

Conclusions of the Faro Convention Network (FCN) gathering in Lisbon

7-8 December 2017

The Faro Convention Network gathering took place in Lisbon, Portugal with 18 participants. This 2-day dynamic programme generated a fruitful platform for exchanges of views, experiences, and witnessed constructive discussions among FCN members. While this event also marked the end of the Faro Action Plan 2016-17, it allowed participants to reflect upon the activities that took place in 2017 and make suggestions for the next Action Plan, with particular focus on 2018.

1. Issues addressed and lesson learned in 2017

Community engagement and ownership of the processes has been brought up as a challenging issue to be discussed. Bringing communities to a level of participation has been a significant challenge in some countries. 'Memory of the space', a model developed in Italy, was suggested as an option to be considered for community engagement. Intergenerational projects also help with increased community engagement. Activities with children and youth encourage families to attend the events. It is essential to prepare conditions for change, as changes in perspectives and behaviour require careful steps to be sustained. The need for economic activities is inevitable, although our relationship with consumerism should be carefully analysed.

In the eastern European context, lack of ownership is embedded in recent behaviour of communities due to recent political history. Fear of losing authenticity creates anxiety and outside recognition is important for acknowledgement. Local communities expect acknowledgement from local and national authorities, and the CoE visits play a crucial role in this recognition and in bringing involved parties together. Responsibility and ownership issues are not resolved just with money. Post totalitarian areas expect orders for community engagement, which calls for change. The concept of collective action has a negative connotation and the term association is better received (at least in the Romanian case). The question of narratives is essential and is considered as a first step prior to ideas turning into action. The presence of diverse narratives leads to acknowledgement, and consequently increased community engagement. Ownership, on the other hand, is closely linked to cooperation; constructing together instead of participating in something which has already been shaped.

Heritage as a form of transmitting values of human rights and democracy was an overarching discussion where the role of heritage in addressing societal challenges has been discussed. Innovative ways of reaching out to communities with a forward looking attitude would be more constructive than solely focusing on a given problem. Focus on a single problem may restrict the work we carry out with multiple implications. Heritage and identity play a central role regarding human rights, and the role of arts is essential in transmitting the concept and values of human rights in various communities. Direct involvement of communities in governance offers a constructive platform for the democratisation process.

At local level, more and more, a new local governance model with increased collective and common responsibility is introduced and seems to be more effective. Heritage education plays an important role for interpretation and use of heritage. This education should be community based, pragmatic and addressing a number of issues regarding the community, linking various elements together. Environmental issues including climate change, natural heritage and heritage at risk were discussed and encouraged to be part of an integral part of the discussions. There are good examples in various countries and these should be further explored in order to foster democratisation and respect for human rights and diversity.

Heritage and Elitism was another topic that presented a different angle during discussions. Heritage is still perceived as an elitist notion. Sometimes communities are reluctant to engage heritage and cultural activities as they see this as the role of authorities, experts and the elite. On the other hand, with the definition offered by the Faro Convention and the approach promoted by the Action Plan, heritage plays a role as a tool for development in marginalised areas and among marginalised groups, and should be further explored.

Heritage and Gender was a topic that was shared by many as well. Gender perspectives and cultural relativism; women being subject to propaganda and violence and traditions / culture being presented as reasons for oppressive practices was a part of vivid discussions. There is substantial work being conducted in Forlì, Italy on this issue. In the Portuguese context, strong paternalism and a feeling of inertia among mining communities was shared with examples.

FCN as a dynamic learning platform is shaping up. The FCN members share a same language and there is an increasing sense of a larger heritage community. The FCN considers itself as a learning community where resources, experiences and knowledge are shared. Each member recognises his/her strengths and weaknesses and there is a shared interest in developing a mentorship programme among FCN members. More mobility among FCN members, visiting each other in their respective communities and promoting the Faro Convention and FCN in other areas in their countries, is in the planned actions in the coming years. While a virtual communication will be maintained throughout the year, it is strongly believed that human connection and face to face interactions make their work stronger and more sustainable.

Heritage governance / management is one of the most important issues that was identified by the FCN members. This is directly related to the democratisation of this field and consequently the community life. It was emphasised that local and national authorities are involved in the process to better understand the crucial role of communities and to adopt a different approach to heritage governance. It is important that institutions think out of the box and refrain from mechanical thinking. Revisiting conventions and laws might be useful to develop joint integrated policies to which various stakeholders subscribe. It was also discussed that FCN members should enhance the human resources, including new facilitators in their work. Heritage governance should be inclusive of topics and people focusing on landscape, natural heritage and environment as well.

Visibility of the work being carried out by the Faro Convention Action Plan is very important. Increased visibility would also help facilitators to spread the word at local and national levels. More cooperation among FCN members will be sought in the coming year.

2. **For the new enquiries to the FCN, a review group was formed.** This group will provide the Secretariat with feedback about the suitability of the enquiry vis-à-vis the Faro Convention principles and criteria. Based on the process introduced in the Faro Convention Action Plan Handbook, this review group will assure the FCN involvement in decision making about network members' engagement.
3. The Faro Convention Action Plan **Handbook** received a positive feedback. With minor suggested additions, it will be made available in the first quarter of 2018. A biennial review and a report format was introduced and well received.

4. The following topics were suggested for a **Faro Convention research** action workshop in 2018

- Socio-economic benefits of heritage for local communities
- Participatory heritage governance / the “risk” of success
- Communities at risk
- Sustainability of ‘practice sites’ - extraction of knowledge – practice sites as power houses to drive the research
- The importance of inclusiveness in conflict transformation

5. The following topics were suggested for the Faro Convention **seminar series** in 2018

- Heritage and gender
- Heritage and displaced people (newcomers / leavers / refugees)
- Participatory governance/ methods / design
- Shared economies and heritage
- Heritage at Risk - Disasters, climate change and heritage - Authentic Reconstruction, focusing on political and social aspects of reconstruction processes after conflict or natural disasters / Destruction, forbidden and forgotten (dissonant heritage)
- Illicit trafficking of goods
- Communities at risk

6. **Suggestions / plans for 2018**

The FCN members have reflected on the 2018 activities as follows:

- Initiation of a mentorship programme of the FCN
- Work on a common glossary – concepts agreed upon
- Sharing testimonies of good practices and implementation with a wider audience
- Improving relationship between institutions / various political levels
- Indicating FCN members on a map on the Faro Convention website and linking them to the CVs
- Working with the newly introduced FCN review group for new enquiries
- Increased visibility of results; sharing of data about the benefits; economic, the role of universities, etc.
- Focus on educational activities - intergenerational dialogue on disappearing heritage, as well as guidance for schools for heritage walks
- Organisation of training / workshops for local entities to begin heritage related projects – connecting networks of heritage communities
- Mapping Faro Convention related initiatives in each country
- Explore the possibility of directing already funded visits of senior citizen organisations and schools to the areas of the FCN members
- Explore possibilities for the development of new workshops; the role of creativity and arts in the Faro process (Marseilles, Kaunas), social contract (Viscri)
- Twinning (bi-lateral work) between towns within the framework of the Faro Convention;
 - A group from Ukraine will go to Romania to visit 3 different villages at different stages of development;
 - A visit to Viscri with a group of women from diverse nationalities to work on creative business;
 - Marseilles is going to host a “Totally Lost” event to link the topic of totalitarianism and colonialism and their impact on urban planning, architecture and migration and to link this event to the new migration of Italian people today;

- Fontecchio and San Milan are going to collaborate on educational activities, especially on the integration of their convents in the territory and landscape;
- Forlì and Fontecchio are going to work together on the promotion of the richness of language (beauty, complexity, etc);
- Organisation of events at national level in Portugal, Spain, Romania, Georgia;
- Organisation of a summer camp in Fontecchio (cooperation with Austria)

The FCN considers the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage as a stepping stone for promoting the Faro Convention principles locally, nationally and internationally.