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***COUNCIL OF EUROPE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON THE
VALUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR SOCIETY***

(FARO CONVENTION)



Council of Europe - European Union Joint Project
The Faro Way: enhanced participation in cultural heritage

Fourth Regional Seminar
“Faro Convention: from words to action”

14-15 October 2021

Organised in collaboration with



MINISTERUL CULTURII



Institutul
Național al
Patrimoniului
Ministerul Culturii

INTRODUCTION

The Council of Europe, the National Institute of Heritage of Romania and the Ministry of Culture of Romania are jointly organising a high-level meeting *Faro Convention: from words to action*, that will take place on 14 and 15 October 2021 in a hybrid format (national participants will be present on spot and online participation is envisaged for international experts).

The meeting is held in the framework of the Council of Europe-European Union partnership in the field of culture and cultural heritage and, more specifically, their Joint Project "*The Faro Way: enhanced participation in cultural heritage*", which aims at promoting and disseminating the principles of the Council of Europe's Faro Convention and encouraging its signature, ratification and implementation in member States.

The event will be the last of four regional seminars in the framework of the above-mentioned Joint Project, following on from the previous seminars held in Madrid (December 2018), Maastricht (May 2019) and Tbilisi (June 2021, online meeting). It will bring together stakeholders in cultural heritage from different countries and will aim at reflecting on the Faro Convention principles, exchanging on their interpretation and implications, as well as sharing experiences and creating interactive space for collaboration among the participants.

Furthermore, as many countries in South-East Europe have already ratified the Faro Convention, the meeting will have a particular focus on sharing good practices from member States, as well as from heritage communities and civil society initiatives, on how the Convention principles are actually applied. The aim is to showcase these good examples and the added value for member States of implementing the Convention principles in the management of their cultural heritage.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVENT

The Meeting will have the following objectives:

1. to reflect on the Faro Convention principles and their multiple uses in practice;
2. to showcase examples of good practices from the national authorities, heritage communities and civil society on the implementation of the Faro Convention;
3. to highlight the added value and benefits of signing, ratifying and implementing the Faro Convention for all stakeholders;
4. to provide guidance for the implementation of the Faro Convention principles;
5. to create an engaging space for exchange and dialogue among the participants from different countries;
6. to foster co-operation between the public sector and civil society and discuss the role of national authorities and civil society in cultural heritage governance.

Although the meeting is taking place in one of the countries that has not yet signed the Faro Convention, the existing good practices on the implementation of the Faro Convention principles by civil society and heritage communities in Romania will be highlighted to illustrate the potential of these principles and the pertinence of the adoption of the Convention by member States.

APPROACH

Through presentations and discussions on specific topics, participants at the seminar will have a unique opportunity to share their experience and good practices, exchange on the concerns that authorities may have in supporting the Faro Convention approach to cultural heritage, as well as create possibilities for synergies and co-operation.

Besides the formal part of the seminar, visits to local initiatives that are already applying some of the Faro Convention principles will serve to illustrate how authorities can be involved in the implementation phase.

EXPECTED RESULTS

It is expected, after this fourth seminar, to highlight the benefits and added value of the Faro Convention and to offer practical guidance on how to implement the Faro Convention principles to those member States that have already ratified the convention.

The seminar should also encourage national authorities to participate and engage more with the Faro Convention principles, and develop further initiatives for their implementation.

Furthermore, through sharing good practices and experiences, the seminar should encourage the member States that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Convention, showcasing its added value.

Finally, the seminar should create momentum for increased participation of civil society in cultural heritage governance, in line with the Convention principles.

The results of all four regional seminars will provide content for the planned publications – a good practices collection and a policy guidance document for member States. They will also contribute to the development of the innovative *Interactive Toolkit: Find your Faro Way* (a step-by-step guidance in a form of a role-playing game for the practical application of the Faro Convention principles) to be presented at the closing event of the Joint Project: a high-level conference in November 2021 marking the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Faro Convention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. THE FARO CONVENTION

The Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention) is a convention about cultural heritage, conceived for the benefit of society and implemented by European citizens. It outlines a framework to define the role of civil society in decision-making and management processes related to the cultural heritage environment in which they operate and evolve.

The Convention emphasises the important aspects of heritage as they relate to human rights and democracy. It further promotes a wider understanding of heritage and its relationship to communities and society and encourages citizens to recognize the importance of cultural heritage objects and sites through the meanings and values they represent to them.

This legal instrument was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 13 October 2005 and opened for signature to member States in Faro (Portugal) on 27 October of the same year. It entered into force on 1 June 2011 and to date 21 countries have ratified it and 7 others have signed it.

It is important to emphasise that the Faro Convention principles could serve as useful guidance for the member States' policies in the field of cultural heritage, leaving authorities free however to implement these principles according to their national contexts.

The Faro Convention highlights three main aspects:

- The shared rights and responsibilities towards cultural heritage within an integrated strategy approach;
- The role of cultural heritage as a resource for building more democratic societies and improving the living environment and quality of life;
- The links between heritage rights and human rights: every person has a right to engage with the cultural heritage of their choice, while respecting the rights and freedoms of others.

The Faro Convention has consequently several guiding principles:

- Cultural heritage is a mean and not an end;
- Involvement of social groups and organisations while considering different backgrounds, responsibilities and capacities of each group or organisation;
- Cultural heritage is about the relationship between people, places and stories; the feeling of belonging;
- Social cohesion can be strengthened by creating shared responsibility towards cultural heritage;
- Cultural heritage can contribute to protecting and maintaining cultural diversity and locality (sense of place) in a time of standardisation.

Such concepts may challenge the usual approach to cultural heritage governance, where identification, protection, conservation and diffusion are mainly developed through public authorities. The decision by States to endorse the Faro Convention and participate in its implementation should ensure a balanced approach between the more traditional role of authorities and civil society's increased involvement today. This will allow the preservation of the existing heritage while promoting its use in addressing societal issues.

2. THE JOINT PROJECT *THE FARO WAY*

Agreeing on the importance of encouraging the increased role of civil society in heritage governance, the European Commission and the Council of Europe are promoting the Faro Convention principles, through a Joint Project: *The Faro Way: enhanced participation in cultural heritage*.

The Joint Project is structured around three major goals:

A to ensure the commitment of all stakeholders, and in particular national authorities, to the Faro Convention principles;

B to showcase concrete examples of implementation of the principles at national, regional and local levels;

C to build long-term stakeholder cooperation to translate the Faro Convention principles into action.

Three main lines of action are considered to achieve the above objectives:

1. Increasing the number of signatures and ratifications of the Faro Convention

The commitment of national authorities to the Faro Convention principles is promoted through four multi-stakeholder regional seminars and a final conference to advocate for greater involvement of all heritage stakeholders.

2. Promoting implementation of the Faro Convention

Concrete actions to implement the Faro Convention principles are encouraged through a compilation of examples of Faro Convention inspired achievements and the production of interactive material clarifying the implications for the various stakeholders.

3. Building on a dynamic pan-European network

The long-term sustainability of the Faro Convention principles is ensured through a network of heritage stakeholders – that build up on the existing Faro Convention Network – in order to continue sustaining Faro-related actions through the exchange of knowledge and experiences.