection of the definition incorporated in the law makes it obvious that the national legislation on the topics of intangible cultural heritage takes into consideration the stipulation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted on October 17th 2003.

Bulgaria joined UNESCO on 17 May 1956. Since then the country has been active in work of the organization and has joined the majority of the most substantial initiatives of UNESCO. The Convention - which is among the major international regulations on intangible cultural heritage - was ratified by the Bulgarian Parliament on March 10th, 2006. It came into force for Bulgaria on June 10, 2006 and at the end of June 2006, Bulgaria was elected to be a member of the first Intergovernmental Committee for Intangible Heritage with a two-year mandate.

Article 12 (1) of the Convention stipulates that "To ensure identification with a view to safeguarding, each State Party shall draw up, in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory. These inventories shall be regularly updated."⁵. This is reflected in the Bulgarian law on Cultural Heritage as seen above in article 42 (2).

⁵ <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention/>

Institutions

National Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage

Page | 9 The National Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage (NCICH) was established in 2007 within the structures of the Folklore institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

NCICH has the following structure:

1. Archives
 - 1.1. Archive paper-based
 - 1.2. Photo archive
 - 1.3. Phonetic archive
 - 1.4. Video archive
2. Library
3. Bibliographic centre.

A major priority is the modernization of the set of available scientific information. In the short term efforts are focused on building a digital archive of representative virtual exhibitions of artefacts from Bulgarian folklore held in NCICH and preparing multimedia products of archival material. In perspective complete digitization of the funds of the institute is planned as well as providing opportunities for its virtual presentation.

Community Centres “Tchitalishte”

The community centres called “Tchitalishte” are traditional self-managed Bulgarian cultural-educational associations which perform public cultural and educational tasks. Their activities are open to all individuals regardless of age and gender, political and religious beliefs and ethnic identity.⁶

The objectives of the community centres are to meet citizens' needs related to:

- development and enrichment of their cultural life, social and educational activities in the locality where they operate;
- preservation of customs and traditions of the Bulgarian people;

⁶ Act on Community Centers “National Tchitalishte”

- broaden the knowledge of people and their adherence to the values and achievements of science, art and culture;
- preservation and promotion of the national identity;
- providing access to information.

To achieve these goals community centres perform activities such as:

- establish and maintain libraries, reading rooms, photo-, phono-, film and video collections, and create and maintain electronic information networks;
- development and support of amateur arts;
- organizing schools, workshops, courses, clubs, film and video exhibitions, festivals, concerts, celebrations, and youth activities;
- collection and dissemination of knowledge about the homeland;
- the creation and preservation of museum collections according to the Act on Cultural Heritage
- to provide computer and Internet services

The Minister of Culture contributes to the development of community centre work, assists and supports community centres by

- providing methodological support for their activities;
- analyzing the status and activities with regional and municipal administrations;
- publicly announcing the projects of international donor programs;
- creating a public registry database on paper and electronically of the registered community centres and community centres associations;
- The Minister of Culture may entrust the implementation of state-assigned tasks connected with community centre work to community centres associations and support them financially.

Community Centre "Tchitalishte" may be established by at least 50 persons in the villages and 150 - for the cities after a mutual decision on a constituent assembly.

Regional expert, consultancy and information centres "Tchitalishte" / *RECIC* / support the national policy towards the community centres on the basis of the principles of decentralization, preservation of local traditions and active citizenship. They perform the activities of community centres throughout the region in whose territory they work.

Priority areas of activity to RECICs are:

- Fill in an information card for each community centre. Inclusion of data available in the national register of community centres;
- Provide methodological and expert consultancy; Development of expert statements on the conditions and the problems of community centres;
- Organization and participation in the implementation of training programs, courses and other training activities, preparation and support of community centres in developing and participating in projects;
- Organization of regional meetings on issues connected to community centres;
- Encouraging and promoting new ideas and thinking in the community centres;
- Coordinating the work of community centres in the territorial library and information network and supporting their modernization as the main cultural and information centres for the local community;
- Support of the activities of community centres in the protection and promotion of intangible cultural heritage; Amateur art.

Regional Centre for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

In 2011 the Budget and Finance Committee supported the Bill on ratification of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the establishment of a Regional Centre for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage under the auspices UNESCO in Sofia.

Financing from the budget for 2011 will amount to BGN 400 000. This is recognition that Bulgaria has the capacity and the ability to be a UNESCO Regional Centre, created with the special purpose to study the intangible cultural heritage.

The main objective of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is to detect and prepare these unique elements of intangible cultural heritage for inclusion in the list of world intangible cultural heritage for the whole region of Southeast Europe.

The centre is the first of its kind in Europe and fifth in the world. The first one was founded in Peru and the remaining three are located in the Far East - in China, Japan and Korea⁷.

The centre will also carry out small project activities and will announce competitions for research in the field of the intangible heritage.

One of the ambitions of the Ministry of Culture is to make a flexible website which will allow the audience to collect information about intangible cultural heritage from various sources.

Major Initiatives

Second Extraordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

In February 2008, Bulgaria hosted the Second Extraordinary Session of the Committee for Intangible Heritage in Sofia. The President Georgi Parvanov, under whose patronage the event went, welcomed the delegates to the Intergovernmental Committee. He stressed on the importance of the Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage of Southeast Europe, the Mediterranean and Black Sea region. "The main merit of the Convention is that it focuses on the intrinsic role of spirituality as an essential element of development," President Georgi Parvanov said and noted that the preservation of diversity and opposition of inflexible thinking are possible only through culture⁸.

Francois Riviere, deputy Director General for Culture of UNESCO, thanked the Bulgarian President for his personal presence and noted that this was the first occasion when a president attended the opening of a workshop. Ms. Riviere noted the great interest in the forum - attended by 23 of the 24 countries of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, along with parties, observers and NGOs. About 300 people had registered to participate in the meeting and to monitor its operation.

"By hosting the Second Extraordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, we have made efforts to successfully complete the process of the drafting of documents, thanks to which this Convention will become more active," Prof. Stefan Danailov, Minister

⁷ <http://bnr.bg/sites/radiobulgaria/Lifestyle/News/Pages/2510-8.aspx>

⁸ <http://mc.government.bg/newsn.php?n=804&i=1>

of Culture said in his speech at the opening⁹. He noted that at the end of the last year and early this year at the initiative of the Ministry of Culture and in collaboration with the Institute of Folklore and the National Commission for Bulgaria of UNESCO, the first phase of the "Living Human Treasures" - Bulgaria was launched. The nominations for this program would be announced for the first time in the summer of 2008.

H.E. Mr Olabiyi Babalola Joseph Yai, President of the Executive Board of UNESCO and H.E. Mr Mohammed Bedjaoui, President of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the 2003 Convention arrived in Sofia for the event. The delegates were welcomed by the Director-General of UNESCO Koichiro Matsuura, who greeted the audience through a video message. "The session will be of great importance for the future because it is the final stage before the General Assembly at which the Directives for implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage will be drafted", H.E. Matsuura said and thanked Bulgaria for hosting the forum¹⁰.

The meetings of the extraordinary session were chaired by Irina Bokova, who at the time was a Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to UNESCO and Bulgarian Ambassador in Paris. Mrs. Bokova is currently the tenth Director-General of UNESCO.

The main organizer of the event was the Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the National Palace of Culture.

Delegates from over 70 countries took part in the Second Extraordinary Session of the Committee for Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The main task was the finalizing of the operational guidelines for implementing the Convention and the biennial report on the work of the Committee which had to be submitted for approval of the Assembly of Parties in June 2008.

Living Human Treasures

Bulgaria joined the UNESCO project "Living Human Treasures" in 2001. The Bulgarian project was the result of two years work of the Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria and a team of experts and researchers from the Institute of Folklore.

⁹ <http://mc.government.bg/newsn.php?n=804&i=1>

¹⁰ <http://mc.government.bg/newsn.php?n=804&i=1>

The activities were carried out with the broad support of local authorities and experts from all areas of the country.

The project is associated with the retrieval, preservation and promotion of traditional activities and specific skills in the face of their creators and carriers, transmitting knowledge to future generations. Various forms of traditional culture: storytelling, music and dance folklore, traditional skills and crafts, rituals, traditional and folk medicine are summarized in 24 national and regional nomenclatures nomenclature of traditional cultural activities in the country. The aggregated results of this unique project are published in a bilingual edition (2004) and are available is website dedicated to the results of the project: www.treasures-bulgaria.com.¹¹

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An effective way to safeguard ICH sustainably is to ensure that the bearers of that heritage continue to transmit their knowledge and skills to younger generations. UNESCO also encourages States to establish national systems of “Living Human Treasures”. In this perspective, exemplary bearers of intangible cultural heritage are identified, among whom some are given official recognition and encouraged to continue to develop and transmit their knowledge and skills.

Living Human Treasures are persons who possess to a high degree the knowledge and skills required for performing or re-creating specific elements of the intangible cultural heritage.¹²

The creation of a national system “Living Human Treasures aims at:

- 1) Safeguarding the knowledge and skills for cultural expression which hold historic, artistic and cultural importance for Bulgaria;
- 2) Their transmission to the younger generations through the implementation of effective training programmes;
- 3) Encouraging young people to acquire knowledge and skills related to the intangible cultural heritage through public recognition and organization of public presentations at national and international level;
- 4) Creation of an archive of documents and materials related to the intangible cultural heritage, in the National Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage - Folklore Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The creation of the archive will help enrich the regional lists of Living Human Treasures.

Nominations for the Living Human Treasures are held every two years.

¹¹ <http://mc.government.bg/page.php?p=46&s=27&sp=32&t=33&z=35>

¹² <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00061>

Bulgarian community centres (Tchitalishte) are eligible for nominations, as the oldest cultural institutions represented today in almost every village in Bulgaria, as well as local museums (primary institutions). They offer individuals or groups for nomination for a Living Human Treasures. Applications must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation (a standard form - a passport or a file of the application and accompanying materials), showing the uniqueness of the application. Primary institutions may offer only one application per session, regardless of the area of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), as described in the regional lists of Bulgarian Register of ICH: <http://www.treasures-bulgaria.com>. All applications must be accompanied by a supporting letter from the "Culture" Department in the municipality. The proposals are collected by the Regional expert, consultancy and information centres called "Tchitalishte" (RECIC) and filed at the Regional History Museum.

Applications submitted from the region in question are reviewed and undergo a selection process by a panel comprising of members of the community centres, the Regional Museum, and an independent expert from the Institute of Folklore. These committees carry out primary selection of the candidates and offer one application, regardless of which area of the field for the final selection. After primary selection all files which are received but do not continue to secondary selection, are put in storage at the National Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The 28 elements selected after the primary selection are presented to a national audience through a 15-minute videos on Television in a campaign that is publicly announce to be within the framework of the. Each movie starts with the logo of UNESCO.

National Commission of experts in all areas of ICH and representatives of the Ministry of Culture discuss the 28 regional candidates and make a motivated proposal to the National Council for intangible cultural heritage, which after discussion broadcasts up to 5 applications.

The Living Human Treasures Nominees put forwards by the National Council for the Living Human Treasures - Bulgaria get approved by the Minister of Culture and announced officially.

Applications for Living Human Treasures can be in two forms:

- a) Individual - a person who possesses a high level of traditional knowledge and skills in certain fields of ICH;

- b) Collective - a group of persons who jointly have the traditional knowledge and skills (e.g. in the rituals of traditional performing arts or crafts); groups, including the personality of a leader and a group created by him, and all appear essential bearers of knowledge and skills required in a particular field of intangible cultural heritage in which the contribution of the group is more important than the role of the individual.

All applications must be made with the consent of and in close cooperation with the holders of the cultural traditions.

Criteria for nomination:

The proposed applications may include any of the fields of intangible cultural heritage according to the regional register "Living Human Treasures - Bulgaria": <http://www.treasures-bulgaria.com/>

- a) Traditional rituals and celebrations;
- b) Traditional singing and playing;
- c) Traditional dance and traditional children's games;
- d) A traditional narrative;
- e) Traditional crafts, activities and household livelihoods.
- f) Traditional Medicine¹³

All applications are associated with knowledge, skills and activities included in the regional lists for the National Register "Living Human Treasures - Bulgaria".

The nominated individuals / groups must meet the following conditions:

- a) Higher level of knowledge of traditional knowledge, skills and activities;
- b) Ownership of the individual / group to the intangible cultural heritage;
- c) An opportunity to boost their knowledge and skills;
- d) Willingness and ability to transmit knowledge and skills of young people.

With their activities the nominated applications contribute to the visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and awareness of its importance and dialogue and are a testament to human creativity.

The applications are the result of free consent and expressed concern for the preservation of skills / knowledge of the community or group.

¹³ <http://mc.government.bg/reg/index.php?act=content&rec=671>

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