Strasbourg, 7 November 2022

CDCPP(2022)2
Item 4 on the agenda

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE (CDCPP)

WORKING GROUP ON GUIDELINES TO COMPLEMENT COUNCIL OF EUROPE STANDARDS IN THE FIELDS OF CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

(Ministerial Conference follow-up activity)

For action

Secretariat Memorandum
prepared by the
Directorate of Democratic Participation
Culture, Nature and Heritage Department

www.coe.int/cdcpp
cdcpp@coe.int

Introduction

At the recent Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Culture (Strasbourg, 1 April 2022) *"Creating our future: Creativity and cultural heritage as strategic resources for a diverse and democratic Europe"*, the Ministers responsible for culture and cultural heritage, in their **final Declaration**, invited *inter alia*:

- *cultural and cultural heritage stakeholders, including policymakers and practitioners, to recognise the crucial role of the Council of Europe's conventions in building a unique framework for action on culture and cultural heritage in Europe and beyond, and in pursuing sustainable development and democratic stability;*

- *the Council of Europe to work – through its dedicated body, the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) and in cooperation with relevant professional associations and other partners, as required – on* ***developing guidelines given the latest technological developments, such as Artificial Intelligence, complementing Council of Europe standards in the fields of culture, creativity and cultural heritage****.*

The CDCPP hence suggests following up the Ministerial Declaration and previous relevant work by the Committee in this area by forming a working group that would be entrusted with the development of such new guidelines, with a focus on cultural heritage[1] and related conventions.

Background

Specifically, the thematic debate held at the CDCPP's plenary session in December 2021 on the topic of "*Archaeology and digital technologies – exchange of best practices with particular reference to the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised, Valletta, 1992)"* is relevant in this context.

The presentations from experts in the field at the time not only underlined the opportunities, but also the challenges involved in the wide application of new technologies in cultural heritage work. In a subsequent question-and-answer session, several member States shared their experiences in the form of oral, powerpoint or film presentations, creating an enriching information exchange. The presentations are available on the dedicated webpage.

The Committee debates underlined that "the digital booster" was indeed two-sided: many issues needed to be addressed, including ethics, data-sharing, involvement of interested public and protection, as well as finding the right balance between research agendas and the discovery and further development of sites.

Next steps

In line with the Ministerial Declaration and the conclusions of the CDCPP Plenary of December 2021 suggesting the preparation of guidelines that would complement the Council of Europe's conventions in the cultural heritage field and be beneficial to policy makers, the CDCPP is invited to set up a **working group of up to six Delegates** – experts in cultural heritage and digitisation issues – **who would work with four independent experts** (including from professional associations) in the pursuit of this goal.

The work on the guidelines will be conducted through online and/or in-person meetings, depending on resources and the health situation and be concluded at the latest by December 2024.

It will take into consideration previous CM Recommendations that have been prepared under the auspices of the CDCPP on culture and digitisation, as well as other relevant work by the Organisation and its external partners.

[1] This focus seems useful given that previous Council of Europe work already addressed issues of culture and AI (Rijeka process and the recent publication "E-relevance: The Role of Arts and culture in the Age of Artificial Intelligence") and also acknowledging the outcome of Council of Europe initiatives in the field of culture and digitisation, such as the multi-stakeholder Exchange Platform on Culture and Digitisation, resulting so far in a series of Council of Europe/CM Recommendations.

Action required:

The CDCPP is invited to:

- discuss the particular focus they envisage for the Working Group and the Guidelines;
- express its interest in participating in the working group on new guidelines to complement the cultural heritage conventions, and/or suggest relevant experts by 15 January 2023;
- request its Bureau to set up the working group with due consideration for geographical and gender balance.