

Intangible Cultural Heritage

Language

English

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was approved in Paris in October 17th, 2003 during the 32nd General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO.

The 2003 Convention has various goals:

- a) The safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage;
- b) The respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, the groups and the individuals;
- c) The awareness at local, national and international level about the importance of the intangible cultural heritage and its mutual recognition;
- d) The international cooperation and aid, within the frame of an increasingly global world which threatens to standardize cultures increasing, at the same time, social inequalities.

Recognising itself as a promoting instrument of the intangible cultural heritage, main generator of cultural diversity and a guarantor of the sustainable development, the 2003 Convention intends to fill a gap in the legal system for the international protection of the cultural heritage, the instruments of which did not consider the intangible cultural heritage but only the movable and immovable tangible cultural heritage, so far, and as such the intangible cultural expressions could not be safeguarded by means of the existing international legal instruments at that time.

Intangible cultural heritage is considered to be, according to the Convention, «(...) the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated to them – that the communities, the groups and, as the case may be, the individuals recognise as being an integral part of their cultural heritage. That intangible cultural heritage, passed down from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by the communities and groups according to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, instilling a sense of identity and continuity, thereby contributing for the promotion of the respect for cultural diversity and human creativity» (Article 2).

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