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Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society – FARO Convention



Third Regional Seminar “Faro Convention for Concrete Action on Cultural Heritage”

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About the Faro Convention Seminar

The Third Faro Regional Seminar was jointly organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia, the Georgian National Agency for Heritage Preservation and the Council of Europe.

This high-level meeting was held within 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 the member states.

Bringing together representatives of the ministries in charge of culture and heritage issues from the Council of Europe and the European Union member states, various international organisations, heritage communities and other local, regional and national stakeholders in the fields of culture and heritage, the seminar sought to provide guidance on implementing the Faro Convention principles, showcase examples of best practices from national authorities, heritage communities and civil society, highlight the added value of signing, ratifying and implementing the Convention and foster co-operation between the public sector and civil society in cultural heritage governance.

Initially scheduled to be held in April 2020 during the Georgian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the seminar had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak. It was then moved online owing to the pandemic and the resulting travel restrictions, with nearly 60 participants from 20 Council of Europe member states participating remotely.

The programme of the two-day seminar was prepared with the support of Georgia’s Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and its National Agency for Heritage Preservation. Under the Faro Action Plan, these two Georgian bodies will continue to conduct information and consultation meetings at national level for all stakeholders in the field.

https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/third-faro-regional-seminar-10-11-june-2021?fbclid=IwAR1-rJAcimssQhcwo_i9SvaReAozrlojwuHbtvVMRPwqLCFnbgTwB80Wa5Y

Words of welcome

“Faro addresses the most noble aspects of human rights, thus reminding societies that the right to cultural heritage is as essential as the rights to equality and freedom of expression.” Mr Paata Dolidze, Deputy Director General of the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation

In his opening address, Mr Paata Dolidze, Deputy Director General of the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation underlined the importance of holding the Third Regional Seminar and expressed his gratitude that Georgia had been selected among the host countries for the cycle of regional seminars held as part of the Council of Europe-European Union Joint Project. He thanked the event’s organisers and the Council of Europe representatives who had spared no time and effort in preparing the event during these difficult times. He expressed his regret that Georgia was hosting the seminar online as it meant that participants did not have the opportunity to discover Georgia’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, monuments, historical landmarks and centuries-old traditions.

The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, better known as the Faro Convention, which built on the previously identified concepts of tangible and intangible heritage, primarily addressed the most noble aspects of human rights, thus reminding societies that the right to cultural heritage was as essential as the rights to equality and freedom of expression.

By building up democratic governance of cultural heritage – based on awareness-raising, civil society engagement and transparency – Georgia had already made substantial and noteworthy achievements that had been picked up by various international networks to be shared with the wider European community. Nevertheless, it still had a lot to learn from other European countries to continue fostering democratic approaches to governance to improve preservation and enhance Georgia’s diverse heritage as a factor shaping its identity, ensuring these values were passed on to the next generation. It was well acknowledged that, despite some success, Georgia was still far from being a model for heritage participatory management, in which the community and each of its members can be driving forces in preserving cultural heritage. There was still a long way to go to achieving that goal.

It was therefore crucial that the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, the main body responsible for implementing cultural heritage policy, shared best practices, success stories and lessons learned to help hone the cultural heritage management system and introduce tried and tested international approaches. In addition, pooling potential challenges would help to enhance our joint efforts to move towards solving the issues and sharing and developing our pan-European common values in the process.

In his closing remarks, Mr Dolidze expressed his strong belief that by providing an opportunity to share and discuss our experience in the field, analyse the lessons of the past and identify current needs, this seminar would significantly support and guide our efforts to improve the cultural heritage governance system, ensuring that everyone had equal access to these values as set out in the Faro Convention.

“Objects, places and traditions are important because of the meanings and the uses that people attach to them, the value and the identity they represent.” Ms Catherine Magnant, Head of Cultural Policy Unit, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission

A people-centred approach, putting people at the heart, was very much key to the European Commission’s policy on cultural heritage as described in the European framework for action on cultural heritage that had been adopted in total alignment with the principles of the Council of Europe Convention on the Value of the Cultural Heritage for Society.

The Faro Way was a joint project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe and a tangible measure breathing life into their joint commitment to the Faro Convention principles, symbolising the value of cultural heritage and the role it played in our societies.

The European Commission had a long-lasting, fruitful co-operation with the Council of Europe in a variety of areas including democracy, education and culture. During the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018, co-operation on cultural heritage had reached a new level: the Faro Way project was born.

It was important to attract attention to and raise awareness of the Faro Convention and increase the number of signatures and ratifications among EU and Council of Europe member

states. This was the very purpose of the regional seminar, which provided an opportunity to exchange best practices and learn about the benefits of the Convention together.

Georgia was one of the frontrunners and biggest promoters of the Faro Convention. It had been a partner of the European Year of Cultural Heritage and very active throughout the year, holding nearly 150 events which were attended by half a million participants in total.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage had been a great success with 37 countries participating, 23 000 events held and 13 million people involved across the continent. It had contributed to the wider understanding of heritage as a common good, where people and communities should be placed at the centre and involved in decision-making.

To fulfil its commitment to the Faro Convention, the European Commission had:

- facilitated the exchange of best practices and peer learning with the 27 EU Member States on participatory governance of cultural heritage, as summarised in a best practices report;
- set up an online platform – REACH (<https://www.reach-culture.eu/>) to map research and collect evidence on redesigning access to cultural heritage for a wider participation in preservation, (re)-use and management of European culture. Funded by the Horizon 2020 programme, the platform was still fully functioning and available;
- in partnership with the Council of Europe, funded and implemented two projects: “Steps” – aiming to engage communities in Lisbon and Rijeka to map cultural heritage in their neighbourhood; and the “Faro Way: Enhanced Participation in Cultural Heritage”, aiming to encourage communities to play a more important role in heritage governance by promoting the Faro Convention principles.

Significant progress had been made in terms of the number of signatories and ratifications of the Convention since the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018 with an additional six Council of Europe member states signing the Convention (Estonia, Finland, Spain, Cyprus, Poland and Switzerland).

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic had changed the way we lived, worked and interacted with cultural heritage. A great many activities and events had been cancelled or postponed and some communities could no longer access cultural and natural spaces or share some aspects of their intangible cultural heritage.

What lessons had we learnt? Could this unfortunate experience at least help us bring about positive change in how we access and manage cultural heritage? Now that reopening was starting to get under way safely, how could we rebuild communities, recapture lost audiences and have people engage with local cultural heritage even more than before? How could we reassert the value of cultural heritage in societies affected by the pandemic? These were the questions to be addressed during the seminar and in exchanges between participants.

“The Faro Convention is first and foremost an agreement about society, for society and it highlights the importance of culture as a unifying aspect of life.” – Mr Karlo Sikharulidze, First Deputy Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia

Mr Sikharulidze said that as we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Convention entering into force in 2011, Georgia was proud of being the 10th member state of the Council of Europe to ratify the document. This anniversary was an opportunity to look back, consider all the achievements we had made and the challenges ahead to draw up our plan for continuing to enhance participation in cultural heritage in the future.

The Faro Convention was first and foremost an agreement about society, for society and it highlighted the importance of culture as a unifying aspect of life. It was an integrated approach by the Council of Europe to protect, promote and transmit cultural heritage values, highlighting communities’ vital role in the decision-making process and ensuring equal access to cultural heritage for a better quality of life for all. The Convention played a crucial role in enhancing the value of our shared heritage, acknowledging our duty to preserve it and supporting our efforts to raise awareness and transmit it to future generations.

In recent years, Georgia had taken important steps to improve public engagement in heritage preservation decision-making processes. There was, however, still much work to be done to strengthen civil society’s capacity for more active democratic participation and harness the potential of cultural heritage for sustainable development, thereby contributing to social cohesion and broadening the scope of heritage policy.

The seminar would serve as a valuable platform for learning from one another by sharing achievements and discussing the challenges faced, and for enhancing our joint commitment to continue building up democratic governance in the field of cultural heritage.

“Cultural heritage reflects who we are and projects who we want to be” – Mr Matjaž Gruden, Director of Democratic Participation, Council of Europe

According to Mr Gruden, cultural heritage was and had always been important. It stood for many things, reflected who we are, projected who we wanted to be, helped us to discover others, to communicate with other people and learn about other cultures. Cultural heritage could build a bridge between people and as a result, was sometimes a target of violence and destruction. During times of conflict, cultural heritage came under threat and when they ended, rebuilding cultural heritage was one of the first and most important paths to take in efforts to bring about reconciliation.

Cultural heritage had been a Council of Europe priority almost since the outset. In 1954, the European Culture Convention had been adopted, reflecting cultural heritage’s further dimension – the ideals and principles that were a common heritage of value for European society. The Convention was about more than the mere protection and top-down management of cultural heritage. It was the first major Council of Europe convention to follow the European Convention on Human Rights and this was no coincidence, but rather a deliberate political act. The founders of the European Project at that time had understood that in order for the European Court of Human Rights and other European institutions to function, they would need to create, nurture, protect and expand the European environment. To achieve these objectives, culture, cultural heritage, education and history would need to be used to forge a European identity.

From 1954 onwards, cultural heritage protection at the Council of Europe had been seen as an important asset contributing to creating, protecting and expanding open democratic environments within societies. In many ways, the Faro Convention drew on that same idea and tried to bring it down to local level, helping communities to crystallise around cultural heritage administration and governance, bringing people together.

There were several Council of Europe conventions dealing with aspects of cultural heritage and reflecting its importance for the Organisation: the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, the European Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property and the European Landscape Convention. Protection was an essential part of these conventions, but the Faro Convention stood out as one of the most important instruments, as it directly reflected the importance of democracy. It established that a top-down approach needed to be balanced, combined and expanded with a bottom-up approach to cultural heritage and its governance, not least in terms of accessibility, as access to cultural heritage should not be a privilege of the lucky or a wealthy few. It had to be really open and accessible to all, but the principle of “living heritage” was also crucial to cultural heritage management. Efforts to preserve and promote living heritage through an exclusively top-down approach were bound to fail. It was also as important as any other category of cultural heritage.

The cultural sector had suffered enormously in today’s turbulent times, but these had also helped teach us to appreciate the importance of culture and cultural heritage in our lives. Paradoxically, we were sometimes unaware of something’s importance until we were suddenly and unexpectedly deprived of it. That is why it was vital to build on and use people’s new-found recognition of the needs and benefits of culture to make qualitative steps forward.

The Council of Europe and European Commission shared the mutual understanding that cultural heritage must be inclusive, sustainable, resilient and innovative. Through this collaboration, more and more progress was being made on the need to favour bottom-up approaches – as the recent three signatures and two ratifications of the Faro Convention testified. There was a growing acknowledgement of the Faro Convention’s relevance and benefits for cultural heritage preservation and management as it combined the right to enjoy and benefit from cultural heritage with the responsibility to manage and preserve it.

This Third Regional Seminar was very important as it offered insights into how the Faro Convention had been implemented by way of concrete examples. It showed how the Convention had inspired a number of grassroot initiatives which had popped up since its ratification 10 years ago and would encourage others to speed up their ratification processes. Better knowledge of the implementation of the Faro principles and their potential to improve the daily management of cultural heritage would inspire more countries to join, leading civil society organisations to translate these principles into actions through new Faro-based initiatives.

“The Faro Convention is not just a list of nice-sounding noble aspirations – it is a blueprint for action.” Mr Matjaž Gruden, Director of Democratic Participation, Council of Europe

Faro Principles

Cultural heritage is a value connecting us with the past, giving us a firm footing in the present and showing us the way to the future. Mr Francesc PLA Programme Manager at Culture and Cultural Heritage Division, Council of Europe

The Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society 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 2005. The Faro Convention entered into force on 1 June 2011. Georgia signed the Faro Convention on 1 September 2010 and ratified it on 4 January 2011. The Convention entered into force in Georgia on 1 June 2011.

The Faro Convention is innovative in linking the concept of Europe’s shared heritage to human rights and fundamental freedoms for which the Council of Europe remains one of the historic guardians. It provides an original contribution to the issues related to “living together”, quality of life and the living environments where citizens wish to prosper.

The Faro Convention is consistent with new trends which underline the growing importance of cultural values in the environment, the territorial identity, the character of landscape and the environmental dimensions of cultural heritage. This specificity clearly distinguishes the Convention from earlier international instruments of the Council of Europe and from those launched by UNESCO. It provides the basis for the concept of a “cultural environment”.

To date, 21 member states of the Council Europe have ratified the Faro Convention and seven states have signed it. During its plenary meeting on 27-29 May 2013, the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) adopted the Faro Action Plan which started a series of actions aimed at promoting the Faro Convention in order to increase the number of ratifications and to ensure the implementation of the Convention’s principles. These actions

are aimed at translating the Faro Convention principles into practice with an objective of regenerating communities through cultural heritage by: collecting field-based knowledge and expertise for member states, providing interpretation possibilities for current societal challenges and studying specific cases in line with political priorities of the Council of Europe. All of these lead to heritage-led, people centred actions, including workshops on innovative ideas related to Faro, making the invisible visible and supporting a Pan-European Faro Network to foster exchange between initiatives that are already using Faro Convention as a reference for their actions.

Understanding the Faro Way

The Faro Convention emphasises the human dimension of heritage, according to Francesc Pla of the Council of Europe Culture and Heritage Division. The originality of the Faro Convention was that it had evolved from previous Council of Europe conventions on cultural heritage which had essentially underlined “how we protect” cultural heritage, while the Faro Convention accentuated “why we protect” it.

The Faro Convention echoed the spirit of one of the first Council of Europe conventions – the European Cultural Convention (Paris, 1954), reasserting the need to define Europe’s common cultural heritage and values in more inclusive way and establishing the need for mutual understanding and reciprocal appreciation of cultural diversity.

“The Faro Convention does not create specific obligations for action: it suggests rather than it imposes.” Mr Francesc PLA Programme Manager at Culture and Cultural Heritage Division, Council of Europe

Unlike the previous Council of Europe conventions in the field, the Faro Convention was a framework convention. It did not create specific obligations for action: suggesting rather than imposing by defining principles and broad areas of action. The Faro Convention mainly established measures to enable and foster the adoption of its principles, meaning that national implementation remained the responsibility of members states as the diversity of cultural heritage implied that each country had to find the best ways to introduce the Faro principles. Another important aspect of the Convention was that no specific rights were conveyed by ratification, even if some were recognised. Although it was a legal instrument that mainly

addressed the signatory states, it ultimately impacted all pertinent stakeholders in the field by providing additional tools enabling them to develop their activities.

The Convention included six main aspects:

- defining wider heritage in its wider meaning and its link with society and heritage communities;
- establishing meaning, uses and values people associated with heritage;
- acting as a resource for sustainable development and improved quality of life;
- contributing to efforts to improve access human rights and democracy by suggesting more participatory decision-making processes;
- raising awareness of and improving access to cultural heritage;
- defining stakeholders' roles in cultural heritage governance and management to foster a more inclusive approach.

Georgia's experience

“We believe that capacity building at all levels of heritage management is the main key for empowering citizens and heritage communities to take an active part in (re)-defining the values and meanings this heritage entails”. Ms Manana Vardzelashvili, Head of the UNESCO and International Relations Unit at the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation

Addressing the Regional Seminar, Ms Vardzelashvili outlined Georgia's experience in implementing the Faro principles at national level.

Substantial assistance had been provided by the Council of Europe, which had initiated a number of community-based projects geared towards awareness raising and capacity building among local communities. While these projects did not directly fall under the Faro Convention, they enhanced local involvement in the cultural heritage sector and were all aimed at improving democracy and human rights Georgia – “acknowledging that the right to heritage is an inherent human right”.

Although Georgia had a very rich, centuries-old and diverse heritage, the political and social upheaval dating from its fight for independence meant that greater efforts were needed to ensure that a truly democratic approach to cultural heritage was adopted at all levels.

The collaboration with the Council of Europe, European Union, UNESCO and successful bilateral co-operation with the most experienced countries had laid firm foundations for efforts to improve the management of and legislation on cultural heritage in Georgia. Since Georgia joined the Convention, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation (NACHP) – the main body responsible for implementing cultural heritage policy in Georgia – had been working in the knowledge that sharing best practices and knowhow was vital for the further development of the cultural heritage management system.

Since the ratification of the Convention, the NACHP had worked with various international and local partners to implement a variety of projects aimed at valorising and better protecting cultural heritage.

A wide range of thematic inventories had helped to uncover hidden treasures and a great potential for local sustainable development. As part of this programme, the **German Historic Settlements Inventory**, run by the NACHP from 2015 to 2018 in collaboration with the Association of German Heritage in the Caucasus, was an example of a successful project which had led to investment and a rehabilitation programme. The dedicated team had motivated regional and national authorities to work together to preserve and revive the local heritage sites. The association's active work with the local population to put a value on their heritage to improve their prosperity and welfare was the project's main focus.

The **Rehabilitation of the Fortified Settlement of Mutso**, which had won the European Heritage Europa Nostra Award and Public Choice Award in 2019, was another important project. Not only had heritage conservation been improved by reinforcing the site's structural stability, but owners could also now use the dwellings which had been adapted to meet their needs. The most outstanding result had been people choosing to return to the abandoned village immediately as soon as the project had started. In retrospect, one of the main factors for achieving success in such projects, besides strengthened co-operation with professional bodies, was winning the engagement and support of the local community.

The **Vardzia Rock-Cut Complex Project, with its proactive conservation and monitoring system** had also recently won a Europa Nostra award in the field of heritage conservation.

The project to ensure the stability of the outstanding rock-cut complex dating from mediaeval times had relied on capacity-building activities and interdisciplinary, international knowledge exchanged with Georgian and Italian scientific schools to develop local expertise in this field.

In the context of digital technology development: the project on: “**Cultural Heritage Database Management System and the Georgian GIS Portal**” had been run from 2013 to 2019 with the support of Norway’s Directorate for Cultural Heritage (*Rikskantikvaren*). It was an innovative, modern system of international standards for better cultural heritage management at all levels of governance. The GEO Information System continuously described, illustrated and analysed comprehensive cultural heritage sites, including spatial scales in the environment, building groups, individual features, building components and their changes over time, which were critical to conservation practices. The project was based on the investigation and scientific multidisciplinary study of similar GEO systems around the world elaborated in accordance with national needs and requirements. Spatial and attributive data on cultural heritage provided important material for government agencies, cultural heritage researchers and representatives of various fields interested in specific cultural heritage topics. Publishing baseline information on cultural heritage through the GIS portal enabled the public to immediately obtain, study and analyse information. The project had had a direct positive impact on improving cultural heritage management in Georgia. The tool provided an inclusive opportunity for interaction between the different stakeholders responsible for spatial development in respect of cultural heritage.

Working with local communities to promote the protection of **intangible heritage** in a wide range of communities in Georgia was one of the priorities of the ICH Convention. Thus, joint activities were held for different groups in society, offering practical exercises including learning how to fill out registration documentation, publish information reference literature, guidebooks and other promotional material, actively use broadcasting and social media to popularise the field and etc.

In the framework of the tripartite co-operation agreement between Georgia, the World Heritage Centre and the World Bank, a multidisciplinary pilot project had been implemented from 2015 to 2017 with the aim of **improving the Management System of Mtskheta World Heritage property**. Under the Agreement, the World Heritage Centre assisted the State Party in developing site management instruments, above all the Mtskheta Urban Land Use Master

Plan (ULUMP) and facilitated capacity-building for all stakeholders and involved parties. This co-operation aimed at setting the long-term planning framework and reinforcing management mechanisms and capacities to deal with the integration of heritage protection and development needs. This collaboration was the follow up to the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy and a model for future capacity-building activities in the region (WHC/16/40.COM/6). During the project's capacity-building activities, all responsible stakeholders, including the Municipality of Mtskheta and the Patriarchate of Georgia, shared best practices and knowledge about the regeneration and management of the historic town. This had established a useful platform for further constructive collaboration between all those involved to meet the different needs identified in the development of the Urban Land Use Master Plan. In line with the World Heritage Centre's recommendations under the tripartite co-operation, in May 2018, the Government of Georgia had set up a Special Steering Committee to support and supervise the preparation of urban planning documentation in Mtskheta. The Steering Committee included all the relevant stakeholders, i.e., the relevant ministries, the municipality of Mtskheta and the Patriarchate of Georgia. Setting up the Steering Committee was an important step towards ensuring the municipality and ecclesiastic representatives were involved in the ULUMP's development, making it a participatory process and improving co-ordinated inter-ministerial and institutional decision-making procedures for the proper protection of the Mtskheta World Heritage property. Efforts to improve the Mtskheta World Heritage Property's management tools were still ongoing, but even at this stage it was clear that the methodology promoted by the World Heritage Centre and its advisory bodies had proved effective in helping to achieve the crucial objective of inter-sectorial co-ordination and implementing a shared and integrated management approach.

Numerous projects were implemented by international donor organisations to help **enhance local communities' voices in cultural heritage management**. In this respect, the USAID Zrda Project made noteworthy contributions to Georgia's efforts to further develop the Vardzia-Khertvisi-Oloda management system. This task should be highlighted as a special aid focused on the region's heritage-led socio-economic sustainability. Due to the lack of the inter-institutional co-operation between various sectors and public administrations, another prerequisite for further development was the strengthening of sustainable heritage-led management with shared responsibilities. In co-operation with Zrda, a significant step forward was taken to set up a co-ordination system that will help maintain the necessary favourable conditions for preserving this outstanding landmark and its values for further generations, paving the way for sustainable development beneficial to the local economy.

The lack of skills and knowledge remained a major obstacle to better cultural heritage management. The unfortunate development of modern buildings at the World Heritage Site in Upper Svaneti clearly showed that further steps were necessary. This included reinforcing current efforts to improve cultural heritage management by providing training and capacity-building and raising wider public awareness. Further support and assistance from the Council of Europe was vital to implementing the Faro Convention.

Engagement of national authorities and civil society initiatives

“A process of the feet as well as the mind” Mr Prosper Wanner, Lead Expert of the Faro Convention Network

Mr Prosper Wanner, Lead Expert of the Faro Convention Network, introduced the Faro Convention Network. The Faro Convention Network (FCN) was a platform made up of heritage communities working together in line with the Faro Convention principles and criteria. The Network worked towards identifying good practices and practitioners, conducted workshops and supported members' efforts to address cultural heritage challenges. It also aimed to demonstrate the role heritage plays in addressing today's societal challenges.

According to Mr Wanner, people found the Faro Convention very interesting, but sometimes experienced difficulties when trying to apply the Convention as it was a relatively new paradigm. For this reason, the network used a plural approach bringing together academics, public authorities and civil society. Its research action approach meant that the interpretation and application of the Faro Convention were not separated, enabling the theoretical and practical aspects of the Convention application to be combined. Its integrated approach supported understanding the Faro Convention with the mind as well as the feet. To truly comprehend the context, one had to be on spot and interact with people and things. The “glocal” approach derived from the “local-global” principle that enabled Council of Europe priorities to be implemented with respect for national and local priorities.

The Faro Convention Network had three main priorities: The first was about narratives and focused on respect for diversity of interpretation and establishing processes for conciliation; the second treated cultural heritage as a resource for sustainable and human development and quality of life. The third highlighted the importance of co-operation, recognising individual and collective responsibility for cultural heritage and developing innovative ways to co-operate.

Mr Prosper Wanner had been working on various Faro-related projects in metropolitan areas and rural villages in Italy, Romania and France. Among the cases Wanner described was that of the Hotel du Nord in the French city of Marseille, now a residents' co-operative offering hosting and touristic opportunities through emphasising local cultural heritage.

Mr Wanner stressed the Faro Way as a process of the feet as well as the mind, requiring an understanding of culture. "It's not enough just to listen", he said. "You have to go to a place, to smell it, to hear it, to understand the points of view of others and share stories".

Implications of signing and ratifying the Faro Convention

Speakers highlight different experiences of Convention signing and ratification processes at national level

"Implementing the Convention does not add any financial obligations to those already undertaken by the Republic of Cyprus for the implementation of its national laws and strategies regarding cultural heritage." Ms Irene Hadjisavva-Adam, Senior Planning Officer at the Department of Town Planning and Housing of the Ministry of Interior, the Republic of Cyprus

Ms Irene Hadjisavva-Adam, Senior Planning Officer at the Department of Town Planning and Housing of the Ministry of Interior, shared the experience of the Republic of Cyprus. She

described the relationship of Cyprus with the Faro Convention as a long engagement. The signature of the Convention was the result of a long process made possible by the strong commitment of the conservation sector and the Director of the Department of Town Planning and Housing, who at that time was also the country's national representative on the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP).

The Council of Europe's guidance and assistance throughout the process had been instrumental. The process had been launched by a seminar on the Faro Convention, organised by the Department of Town Planning and Housing in parallel to a Granada Convention workshop held by the Council of Europe in Cyprus. This had been followed by the translation of the Convention into Greek, a consultation process with major stakeholders, and the implementation of a Local Development Pilot Project in the Faro spirit. The decision to sign the Convention had been approved by the Government of Cyprus as part of the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe in 2019 on the basis of a special report prepared by the Department of Town Planning and Housing and submitted to the Ministry of Interior.

Ms Hadjisavva-Adam had outlined the legal process connected with signing and ratifying the Convention by the Government of Cyprus. The rationale for signing the Convention was that it was the only Convention in the cultural heritage sector not signed by Cyprus; the values of the Convention, namely – participatory democracy and economic and social value of heritage were shared by the Republic; the action suggested by the Convention was in line with the Governance Programme of the President of the Republic of Cyprus; obligations arising from signing the Convention, as described in Article 5 and the Explanatory Report of the Council of Europe, had been interpreted with reference to the Cyprus context. Also an important enabling factor was that the document set out broader commitments with regards to the principles, objective and governance while leaving the implementation methods to the discretion of the parties.

“The Faro Convention is a legal instrument that requires and allows more interpretation of cultural heritage than any other legal instrument. Its implementation also allows experimenting and testing and therefore, the process becomes more creative.” Ms Liina Jänes, Adviser at the Cultural Heritage Department of the Ministry of Culture, Estonia

Ms Liina Jänes, Adviser at the Cultural Heritage Department of the Ministry of Culture presented Estonia’s experience of joining the Faro Convention. Although Estonia had signed the Convention in March 2021 for an entry into force on 1 August 2021, the process had really started back in 2016 when a working group of experts and civil society representatives was formed to analyse the text and prepare the ratification documents. Examples from other member states that had joined the Convention (including Austria, Latvia and Finland) had encouraged Estonia to launch the participatory process in the spirit of the Convention, with experts from various fields also invited to take part.

This had been a very productive approach with a focus on co-creation and feedback from the working group had been very positive as it broke with the usual means of engaging civil society. Normally, draft documents would be sent to civil society representatives for opinion but in this case, the relevant ministries and authorities had been asked to join the process.

The working group had prepared a detailed, article by article, analysis of how Faro Convention principles were already being implemented in Estonia, using concrete examples. It had concluded that no legislation changes would be required and found no obstacles for joining. However, as luck would have it, Estonia’s new Heritage Conservation Act was being drafted at that time, providing the perfect opportunity to lay the Faro principles down in law. As a result, cultural heritage as defined by law had become broader and included both tangible and intangible heritage, with a special paragraph about the principles of heritage protection included in the legislation. Previously, the focus had been very much on the physical conservation of heritage, but now the scope had been made much wider.

Estonia was a rather small country with different heritage regions and various local characters of heritage. A change of mindset was needed to move from a focus on expert input to engaging different heritage communities.

During the ratification process, some shortcomings had been identified where input from heritage communities could be improved. Firstly, bridges needed to be built between the

heritage sector and other sectors (pursuant to the provisions on integrated strategies in Article 5 of the Convention), to show that heritage was affected by other policy areas and can contribute to other policy areas (e.g. the environmental value of built heritage which is a hot topic across the Europe). Secondly, Estonia provided for heritage protection at state and local level, but it always took place at state level in practice. Local governments were not always listening to their communities. Therefore, the need to advocate for reinforcing local heritage protection had been identified. Plans had been made to start collecting local best practice examples of implementing the Convention because this seemed an effective way of raising awareness about the Convention and improving understanding of its principles.

“Framework conventions are flexible as they provide a dynamic framework and scenario that, in the end, are best suited to cultural heritage”. Ms Simona Pinton of Ca’Foscari University in Venice and the Faro Venezia Association

Ms Simona Pinton of Ca’Foscari University in Venice and the Faro Venezia Association described the legal implications of signing and ratifying the Faro Convention. She noted that although the framework convention was a type of legally binding treaty, it established broader commitments for the parties and left national legislation and public authorities a broad scope for implementing the principles.

According to Ms Pinton, the choice of a framework convention reflected the Parties’ decision to set general goals and introduce some institutional arrangements, but also left room for stricter standards and implementation of the measures at national level.

The advantage of the framework convention was that by creating a coherent treaty regime, based on a general overarching agreement, consensus could be more easily reached by the parties, as they first agreed on general and basic principles that could guide them in their negotiations, specifying their aims in the spirit of the principles.

Precisely because the principles and spirit were achieved and addressed through national policies and strategies, framework conventions were flexible because they provided a dynamic framework and scenario that, in the end, were best suited to cultural heritage.

These arguments helped to view the Faro Convention from a different perspective and counter criticism that the Faro Convention had no legal value or weight. The Convention was different because it demonstrated a high level of respect for national legal systems, placing trust above all in national authorities, but also in all other public and private stakeholders, to sincerely engage with and commit to cultural heritage.

According to Pinton, there were several general benefits of ratifying the Faro Convention. First of all, it helped view cultural heritage as an essential human right and understand cultural heritage includes tangible, intangible and digital heritage. Another advantage was that it assisted governments' agenda for social inclusion and supported national economies, given that cultural heritage was a resource for economic development.

From a legal perspective, it was worth clarifying that when speaking about entry into force, there was a need to distinguish between entry into force at international level and that at national level. Entry into force at international level did not mean implementation at national level because the Convention must be signed and ratified in accordance with constitutional or national law. The relationship that needed to be established when introducing and transposing the Framework Convention and its specificities into national legal systems was important.

Of course, national authorities had a crucial role to play because the majority of the Faro Convention's provisions were not self-executing, meaning that they did not have to be applied directly. From a legal point of view, however it was important that when countries were ready to introduce the innovative notions enshrined in the Faro Convention, changes in national legislation would be required if those concepts did not already exist in national law.

When considering the specific concepts of the Convention, one of the main questions was how to give applicability to the right to cultural heritage which was one of the specific features of the Convention. The right to cultural heritage had been explicitly recognised as a human right and Article 6 of the Convention was clear that "no provision of this Convention shall be interpreted so as to create enforceable rights". This was an issue because even if the Convention were formally recognised, how could the right to cultural heritage be protected if no judicial protection was provided? This may refer to other provisions, even if they did not create specific obligations, but were nevertheless intended to create a legal environment in which the role of heritage communities was recognised for developing and promoting measures in terms of education, dialogue, investment and all other aspects of safeguarding cultural heritage.

What if there were alleged violations of the right to cultural heritage? It was true that the Faro

Convention did not dictate specific obligations to State Parties, but some of the legal doctrine on the right to cultural heritage recognised a specific obligation under the Faro Convention, namely the adoption of national legislation that recognises and gives individuals this right. Even if this right was recognised, what kind of protection would we have if an alleged violation took place? A variety of options were available, but the first would be to acknowledge that this right had already been recognised in national law and was therefore an enforceable right. In that case, it would be up to national judges to assess potential violations and rule on the basis of existing national laws.

According to Pinton, another innovative option to consider was the remedies provided by the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (OP-ICESCR). As the preamble of the Faro Convention recognised, the right to cultural heritage was an aspect of the right to participate in cultural life as enshrined in both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also in Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. As an international treaty rather than a framework convention, the Covenant is fully legally binding. The remedy could be that when states had adopted and ratified the Optional Protocol, complaints about alleged violations of the right to cultural heritage could be submitted to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). Pursuant to Article 2 of the Optional Protocol, complaints could be filed by individuals, heritage communities and groups. Under Article 10, they could also be brought by other states in the so-called “Inter-State Complaints Procedure”. This was not a judicial procedure, but rather part a monitoring system. Of course, all of this required states to ratify the Optional Protocol so as to recognise the competence of the Committee to receive and consider complaints. It was why this Protocol had not been widely ratified. Only 26 states in the world had ratified it to date (including eight Council of Europe member states: Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, San-Marino, Slovakia and Spain). This option was therefore quite limited, but another international forum could provide an opportunity for dialogue and discussion about potential violations using this option, thereby raising awareness of such rights violations.

Social sanctions could provide another remedy. Civil society, non-governmental organisations and professional groups of cultural heritage experts already played this role. Social sanctions – like public monitoring, denunciation and even public shaming in cases of non-observance of relevant cultural heritage norms – had a powerful role to play in enforcing international legal norms. In fact, when properly developed and deployed, social sanctions could help push state authorities to take corrective action and plug the gaps in international law.

Another way could be to present complaints about non-observance and alleged violations of other Faro provisions to the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP). Under the Faro Convention, this was the body responsible for following up and guiding its implementation. Making it possible for individuals, members of the Faro Network and heritage communities to submit complaints to this Committee could also be a way to initiate discussion on the non-implementation of Faro provisions. Social sanctions could also be an option for the other Faro Convention provisions which did not concern the right to cultural heritage.

To conclude, by using a framework convention with its specificities – which suggested the innovative notions set forth in the Faro Convention be included and translated into national legal systems, fostering an approach of participative and active co-operation between all stakeholders while recognising and giving respect and relevance to the role of national and local authorities and co-operation between them – the legal implications of the Faro provisions were to create a fertile economic, social and political climate for the relevant legal provisions to be adopted at national level, but as a natural, accepted consequence of joining the Faro Convention.

Heritage communities and governance

“Patrimoni is a project that springs from the territory, from the demand of a whole range of local voluntary groups with their own cultural heritage projects” Mr Ángel Portolés Górriz, Faro Convention Network in Spain

Mr Ángel Portolés Górriz, representative of the Faro Convention Network in Spain, presented the Jaume I University Patrimoni project, which was structured around a network of heritage communities, and provided two examples of local heritage communities in action. The first was about the Viver Local Action Group and their project on the importance of heritage education. In 2013, a group of neighbours in Viver (population 1 536) contacted the Patrimoni project of the Jaume I University to begin a project to raise the profile of the town’s viticulture heritage. For two years, the Viver Local Action Group studied the area’s wine-growing heritage, drew up an inventory and designed some routes and activities to promote these to the village’s residents. In 2015, the group met with staff at the local primary school with a

proposal to organise a two-day educational activity in the form of a Wine Festival. Primary school pupils worked closely with the group, learning about the local wine-growing heritage and production.

Mr Górriz then presented a project implemented by the Museum of Cirat. Cirat is a small village (population 220) in rural Castellón. In 2016, the Las Salinas Cultural Association of Cirat began work on a plan to promote the village's ethnography museum, located in an old Moorish oven. The first action was to organise a cultural heritage workshop during which participants could consider the museum and make suggestions for its improvement. The Museum of Cirat was in a very poor state: the oven walls were seriously affected by damp, compromising the integrity and conservation of both the collection and the building itself. The members of the cultural association then approached the local university with a request to organise specific workshops to learn how to conduct conservation works and to work on a new project for the museum. Local members of the community took part in the workshops, sharing their ideas and helping to decide on the museum's future. On 5 June 2021, the cultural association held a workshop on cataloguing local heritage. This was part of an ongoing process fostering a sense of belonging in a community through participation and inclusion.

“Highlighting the value of cultural heritage has motivated the local community to preserve it” Ms Caroline Fernolend, Faro Convention Network, Romania

Ms Caroline Fernolend of the Faro Convention Network outlined the work of the Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET) in 46 villages across Romania and showcased successful examples of heritage communities and governance in Viscri, Romania. According to Ms Fernolend, the aim and common goal of the heritage community in Viscri was to improve the inhabitants' quality of life and living conditions by valorising the village/community authenticity; revitalising traditional crafts (of plasterers, carpenters, roof makers, tile makers, blacksmiths, weavers etc.); restoring village houses and local monuments in a traditional way while working with local experts and materials (e.g. clay, sand, stone, slaked lime and wood); turning traditional houses into bed-and-breakfasts; developing horse and cart itineraries for tourists; encouraging agriculture, the use of home-grown organic vegetables and promoting local gastronomy.

MET's actions in rural areas and villages were directed towards making local communities aware of the value of what was around them which sometimes went unnoticed. People were

asked what they were proud of and what was of value. People in remote areas often thought that there was nothing extraordinary about where they lived, but every place and community had values and all it took was to identify that value and enhance it.

Ms Fernolend explained that the constant motivation of all vulnerable groups (such as Roma or women) to participate in and contribute to the implementation of cultural heritage valorisation projects in Viscri had laid the foundations for their sustainable integration in the community. This meant that efforts were made to help each and every individual find their place and create something with their hands.

Translating the values of the pluri-cultural community regarding existing cultural heritage and developing existing and new activities contributed to exploring new interesting cultural attractions (e.g. cultural routes and walking paths).

Drawing up a common framework of regulations, including the integration of the new village residents, was also very important.

To achieve successful integration through democratic participation, a strategic action plan and a social contract had been created together with and for the members of the Viscri community. Each group of interest that was involved in the development of this document had acknowledged that the result needed to be a realistic, proactive and interactive agreement which would be open to revision. The social agreement represented a pact for the Viscri community, including an informal parliament representing all the different village groups of interest that would discuss and agree on stipulations and arrangements before any new measures were implemented. An informal parliament was a very democratic tool of local governance. It consisted of 22 members and met every last Sunday of the month. To keep the lines of communication open during the pandemic, a special WhatsApp group for the whole community had been set up to discuss important issues.

Efforts to develop the local economy through the informal parliament had motivated the local community to preserve their heritage and put it in the spotlight. The local economy was the key to success and the Mihai Eminescu Trust's mission was to improve the living conditions of each member of the community who desired to work.

In 20 years of activity (1 267 implemented projects), the MET team had acquired vast experience in engaging community members in 46 villages to preserve cultural heritage, thus contributing to the community's sustainable development of by valorising local cultural and

natural heritage.

“Cultural heritage is the means of preserving identity –conserving this intangible heritage safeguards collective values and universal knowledge accumulated over the centuries.” Ms Asmat Lali Meskhi, Georgian Wheat Growers Association (WGA)

Ms Asmat Lali Meskhi, Chair of the Georgian Wheat Growers Association (WGA), introduced the charity’s mission and work. Founded in 2017 with the aim of enhancing the conservation of Georgia’s wheat culture and heritage, the role, mission and activities of the WGA were fully in line with the values and principles of the Faro Convention, in particular the importance of cultural heritage for society and of fostering the active participation and responsibility of various stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, local communities, individuals and experts) in cultural heritage. This was crucial for the WGA because cultural heritage was the means of preserving identity – conserving this intangible heritage safeguarded collective values and universal knowledge accumulated over the centuries. Every member of society was responsible for protecting cultural heritage in close co-operation with government authorities and other stakeholders. Intangible cultural heritage was at risk in this fast-paced world increasingly shaped by globalisation, which brought new approaches, environmental challenges and economic requirements.

Archaeological studies had found that there were 14 species and 188 varieties of Georgian wheat dating back 800 years, said Meskhi. This very rich intangible heritage was linked to traditions of planting, producing, using and preserving endemic varieties of local Georgian wheat. It had many connections with cultural, social and economic practices, folklore, craft work, vocabulary and much more. Some of these traditions were very important for various small villages and local communities across the country and could be found in a variety of secular and religious rituals and celebrations.

Although this heritage was partly preserved by various local communities, experts and educational institutions, it remained at risk from extinction and required immediate protection and preservation. This was particularly true because local traditional varieties of wheat had been replaced by imported varieties from the second half of the 20th century and were no longer grown.

According to Ms Meskhi, urgent stakeholder action was necessary to ensure Georgia's wheat crop culture was preserved. With this purpose, the Georgian Wheat Growers Association had approached the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation with a proposal to consider Georgian wheat crop culture as intangible cultural heritage. As a result of this productive co-operation, Georgian wheat culture had been classified as intangible cultural heritage by Georgia and registered in the state registry. It had also been nominated for inclusion on the UNESCO list of Intangible Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. In 2019, the Georgian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture had set up an inter-ministerial working group to bring together representatives from various sectors (public authorities, private sector, non-governmental organisations, local wheat communities, scientists and experts) to elaborate a joint strategy and action plan to support protection and preservation of Georgian wheat culture. This was an example of effective co-operation through inclusive and participatory processes leading to the adoption of a unified strategic action plan and support programme. Other important stakeholders and target groups for the knowledge-sharing process included youth groups, museums and community organisations, with continuous knowledge-sharing and professional/vocational education among the main goals.

In 2020, a widespread campaign had also been launched in cooperation with various media outlets to ensure that their understanding of cultural heritage was accurate and, with their help, to raise public awareness on the importance of cultural heritage protection.

The aims of the Georgian Wheat Growers Association included:

- ensuring shared responsibility at the village and local community level;
- enhancing stakeholder participation across social and age groups;
- defining the responsibilities of all those involved in protecting and preserving cultural heritage;
- promoting cultural heritage as means for sustainable economic development while preserving its integrity and value;
- ensuring that special conservation requirements were considered in state decrees;
- incorporating cultural heritage aspects at all levels of education;
- educating public authorities and raising awareness to promote joint actions and active collaborations with non-governmental organisations and local communities;
- encouraging private sector and volunteer organisations to research, analyse promote and preserve cultural heritage;
- contributing to understanding and transmission of common European heritage, memories, ideals, principles and values from generation to generation;

- preserving the world's cultural diversity;
- ensuring international recognition of Georgian wheat culture to create motivation and act as an incentive for all stakeholders.
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Potential support to civil society initiatives

“Social guardians undertake tasks related to the preservation of monuments’ value, to keep them in the best possible condition and to disseminate knowledge of monuments.” Ms Aleksandra Chabiera, Polish National Institute of Cultural Heritage

Ms Aleksandra Chabiera from Poland’s National Institute of Cultural Heritage presented the main findings of the special report on Polish civil society and the aims of the Faro Convention, which had been prepared with the support of the Council of Europe.

Ms Chabiera outlined the legal framework and provisions linked to civil society and cultural heritage. According to Chabiera, various articles of the Polish Constitution referred to cultural heritage in terms of its multiple meanings and the roles incumbent on society. For example, Poland should:

- “safeguard the national heritage and [...] ensure the protection of the natural environment pursuant to the principles of sustainable development” (Article 5);
- “provide conditions for the people's equal access to the products of culture which are the source of the Nation's identity, continuity and development” (Article 6);
- “ensure Polish citizens belonging to national or ethnic minorities the freedom to maintain and develop their own language, to maintain customs and traditions, and to develop their own culture. National and ethnic minorities shall have the right to establish educational and cultural institutions, institutions designed to protect religious identity, as well as to participate in the resolution of matters connected with their cultural identity” (Article 35);
- ensure “freedom of artistic creation and scientific research as well as dissemination of the fruits thereof, the freedom to teach and to enjoy the products of culture...” (Article 73).

Other legislation of relevance was the Law on Public Benefit Activities and Volunteerism, the Law on Associations and the Law on Foundations. Together, these three instruments

regulated the right of association and active participation in public life. The last two were concerned with the different legal forms of NGOs and specified the goals that such organisations could pursue (public benefit). The Law on Public Benefit Activities and Volunteerism regulated all matters relating to voluntary work.

When it came to areas of public life related to heritage and civil society, several laws stood out, foremost among them the Law on the Protection and Care of Monuments which enabled individuals, legal entities or other organisations to be appointed as “social guardians of monuments” on a voluntary basis. A card issued by a district governor certified the right of the holder to reprimand anyone caught breaking the rules on the protection and care of monuments. The function of the guardians was to undertake tasks related to the preservation of monuments’ value, to keep them in the best possible condition and to disseminate knowledge of monuments.

According to Ms Chabiera, social guardians actively co-operated with local authorities and sometimes put pressure on them for various heritage preservation needs. Some districts provided training for aspiring social guardians, including in co-operation with NGOs. It was difficult to assess the exact number of social guardians in Poland, but the city of Krakow had appointed 30 guardians since 2005 and the city of Łódź 48 guardians since 2006. Although districts and cities put information about social guardians on their websites, it was hard to identify who was still active.

This was the topic to be researched by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage to promote the Faro Convention among civil society organisations. There were also plans to invite all social guardians of monuments to a seminar on the principles and application of the Faro Convention. This seminar could contribute to better understanding of the roles and potential actions of social guardians and define ways for better co-operation with the Regional Conservators of Monuments, which were responsible for heritage protection at local level.

Out of around 117 000 NGOs registered in Poland, 11 000 listed “culture and art” as at least one of their areas of activity. 7 000 were active in the cultural heritage field, with education and promotion of heritage accounting for 95%, protecting and maintaining intangible heritage – 69%; compiling inventories and documenting intangible heritage – 44%; conservation and maintenance of monuments – 33%; compiling inventories and documenting monuments – 31%; lobbying for legal recognition of monuments and engage in projects designed to adapt monuments to new functions – 14%. Almost half of all NGOs active in the cultural heritage

field relied entirely on volunteers.

Some of these volunteers were part of sectoral social dialogue institutions (council, boards and committees) at national, regional and local level. These institutions helped enhance co-operation between local authorities and NGOs, provided advisory and consultation services and implemented projects with cities and mediated mutually agreed solutions. Warsaw, for example, had 29 sectoral committees with one dedicated to protecting monuments (including 13 NGO members).

In the social economy, co-operatives and NGOs (foundations, co-operatives of persons with disabilities, social co-operatives, associations) focused on employee welfare and solidarity, promotion of inclusion. These were most commonly social enterprises which had to use their profits for the benefit of the community or the social and occupational inclusion of employees. They also had to be managed in a participatory way and at least 30% of their employees were considered to be at risk of exclusion.

According to Ms Chabiera, 1 235 social enterprises were registered in the competent Ministry's database (although some experts put the number at 3 000). 347 of these were active in the field of education and culture. That was not the only area where heritage activities were pursued, however, as heritage could also be a feature of activities in the culinary field, tourism and recreation, food production and processing, or agriculture. Social enterprises operated in these sectors too. Unfortunately, it was impossible to say how many of them were engaged in ventures related to cultural heritage.

As for academic involvement, there were 130 public universities and 262 private ones (including 12 ecclesiastical institutions) in Poland, with over 1 200 000 students, 73% of whom attend public universities. Around 55% of students in Poland opted to study social sciences, human sciences, economics or administration. Conservation and restoration faculties exist at two fine arts academies and one university; all three institutions were state-run.

The Polish National Institute of Cultural Heritage actively co-operated with academia through various research projects. It had recently launched a new collaborative project – a contest for a thesis on cultural heritage. Another example worth mentioning was a programme that had been created to help establish which sciences lacked data related to cultural heritage.

Since 2016, National Institute of Cultural Heritage had launched a series of training courses for local self-governments on ways to incorporate local cultural heritage into local policies and

how to use heritage assets to boost social and economic local development. Experts from the Warsaw School of Economics had participated in what had been a very successful experience that should be expanded to reach other sciences related to cultural heritage.

“Cultural heritage is a value connecting us with the past, giving us a firm footing in the present and showing us the way to the future.” Mr
Levan Kharatishvili, Creative Strategies Lab in Georgia

Mr Levan Kharatishvili, the Creative Strategies Lab in Georgia, outlined the current situation through selected examples of activities run by civil society institutions and highlighted several opportunities to support future actions.

According to Mr Kharatishvili, a key measure of democracy – understood as the population’s involvement in decision making and their responsibility for the common good – was undoubtedly the degree to which civil society manifested itself through grassroots activities, its presence and visibility. He provided an overview of the legal framework safeguarding citizens’ participation in the protection of cultural heritage in Georgia. Under Georgia’s Constitution, the right to participate in cultural activities was an inalienable human right and people in Georgia were guaranteed equal access to cultural life irrespective of their nationality, ethnic origin, religion or language. This was enshrined in various articles of the Georgian Constitution, which defined the multiple meanings of heritage and the roles incumbent on society:

- “The State shall take care of the protection of national values, identity and cultural heritage, and of the development of education, science and culture” (Article 5).
- “In accordance with the universally recognised principles and norms of international law and the legislation of Georgia, citizens of Georgia, regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation or language, shall have the right to maintain and develop their culture, and use their mother tongue in private and in public, without any discrimination” (Article 11).
- Freedom of creativity, cultural heritage (Article 20)
 - “Freedom of creativity shall be guaranteed. The right to intellectual property shall be protected” (paragraph 1).
 - “Interference in the creative process and censorship in the field of creative activities shall be inadmissible” (paragraph 2).

- “The dissemination of a creative work may be prohibited only based on a court decision where such dissemination violates the rights of others” (paragraph 3).
- “Everyone has the right to take care of protecting cultural heritage. Cultural heritage shall be protected by law” (paragraph 4).

According to its preamble, the **Law on Culture (1997, amended in 2013)** “instils the priority of culture and cultural heritage in the harmonious upbringing and development, and unrestricted self-expression of a person, as well as expressing and enriching the cultural individuality of the people and every citizen, and the moral perfection and humanitarisation of the whole society”. It also obliged the State to support cultural development in every way, ensuring people were free to participate in cultural life and had access to advances in culture developments, acknowledging the universal recognition of national and common values and developing and expanding international cultural relations and creative integration.

Cultural heritage protection was governed by the **Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage protection (2007)** and the **Organic Law of Georgia on Local Self-Government**. Other legislation of relevance included the **Law on the Socio-Economic and Cultural Development of Mountainous Regions**, the **Law on Museums**, the **Law of Georgia on the Export and Import of Cultural Properties**. Together, these instruments governed the right of association and active participation in public life.

In 2016, the Georgian Government had adopted “Culture 2025” – a national policy with long-term strategic vision, goals and perspectives in the light of the various challenges faced by Georgia’s cultural sector. The strategy’s main aims were to improve awareness, civic participation and transparency. Drawn up in collaboration with other government agencies, municipal authorities, NGOs, IGOs, representatives from industry, educational institutions, independent cultural professionals and the general public, it would bring about institutional and legislative reforms laying the foundations for the development of Georgia’s cultural sector. The next step would be to implement a two-year action plan outlining activities to be conducted by public authorities and monitored by a group composed of civil society representatives and experts in the field.

With regard to cultural heritage, Culture 2025 strategy’s goals included:

- drafting a Code on Cultural Heritage as part of an inclusive process;
- assigning roles to relevant institutions and cultural heritage stakeholders and co-ordinating their efforts;
- helping to set up clusters and networks bringing together organisations working in the

cultural and natural heritage sector and supporting national and international events.

There are around 1 284 civil society organisations registered in Georgia. 112 list "culture and art" as at least one of their areas of activity.

Non-governmental and voluntary activities related to cultural heritage were supported to some extent by central and local government through cultural institutions, open grant competitions and tenders. In 2020, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia launched 19 grant competitions (with a total budget of €850 000) and supported the projects of up to 155 civil society and private sector organisations.

Civil society initiatives were also receiving vital international support. Examples included the **US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation Grant (AFCP)**, which had funded 19 preservation projects worth nearly US\$1.5 million, the EU-funded **EU4Culture project** providing cultural development strategy support to non-capital cities and towns of the Eastern Partnership Region, the **USAID Zrda Project** described earlier by Manana Vardzelashvili and **World Bank Regional Development Project for Georgia** aiming to improve infrastructure services and institutional capacity to support the development of tourism-based economy and cultural heritage circuits. Local heritage groups were also clearly becoming more active and a civil society movement was emerging in Georgia. Advocacy and public awareness-raising organisations were stepping up their efforts too.

FARO and the COMUS project

The Community-led Urban Development Strategies in Historic Towns (COMUS) project had been one of the first to be launched as part of the implementation of the Faro Convention in Georgia. It had been the result of decades-long co-operation in the field of heritage-led development, involving local, national and international partners and led by the Georgian Ministry of Culture and the Council of Europe. COMUS aimed at fostering urban (social and economic) development using cultural heritage as a driver in two historic pilot towns: Chiatura and Dusheti.

COMUS had involved local communities in the development a strategy for using local resources. This inclusive approach had been in line with all three components of Strategy 21: the promotion of social participation and good governance (S1, S6, S8), territorial and economic development (D1, D2, D4, D5, D6, D10) and knowledge and education (K2, K4).

The COMUS project's methodological approach had been adopted in line with Council of Europe conventions and recommendations. It included a collaborative platform for local authorities and citizens – the local stakeholder groups – which played a key role in proposing and validating strategic development actions based on local heritage resources. International partners had helped by providing expertise, on-the-job training and study visits, improving the skills and competencies of local professionals and raising awareness among elected representatives.

The steering and co-ordination platform established at national level had contributed to the historic town of Dusheti joining the World Bank's regional development programme. As a result, the Dusheti historical park had been renovated from 2017 to 2018. The COMUS project had also triggered transformative change for Chiatura by reframing its industrial and engineering infrastructure as invaluable national heritage. The project had turned the spotlight onto Georgia's 20th-century and industrial heritage.

Mr Kharatishvili also mentioned a number of recent grassroots initiatives including the Tiflis Hamqari project to protect the cultural heritage of the Historic Tbilisi District, public awareness campaigns conducted by a student organisation campaigning for "Non-Governmental Monitoring of Cultural Heritage" in various regions and the movement to protect the Sakdrisi-Kachagani archeological site in 2013.

Key observations and challenges

- Georgian legislation had a very classical, historical and monumental approach to cultural heritage and civil society's right to participate in all levels of cultural heritage governance should be formalised.
- Citizens and associations were key to defending cultural heritage and overcoming its challenges. Recognition of heritage communities and an appropriate framework to facilitate their role was needed.
- In the light of Georgia's multi-cultural past and present, having legislation that specifically acknowledged minorities' contribution to its cultural heritage was essential.
- Cultural heritage's crucial contribution to quality of life, the economy, employment, leisure, territorial and ecological balances, landscape maintenance and climate change efforts was not yet fully acknowledged by law. A holistic approach to heritage's socio-cultural benefits was required, with sustainable development based on reasonable and prudent valorisation.

- As it stood, legislation hardly touched upon the links between cultural heritage, education and training systems. More must be done to help raise awareness of cultural heritage and its benefits for education and through education.

Save Pompey Bridge – a case study

“Local population is the key, representing a driving force behind actions to safeguard cultural heritage”. Mr Revaz Mamulashvili, Director of Mtskheta Cultural Heritage and Tourism Development Centre

“The Pompey Bridge is an ancient Roman bridge located in Mtskheta-Mtianeti region of Georgia. The bridge was built during Pompey's campaign in Iberia and Colchis which took place in 65 BC. Pompey Bridge was named for the Roman ruler who invaded the Caucasus in the first century B.C. and fought a battle in Mtskheta. But a river crossing at the site is believed to have existed in some form long before Pompey's time.

Today, the original dimensions of the bridge can be estimated only from old engravings and drawings, however, the remains of this structure look impressive. The first information about the Mtskheta bridge is found in the works of ancient Greek authors of the 2nd-3rd centuries AD in connection with the description of the campaign of the Roman commander Pompey. The bridge served for millennia as a crucial crossing point for international traders on their journeys across the Caucasus.

The bridge was restored and expanded during the reign of King Vakhtang Gorgasali. The builders improved the flood drainage system and widened the bridge entrance. Towers of defensive significance were built on both sides of the bridge. They housed guards and a customs post. Subsequently, the bridge was used until the middle of the 20th century, and only after the construction of the hydroelectric power station in 1926 and the rise in the level of the river did it find itself under water and began to collapse. Now it is already difficult to say which part of the bridge remains from Roman times, and which was built in later eras.

The bridge was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994 as part of the historical monuments of Mtskheta. The remnants of the bridge are usually submerged and invisible beneath the surface of the river that runs through Georgia's ancient capital of Mtskheta.”

Mr Mamulashvili told us that a campaign to save the Pompey Bridge had been launched in 2018. With the active engagement of the local community, NGOs and young volunteers, it had aimed to raise awareness about the bridge's catastrophic condition. Local residents had brought old photos of the bridge and shared their stories. These materials had been archived with notes about the bridge's history.

The first step had been to prepare a preliminary study for rehabilitating the Pompey Bridge with the participation of the local community. This had been sent to the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation in September 2018.

In June 2019, a conference on the "Integrated Management of Mtskheta Cultural Heritage and Tourism" had been held in Mtskheta. Subsequently, Mtskheta Cultural Heritage and Tourism Development Centre had been ordered to submit a proposal in the form of pilot project to be discussed and included in work to draw up the Mtskheta city master plan.

Here is a link to a video about the Pompey Bridge campaign: <https://vimeo.com/568884289>

A case study of Kvemo Machkhaani

“Lay your brick for the Knowledge Café”! Ms Nana Bagalishvili, the Civic Initiative

Ms Bagalishvili described Kvemo Machkhaani as a rural village located in the Signaghi municipality of the Kakheti region, known for its unique architecture and history of community mobilisation. There were two buildings recognised as cultural heritage monuments in the village, but more than 10 buildings, also built by Machkhaani citizens, were waiting to be listed as Georgian national cultural heritage monuments.

The most impressive building was Kvemo Machkhaani Theatre, which played an important role in village life with its remarkable history and stately architecture. Local citizens had built the Kvemo Machkhaani Theatre with their own resources and it had opened in 1899. From that day forward, it had been held in high esteem by the local population. This was why it was the only one out of 13 cultural buildings in Signaghi's municipality that had not been pillaged or looted in the 1990s. According to a survey of the 147 village residents conducted by the Civic Initiative, the condition of the Machkhaani Theatre and its lack of resources available

was one of the most important challenges faced by the community, second only to unemployment.

According to the archival data, the local community of Kvemo Machkhaani had played a significant role in developing the village's economy and culture. Throughout history, Kvemo Machkhaani had been famous for its many trade shops.

The first surplus goods centre in the Caucasus had opened in Machkhaani in 1895 and the membership money gathered from the centre had been used by local residents to open a local public bank and support projects to develop their community. Because of this sense of responsibility for civic development, local residents of Machkhaani had opened important public spaces in the 19th century with the support of the local community bank. These had included a hospital, pharmacy, bookshop, libraries and several other educational spaces – even one of the municipality's first schools. This history of community fundraising putting culture first had been documented in newspaper archives (*Iveria* and *Droeba*).

The Soviet regime had completely transformed village life and Machkhaani had lost its place as an economic and cultural centre, slipping into a depression.

The village's remarkable history had inspired and empowered Ms Bagalishvili and her team to take action. Since 2014, the Civic Initiative had been actively working to raise awareness of the story of Kvemo Machkhaani Theatre as a prime example of community mobilisation in Georgia's history.

Thanks to this recently-unearthed history and the community's interest and investment, the Civic Initiative had able to open the theatre hall again for the first time in 2015. Since then, 12 theatrical performances had been organised and with the funds collected, electric wiring and windows were replaced, film screens and stage lights were installed, with a sound system and heating being put in place.

Despite these efforts, more rehabilitation work was needed. The Civic Initiative's efforts were not enough to keep the theatre going. Local and central governments need to provide adequate financial and human resources for rural and economic development in the region.

The Civic Initiative had set the ball rolling and was also working to revitalize cultural and educational life in other towns and villages in the Signaghi municipality. To help support these

efforts, it had opened the Knowledge Café, a social enterprise focused on producing a space for culture, knowledge and non-formal education in the centre of the Sighnaghi municipality.

Located in Tsnori, the Knowledge Café was more than just a place to drink a coffee. It was also a non-formal education centre, multimedia library and bookstore. It was a place for young and old alike and hosted a wide range of educational and cultural activities. Initially set up with the help of the Children and Youth Development Fund, the social enterprise had been raising funds to help local, socially deprived youth get online and have access to digital technologies and quality education. Crowdfunding had been used to collect funds to run the Knowledge Café with the slogan: Lay your brick for the Knowledge Café! Each donor would have their name painted on a brick and mounted in the wall of the new Café when it was built. More than 2 500 Georgian citizens had already chipped in to support the community space and up to €86 000 had been raised through various activities.

Implementing the Faro way

Speakers shared their insights into the practical application of the Faro principles and their implementation at local, regional and national level.

Austria

“Developing and maintaining cultural diversity offers a great opportunity to keep up the heritage of the past and to better shape the future”. Ms Anna Steiner, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport

Ms Anna Steiner of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport, said that Austria had signed the Faro Convention in 2014 and ratified it in 2015, committing to the terms of the Convention.

During her presentation, Ms Steiner described Austria’s experience of implementing the Faro Convention through the example of intangible cultural heritage, namely how traditional house and field names at risk of being forgotten in Southern Carinthia, an Austrian region on the

border with Slovenia, were being revived and reintegrated into daily life, contributing to cross-border collaboration and civic engagement.

Carinthia was home to a Slovene-speaking ethnic minority. In the 20th century, the proportion of the Slovene-speaking people living in the region declined from 25% in 1911 to less than 3% in 2001. Slovene field and house names, mostly originating from rural, local life, were important cultural assets and had been part of daily life for centuries. This living cultural heritage was deeply rooted in the minds of Slovene and German-speaking people in the region. For many centuries, the written word had been German, while the Slovene language had been passed on mostly in its spoken and dialectal form. These names formed an essential part of the local linguistic and cultural identity and were an important basis for understanding the economic, socio-historical and linguistic development of the region.

Socio-economic changes during the 20th century (like urbanisation and the decline of traditional farming techniques) had put the original Slovene names at risk of being forgotten. They were no longer being passed onto the younger generation in the traditional form, especially among the German-speaking population in Southern Carinthia.

Preserving Slovene denomination names for farms and houses, fields, mountain peaks, pastures, lakes, valleys, landscapes, trails rocks, bridges, swamps, etc was very important. A growing number of people regarded Carinthia's linguistic and cultural diversity as a rich cultural asset. Even if they did not speak Slovene any longer, they were attached to these identity markers.

To preserve this cultural heritage, many individuals, communities, institutions and researchers in the region had made every effort not only to document the Slovene field and house names, but also consolidate them in everyday use.

Since 2005, local initiatives to collect house names had popped up along both sides of the border. For example, local farmers' association had put up signposts showing the way to houses and farms. Feedback had been very positive. In particular, these signposts had helped blue light organisations like the Red Cross to find remote houses more easily in emergency situations.

Subsequently, a cross-border Austria-Slovenian project funded by the European Union had supported citizens who had extensively collected documentation and data on Slovene house

and field names via a joint database and multilingual cross-border web portal. Over 1 600 elderly people had been involved as “holders of memory”.

Awareness-raising activities and positive media coverage had encouraged communities and young people to re-introduce Slovene names in their daily life, with Slovene field and house names also being added to the Austrian National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. A number of maps and hiking routes indicating Slovene dialect names had been created over the past few years and this was the first time that many of them had been written down despite the fact that in many cases, a German version did not even exist. Local residents registered on the portal could use audiovisual tools to upload new house and field names with additional information and multimedia files to be added to the cross-border electronic map, which in turn was made freely available for download for private, cultural, touristic and scientific purposes.

Further educational and awareness-raising activities had been organised, including workshops for schools and adults, lectures for students and temporary and permanent exhibitions. Printed maps with house and field names were made available in tourist offices and municipalities. Homes were marked with house names and additional signposts and bus stop signs had been put up. Creative methods for passing on the names had been developed, like musical projects to create “house name raps” and arts and crafts activities including workshops for people with disabilities to produce clay boards to be put up outside private homes.

The project, which had been made possible by in-kind contributions like voluntary work and grants from the municipality (15%), the region (3%), the national administration (15%) and EU funds, namely the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and European Regional Development Fund (61%), had also inspired other neighbouring regions to follow suit.

By August 2020, 15 700 house names and 9 600 field names had been recorded and mapped. So far, nine maps with traditional names had been published and several more were being drawn up. The initiative was being implemented by the local volunteers with support from public authorities and cultural associations representing linguistic minorities and researchers in the region. Several local regional and cross-border co-operation projects were being carried out by two professional institutions in the field of ethnography and linguistics, including the EU’s Cultural Heritage in Action project. As a result of all these efforts, the Austrian Board on Geographical Names now officially recommended that field names and other local names should be used to name new streets.

Azerbaijan

“Azerbaijan strongly believes in the Faro Convention’s positive contribution to society and human development and calls upon all countries to reinforce peaceful actions to support the development of cultural relations and to facilitate peaceful co-existence by promoting trust and mutual understanding in line with the Convention.” Mr Ramil Abbakirov, Head of International Projects and Innovations at the Ministry of Culture, Azerbaijan

Mr Ramil Abbakirov, Head of International Projects and Innovations at the Ministry of Culture, told us that the Republic of Azerbaijan had not yet signed and ratified the Faro Convention, but intended to consider this in the near future.

Azerbaijan had a very rich and diverse cultural heritage, said Mr Abbakirov. The country was located at the crossroads of different regions and had been influenced by different cultures and religions. From an ethnic point of view, Azerbaijan was diverse and each part of the country had its own unique culture. Azerbaijan was home to dozens of ethnic groups, including Lezgins, Avars, Talysh, mountain Jews, Kurds, Russians, Tats and others. Each and every ethnic group had a rich cultural heritage.

Article 40 of the Constitution of Azerbaijan enshrined the right of every person to create, use and disseminate cultural values, irrespective of his/her social and material status, nationality, race, religion and gender. It also stated that everyone must respect and protect historical, cultural and spiritual heritage and historical and cultural monuments.

Pursuant to the Law on Culture, national cultural policy was based on the principles of equal opportunities to create and use cultural values in Azerbaijan. On the basis of special procedures for identifying, studying, conserving, protecting and using cultural heritage in Azerbaijan, state authorities and municipalities took measures to enhance the value of cultural heritage.

Azerbaijan had ratified several conventions in this field, namely the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954), the Paris Convention

(1970), the World Heritage Convention (1972) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). Azerbaijan had three World Heritage sites: Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape, the Historic Centre of Sheki with the Khan's Palace and the Walled City of Baku with the Shirvanshah's Palace and Maiden Tower and a further 10 sites on the tentative list. It also had 15 UNESCO intangible cultural heritage nominations.

Azerbaijan's cultural heritage policy focused on studying, preserving, developing and passing on the cultural heritage of the country's various ethnic groups to future generations. It was well acknowledged in Azerbaijan that cultural heritage played an important role in ensuring social, economic and human development and a number of activities were being carried out in this regard. For example, cultural and creative industries had been included in the 2025 Strategic Roadmap adopted by Presidential Decree in 2021. A strategy paper and action plan were being developed together with the Ministry of Economy with the aim of unleashing the potential of cultural heritage and creative industries and supporting their positive impact on other fields.

The restoration and reconstruction of historic and religious monuments was an integral part of Azerbaijan's cultural heritage policy. The monuments and places of worship of Muslim – but also Christian – communities were fully protected and regularly restored by the state. Pope Francis had praised the country as a model for religious tolerance during his 2016 visit.

International co-operation for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage worldwide was highly important for Azerbaijan. To this end, it actively collaborated with international organisations like UNESCO, ISESCO and the UN Alliance of Civilisations and sponsored cultural heritage conservation projects in various parts of the world. Under the UNESCO 2003 Convention, a special project had been implemented to safeguard intangible cultural heritage in Bangladesh and Guatemala. Azerbaijan had also supported the restoration of the Catacombs of Saint Sebastian and Saint Marcelino in Rome, Italy and assisted in the restoration of seven churches in the Orne Department in France.

Azerbaijan was also home to the Baku Process for the Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue that had been launched in 2008 in partnership with the Council of Europe during the Conference of Ministers responsible for culture on "Intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions". As part of the Baku Process, the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue was held every two years. It had been recognised as a key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue by the UN General Assembly. Azerbaijan had hosted several important international events, in particular the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee meeting in 2013 and the 43rd Session of

the World Heritage Committee in 2019, where 24 cultural sites, 4 natural sites, and 1 mixed site had been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Lastly, Abbakirov spoke of the conflicts in his country and their impact, stressing the importance of joint actions to safeguard cultural heritage that had been affected. Culture and cultural heritage were vital for establishing peace and they in turn could exist and flourish only in times of peace, hence the importance of taking steps to create a peaceful and harmonious environment for all peoples, religions and cultures in the world.

Cyprus

“Faro means lighthouse in Greek and by a happy coincidence, the Faro Convention can be regarded as an instrument shining a light on a people-led, heritage-based future.” Ms Irene Hadjisavva-Adam, Senior Planning Officer in the Department of Town Planning and Housing at the Ministry of Interior of Cyprus

Ms Irene Hadjisavva-Adam, Senior Planning Officer in the Department of Town Planning and Housing at the Ministry of Interior of Cyprus presented the experience of Cyprus in applying and implementing the Faro Convention.

Hadjisavva-Adam said “Faro” meant “lighthouse” in Greek and by a happy coincidence, the Faro Convention could be regarded as an instrument shining a light on a people-led, heritage-based future.

Public participation in Cyprus was at a rather primitive stage and mainly top-down. However, communities were rising up to claim their right to participate more actively in bottom-up or spontaneous actions. These included grassroot initiatives, academic projects and political movements based on shared places, shared narratives and shared interests. Although many of these initiatives were legitimate and had started off well, they often failed to find the necessary backing to continue.

One of the examples Hadjisavva-Adam gave was a pilot project for the wine villages of Limassol that had been undertaken by the Department of Town Planning and Housing as part of the Council of Europe’s Local Development Pilot Project Programme. Funded by the

Council of Europe and the Republic of Cyprus, the project included 15 traditional settlements (total population 3 369 according to the 2011 Census) and was run by one permanent staff member supported by local and European experts, with the participation of 160 stakeholders from 60 different organisations to date.

The project had kicked off with a participatory process involving workshops with representatives from the community, local public authorities and governmental and semi-governmental bodies. Using the Structured Democratic Dialogue process and SWOT analysis, participants had set objectives for the future to preserve the area's tangible and intangible heritage and help forge a stronger local identity based on its wine-growing traditions and architectural heritage. This included stakeholder co-operation with local authorities to develop agrotourism and entice people back into the community through better infrastructure, cultural events and efforts to support and promote entrepreneurship.

The Strategy had drawn up a checklist of actions to be undertaken at national and regional level, supported by private initiatives and associations. It included actions such as a survey of intangible heritage, supported by the local community and Council of Europe experts, architectural surveys, based on the practices of the Department of Town Planning and Housing, and landscape surveys.

A number of other community-led events had been organised for the wider public, including harvest festivals, cooking lessons and other events to promote the local cuisine and workshops on traditional skills such as dry masonry workshops and soap making. Newsletters had been sent out to raise awareness of the Faro Convention principles and values and various other publications presented information about the project, promoted tourism in the area and provided educational materials.

The **Limassol Local Development Pilot Project DPP** had proven to be a unique opportunity to experience a “place-based” approach. By setting long-term goals with a vision, strategy and policies adapted to local needs thanks to the participatory process (with vertical and horizontal integration) had been achieved through stakeholder involvement and cross-sectorial dialogue. The project could be a model for development initiatives in future and had led to a reassessment of policies and practices in the field of heritage management (Article 38, Town and Country Planning Law).

To conclude, it had been a time-consuming process requiring a high level of administrative and local commitment. The following needs had been identified for the similar projects in the

future:

- ensure widespread public and private involvement to foster dialogue and put people at the heart of local development;
- provide facilitator training in tools, software and skills;
- establish mutual trust – a prerequisite of collective action;
- co-ordinate between various relevant government bodies;
- win long-term commitment from institutions, local authorities and communities ;
- achieve tangible results to motivate participants and raise project awareness;
- communicate regularly to keep people involved;
- implement attractive measures to sustain stakeholder interest and attract new participants.

The project and its experimental methods had empowered the community, involving them in town planning and heritage issues, and served as a blueprint for an alternative approach to local development.

Estonia

“Mutual trust is a prerequisite for achieving shared responsibility”.

Ms Helle-Triin Hansumae, Local Adviser at the Estonian National Heritage Board

Ms Helle-Triin Hansumae, Local Adviser at the Estonian National Heritage Board shared Estonia’s experience of implementing the Faro Way by presenting a case reflecting the process of involving the local community in the design of the Pärnu heritage conservation area management plan.

Hansumae said that a new Heritage Conservation Act had come into force in Estonia at the beginning of 2019. It balanced the rights and obligations of the state and cultural monument owners and introduced a compensation system. The new legislation required the regulations on all heritage protection areas in Estonia to be updated and this process had got underway in the autumn of 2019. In total, the National Heritage Board had to compile new plans for each of Estonia’s 11 heritage protection areas. Their main goal had been to involve local residents in the process as much as possible to foster people-led heritage communities.

Work on the Pärnu heritage conservation area management plan had begun with an

introductory event held on 21 August 2019. Students from the Estonian Academy of Arts had conducted a survey of the houses in the heritage conservation area and handed out flyers about the project to raise local awareness and encourage community participation.

A second public event using the World café methodology had been held on 20 February 2020 to pinpoint what the local community valued most about the local heritage conservation area. The evening had been a great success and a large number of the 100 proposals submitted were included in the new management plan. Acclaimed by the local press, it had also been picked by a series of articles, radio and TV programmes.

At the final public event on 13 December 2020, the draft of the new management plan had been presented to the local community. A “proposal corner” had been set up and a special questionnaire distributed so that locals could express their views about the plan.

The new management plan had been completed in May 2021. A small exhibition had been set up in the main street of the Pärnu heritage conservation area to raise public awareness.

Finland

“Since its creation, the Faro Convention has been appreciated in Finland as a valid and modern framework for cultural heritage policies”. Ms Ulla Salmela of the Finish Heritage Agency

Ms Ulla Salmela of the Finish Heritage Agency said the Faro Convention had been an important tool for Finland since its entry into force in 2018, during the European Year of Cultural Heritage. No systemic plan for implementation had been drawn up, but various actions in the spirit of Faro Convention had taken place at local regional and national level. Preparation for Finland’s 2030 Cultural Heritage Strategy was underway, providing the perfect opportunity to promote the Convention and speed up its implementation.

Salmela pointed to the headline of a recent editorial in the widely-read Finnish national daily *Helsingin Sanomat*: “Karaoke bars can be considered as important elements of cultural heritage”. The opinion piece had referred directly to the Faro Convention and how cultural heritage was not defined from above, but by the people themselves in a bottom-up process.

Salmela went on to present the Heritage Hubs project (2018-2020) co-ordinated by the Association of Cultural Heritage Education in Finland (AHEF), La Fundación San Millán de la Cogolla (FSMC) in Spain, Urban Development Centre (UDC) in Serbia, and VITECO e-Learning solutions in Italy. Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme, the project had won a European Heritage Award/Europa Nostra Award.

The project's aim had been to enhance intercultural interaction by encouraging European pupils aged 11-15 to explore and share their own heritage and get to know and practice the heritage of others. Participants had been encouraged to think about the meaning of the cultural heritage and its importance for social cohesion – respecting diversity of interpretations, promoting trust and mutual understanding and creating a feeling of belonging to a common cultural space.

Salmela presented three examples of best practices in cultural heritage management from Finland. The first was a school exchange between Finland and Serbia organised as part the Heritage Hubs project. Serbian children had decided to celebrate Finnish-Swedish heritage by enacting a *Stafettkarneval*, an annual relay competition between Swedish-speaking schools in Finland held in mid-May at Helsinki Olympic Stadium. In turn, Finnish pupils had celebrated Slava, a Serbian Orthodox Christian tradition in honour of the paint saint of families which is on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. The Heritage Hubs project had resulted in a set of recommendations and a manual for heritage education practices being published in several languages. The pupils themselves had summed up what they had learned from the project: “We are actually pretty different, but that’s great!”

The second example Salmela presented was from a countryside town in western Finland called Sastamala (population 25 000). The Sastamala Region Museum had developed and implemented a project called “Museum goes to the village”. Based on an inclusive and community-oriented method of collecting local cultural heritage, it had grown into a permanent way of working. Through a village partnership, the museum joined forces with a local cultural heritage stakeholder for one year at a time (a village association or a heritage community). This partner then chose an aspect of cultural heritage to be recorded and presented in co-operation with the museum. This joint action was fully in line with the Faro Convention principles for the organisation of public responsibilities for cultural heritage, namely by promoting access to cultural heritage and democratic participation to foster a sense of shared responsibility toward the places in which people live.

In her third example, Salmela spoke about how the Finish Heritage Agency annually awarded approximately €400 000 to conservation projects for transportation vehicles with historical value. She showcased the use of expert panels made up of representatives of relevant NGOs, associations and independent experts to evaluate the applications according to pre-defined criteria. The final decision lies with the project co-ordinator, the Finish Heritage Agency, but these panels were a great example of an innovative way to include heritage communities in public authorities' decision-making processes.

Salmela concluded by talking about specific rights and responsibilities relating to cultural heritage in Finland. The right to roam, known as “Everyman’s rights”, enabled access to natural environments, even if they belonged to landowners. Everyman’s rights gave people the opportunity to move and hike on foot, ski or bicycle in places such as forests and disused land, go camping or climbing on boulders and cliffs, or go swimming, ice fishing or mushrooming.

With rights, came responsibilities. Everyman’s rights were at the heart of the experience of Finnish inclusion and co-ownership and through them, the relationship to the environment was also structured. Everyman’s rights had always been accompanied by the concept of responsibility, which was also in the spirit of the Faro Convention. Salmela finished by raising a question: **“How can the spirit of Everyman’s rights be extended to all shared heritage?”**

Latvia

“Latvia’s strong tradition of song and dance festivals are a good example of active cultural participation”. Ms Alma Kaurate, Senior Officer of Archives from the Libraries and Museums Division at Latvia’s Ministry of Culture

Ms Alma Kaurate, Senior Officer of Archives from the Libraries and Museums Division at Latvia’s Ministry of Culture spoke about her country’s experience in applying and implementing the Faro Convention.

According to Kaurate, Latvia had recently completed preparatory work on its Cultural Policy

Guidelines for 2021-2027. The document was in the final stages of approval and included four main goals: an accessible cultural offering for everyone; active cultural participation; the sustainable development of all cultural sectors; and developing new cultural talent and providing training opportunities for cultural sector workers.

Kaurate said that Latvia had a strong tradition of song and dance festivals with a high level of cultural participation – almost 10% of Latvians take part in amateur dance groups and choirs. This figure was on the rise and efforts were being made to help communities to get to know their cultural heritage and unlock its potential.

During the public consultation process for the cultural policy guidelines, the Latvian Museums Association proposed to measure participation in the museum's projects, which included exhibitions that were created with input from the local population. This led to an agreement to engage in dialogue and elaborate methods to evaluate local community involvement in museum exhibitions and other activities.

In 2018, Latvia's State Inspection for Heritage Protection in Latvia had been replaced by the National Heritage Board, in an effort to demonstrate that the authorities' approach had shifted from controlling to consulting. Some examples were provided to show how organisations had changed their mindset in this respect. For instance, the Director of the Latvian National Archives of Latvia took to Facebook each month to field questions raised by a group of genealogy researchers.

The Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art (home to the main archives of Latvian folklore) had launched a very successful digitalisation project. The 1920s and 1930s had seen widespread actions to collect folk songs and customs from across the country. After creating digital records, researchers had gone back to the places where these materials had been collected to invite people to take part in decoding handwritten materials.

The Institute had launched a new project called: "Women Agency in Latvian Culture and Society" to highlight women stories and raise awareness of women's activism. The project was being implemented in the participatory way by calling on Latvians to send in stories about women who played an active role in society between 1870 and 1940. To capture public attention, the Institute had published stories from its archives, including the memoirs and diaries of people who wrote about themselves (e.g. a home teacher of a Russian General and their life in Tbilisi, Georgia).

There were also some good practices in civic initiatives. More and more local communities were not only fighting to preserve their cultural heritage, but also were actively participating in conservation work. This was particularly the case for built heritage that had been neglected by local authorities due to a lack of resources.

Kaurate pointed to two examples of efforts to raise awareness of cultural heritage in a spirit of co-operation. For instance, in the wake of the administrative-territorial reform bill, the President of Latvia had proposed legislation to define historical Latvian lands and the rights of local communities (Law for Preservation of Latvian Historical Lands) as a means to include local communities and strengthen cultural and historical identity. At the same time, an educational reform had introduced a new curriculum and new competence-based approach to provide school children with the “knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for the 21st Century”.

After the reform, the school curriculum had changed and there were now three subjects relevant to the Faro Convention and heritage protection: social and civic studies, natural sciences and understanding culture and self-expression in art. An initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science, the reform included methodological recommendations for secondary schools and a 70-lesson optional course on “Country education”. The course was divided into four parts: people (e.g. lifestyles, famous people, festivities and remembrance days), cultural space (e.g. imprints of history in tangible heritage, visual values of environment, language and partaking), nature (e.g. elements of nature, aesthetic and ethical value of environment, environmental resources in the economy and need for taking part in environment protection and governance) and governance (e.g. administrative divisions, traditional occupations and their transformation and history of governance).

As an example of cultural space, Kaurate talked about the Suiti, a small Catholic community in the Protestant (Lutheran) western part of Latvia. Characterised by a number of distinct features (e.g. vocal drone singing performed by Suiti women, wedding traditions, colourful traditional costumes, the Suiti language, local cuisine, religious traditions, celebrations of the annual cycle, and a remarkable number of folk songs, dances and melodies), this cultural space was at risk because only a few people – mostly members of the older generations – had a good knowledge of Suiti cultural heritage. Greater efforts needed to be made to raise awareness and get more people involved in work to preserve this heritage by recovering elements from written documents, film archives and museum depositaries. The Suiti cultural space had been added to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in 2009.

Armenia

“In times of conflict, implementing the Faro Convention and enhancing digital technology use to provide access to cultural heritage and the benefits it offers takes on a special importance for preserving global cultural values and sharing them with society.” Ms Mariam Gigoyan, Specialist at the Department of International Relations and Diaspora at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, Armenia

Ms Mariam Gigoyan, Specialist at the Department of International Relations and Diaspora at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport outlined Armenia’s cultural heritage practices in today’s information society.

Gigoyan said that the protection and preservation of cultural heritage – an essential component of human development and driver of sustainable development – had always been one of Armenia’s top priorities.

Supported by the Armenian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, the United Youth Union (a non-profit organization committed to youth development and empowerment) had prepared a series of animated videos about the story of Noah and the secrets of Armenia’s lakes and mountains. Available in Armenian and English, both with sign language interpretation, these bright and simple videos had made the content easy to understand with the aim of raising public awareness about preserving the environment and intangible cultural heritage.

The Covid-19 pandemic had meant that projects using digital technologies were even more vital. A number of online programmes aiming to preserve, transmit and popularise intangible cultural heritage had been launched during lockdown, ensuring the continuity of educational and cultural programmes in different Armenian communities and providing information to the general public about current heritage protection today.

A trilingual website and Facebook page on the “Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Armenia” had also been put up during the pandemic to provide comprehensive information on current developments in Armenia’s intangible cultural heritage through special videos about cultural heritage protection practices, intangible cultural heritage values of different communities, legal developments and various international co-operation programmes, etc.

Currently, the Republic of Armenia was drafting a Strategy for 2025 aimed at safeguarding, disseminating and developing culture. The Strategy emphasised culture as a set of components of national identity, combining universal values by preserving the basis of national culture and communication, promoting inclusivity and access to culture and art, encouraging creativity, harnessing culture’s economic power, strengthening the democratic values of pluralistic society, fostering intercultural dialogue and co-existence and publicising the contribution of the Armenian civilisation to the world cultural map.

The Republic of Armenia recognised culture as an important aspect of human development and regarded cultural heritage as a shared wealth of all humankind, regardless of religious, ethnic or historical background. In the development of the Strategy, the country’s obligations under the Faro Convention were being taken into account alongside other internationally recognised principles and conventions.

In her final words, Gigoyan referred to the negative aspects of conflict and its impacts on cultural heritage and stressed the importance of joint actions for safeguarding cultural heritage that has been affected by conflict. In these circumstances, implementing the Faro Convention and enhancing digital technology usage to provide access to cultural heritage and the benefits it offered took on special importance for preserving global cultural values and sharing them with society.

Lithuania

“Lithuania has not yet ratified the Faro Convention, but national efforts are being made in the spirit of Faro.” Mr Alfredas Jomantas, Head of the Division for International Relations and Cultural Heritage Communication at the Ministry of Culture, Lithuania

Mr Alfredas Jomantas, Head of the Division for International Relations and Cultural Heritage

Communication at the Ministry of Culture's Department of Cultural Heritage explained how efforts were being made in line with the Faro principles although Lithuania had not yet ratified the Convention. Jomantas presented a case study illustrating how a 10-year building reconstruction project had influenced work on a new law, showcasing the power of the Faro spirit.

Under Soviet rule, a hospital had been built in typical Soviet architectural style in the garden of the former Church of the Ascension of the Lord and the Missionary Monastery in the historic centre of Vilnius (a World Heritage site). Years later, the hospital had been moved to a modern hospital centre outside the city. The building had been left in a poor condition and sold to a private owner.

In 2014, the Chamber of Architects had initiated discussions on the design of new buildings in the historic parts of Vilnius and launched a competition for selecting potential architectural solutions for the hospital building, with three projects being shortlisted. The Department of Cultural Heritage granted permission for the work under certain specific conditions: the plot should be no larger than the former hospital and the new building should be no higher than before.

As soon as the reconstruction work had started, citizens and representatives of different institutions began to protest. These protests had still been under way when the Faro Regional Seminar was held in Vilnius in 2017. Only then had the State Commission for Heritage Protection together with the Inspection of Construction under the Ministry of Environment asked the owner to defend public interests. A week later, the State Commission for Cultural Heritage Protection and the Inspection of Construction had invited the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the International Council on Monuments and sites (ICOMOS International) to conduct a mission and provide expertise opinion on the ongoing reconstruction project. The conclusions found that the outstanding universal value of the UNESCO World Heritage Site had not been damaged and that the reconstruction project had had no impact on the site. In addition, the experts had highlighted the importance of heritage education, information and communication with citizens and other relevant stakeholders.

This case had been brought to the participants' attention to highlight the Faro Convention's importance as it had influenced the new Law on Special Land Use Conditions adopted in 2019. This law set out the conditions for establishing, amending and cancelling special land use conditions. Its purpose was to "ensure the safety of public health, protection of the objects or activities specified in this Law from negative factors or effects, state security, protection of the

environment and public interest in the territories”. It had also laid down specific rules on providing public information about projects to change land use. Not only would this help protect built heritage, but it was also fully in tune with the principles of the Faro Convention.

Malta

“Council of Europe action in the field of cultural heritage aims to promote diversity and dialogue through access to heritage to foster a sense of identity, collective memory and mutual understanding within and between communities.” Mr

Antoine Zammit, Strategy and Policy Implementation Directorate in the Local Government Division of Malta’s Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government

Mr Antoine Zammit of the Strategy and Policy Implementation Directorate in the Local Government Division of Malta’s Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government said that Malta’s cultural legacy had been prioritised in recent years through a number of initiatives and proactive government approach. He provided the following examples:

- **€200 000 invested in the 2020-21 Culture Pass initiative** – to foster creativity among children and adolescents through the appreciation of culture and heritage; Thanks to the Culture pass, children from nursery to senior school would be able to attend at least one artistic production during the school year.
- **Heritage Malta – Passport & Senior Passport initiative** – issued to all pupils in primary and secondary education in Malta and Gozo, the Heritage Malta card provided free unlimited access for one student and two accompanying adults to all Heritage Malta sites and museums. Heritage Malta's Senior Passport holders could enjoy free and unlimited visits to 27 sites including prehistoric temples and caves, historic houses and prisons, fortresses and palaces, and a selection of museums relating to nature, archaeology, maritime, war and art.
- **€300 000 post-pandemic support scheme for organisations working in the cultural heritage sector** – a number of cultural heritage organisations were

responsible for safeguarding sites in Malta and Gozo. While they received government support, a large proportion of their income came from entrance fees mostly generated through visits by tourists. This was why a new support scheme to help these organisations get up and running again had been launched.

- **The Malta Art Fund** focused on developing and producing artistic projects aiming at boosting artistic development, nurturing experimentation and innovation, engaging and attracting new audiences and attracting new ones. It provided financial support for Maltese artistic initiatives and to some degree art on an international scale.
- **Heritage Malta – Villa Guardamangia** – the Government of Malta had purchased this 18th-century building in June 2020 for its architectural, cultural and historical value (particularly as a royal residence of Princess Elizabeth, later Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom) and commissioned Heritage Malta to carry out conservation work.
- **Social and cultural economic development plan** – a funding initiative to support each of Malta’s five regions in drawing up a social and cultural economic development plan. Each Regional Committee was awarded €100 000 to identify and document the social, cultural and economic requirements of sites in their region with a view to applying for additional funding at national and EU level.
- **Regional cultural strategies** – the aim of these strategies was to support culture’s vital role in building stronger and more cohesive communities while serving as a catalyst for sustainable economic development. The strategies would be a tool for development and investment in strategic areas of entrepreneurship, research, internationalisation and education in local and regional communities with a focus on the themes of digitalisation, well-being and environmental awareness.

Role of local government

Zammit also talked about the role of the Local Government Division which provided annual grants to help regional and local councils carry out various cultural heritage initiatives. These included the Il-Belt jew Lokalita’ Kulturali tas-Sena (the Cultural City/town/village of the Year) scheme and the Annual Culture Scheme, both designed to empower local residents to celebrate cultural heritage, thereby promoting cultural diversity and fostering cohesion.

The Public Property Administration was responsible for processing and co-ordinating requests

varying from the administration of buildings of cultural and historical importance to their restoration and daily upkeep.

Thanks to the work of the Valletta Cultural Agency, the Maltese capital had been named as the European Capital of Culture in 2018 with a Dutch partner city, Leeuwarden. The Maltese programme had included many projects and events held throughout the archipelago to maximise its impact in all parts of the country.

A town in the Maltese islands would also be named European Capital of Culture 2031, according to a schedule established by the European Commission. The Valletta Cultural Agency had launched the bidding process to name the town that, in its words, would: lead and represent its region whilst reaching out beyond its borders to reach the whole of Malta and Gozo; create an innovative and forward-looking programme that may include, but could not be limited to, its existing cultural offer; focus its work on its citizens and their connection with culture and Europe, rather than on tourism, and create its own version of the European Capital of Culture concept that was uniquely reflective of the city whilst ensuring that art, culture and the European dimension were at its core.

Malta's National Cultural Policy 2021

Inspired by cultural rights, Malta's National Cultural Policy 2021 had put culture at the heart of national development with a global outlook that contributed to sustainable development and embraced culture for the well-being of all.

Malta's National Cultural Policy 2021 set eight priorities and outlined 178 policy outcomes to be implemented through six tools. The strategy was based on the following principles:

- culture was dynamic and ever-changing;
- it could help foster integration and fight exclusion;
- a stronger cultural sector was fundamental to freedom of expression and to tolerance, and thus to democracy;
- a society enlightened by arts and culture led to a culture of openness, innovation and creativity.

The Netherlands

“The Faro principles already exist in Netherlands and they should be identified, learned from and put under the spotlight so that everyone could see them.” Ms Michaela Hanssen, Faro Programme Manager at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands

Ms Michaela Hanssen, Faro Programme Manager at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands said that while her country was not yet party to the Faro Convention, a preparatory programme for signing and ratification of the Convention had been launched in 2019. It was decided from the outset that this would be a co-operative process involving all fields of heritage. First, a series of talks had been held to bring all the relevant stakeholders together to set aims and priorities and incorporate as many different perspectives as possible. Questions included how to increase public participation, manage participatory valuation, work with the Faro principles and define the value of cultural heritage.

Under the motto used “learning by doing”, this creative and organic process sought to establish the idea of “heritage as a means for social change”. This was very challenging both for heritage experts, who tended to prioritise heritage itself, and for those from other sectors, who tended to see heritage as a means of achieving goals like improving community life and fostering cohesion.

Hanssen used the metaphor of a sapling to symbolise this process of co-creation which was rooted in existing work in the field. Through the input of heritage professionals, initiatives and Faro connectors inspired by the Convention’s principles, this young tree would grow and branch out into more than 300 projects. The Faro Convention was serving as a catalyst to support and accelerate initiatives that had already been taken in the Netherlands.

As a very decentralised country, many citizens were already active at local level in the Netherlands. Early on, the decision had been made to harness this force by getting Faro Connectors (or Faro Friends) to feedback on work in the field. These connectors were independent, but worked in close co-operation with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of Netherlands. Some ran their own projects, some were employed by institutions (e.g. museums, universities, archaeology projects, etc.) and others interviewed project leaders and heritage professionals working in municipalities. This bottom-up process provided the

Ministry with information about a wide range of initiatives and projects which in turn were publicised through webinars, publications and communities of practice .

Two years down the line, and the little sapling had filled out considerably. A sociologist had been commissioned to write and publish an essay on “Heritage as a means for social change” for which he had interviewed experts and a wide range of people. He was now giving presentations on the recently published essay and had been interviewed for an article in a widely read heritage newsletter. A partner organisation had also chosen this topic for a series of community of practice meetings.

In parallel, the Faro Projects subsidy scheme had been launched to explore best practices from the field. The Ministry was co-operating with experienced heritage organisations in a pilot project to set up regional Faro Hubs. The aim was to establish a regional infrastructure for the future through which volunteers, heritage professionals and others could come together and learn about the Faro Way, helping one another to develop this collaborative approach.

In September, Ministry staff would start to work on a Faro agenda to be presented to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science next year. The policy document would also be drawn up through a process of co-creation. All the knowledge gathered in the past two years would feed into the panel discussions. To continue with the tree analogy, the Faro Convention would “water” the existing projects and the aim was to build up a forest that would continue to develop, spreading the Faro principles and sowing the seeds for the future.

In her final words, Hanssen stressed that whether or not the Netherlands decided to sign the Faro Convention, they would already be working in line with the ideas and ideals of the Faro Convention, which had very much taken root in the country.

Norway

“The Faro Convention has very much inspired the new goals for Norway’s cultural environment policy, which focus on involvement, sustainability and diversity rather than on conservation and protection measures.” Mr Terje Birkrem Hovland, Department for Cultural Environment at the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment

Mr Terje Birkrem Hovland of the Department for Cultural Environment at the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment told us that Norway had ratified the Faro Convention in 2008. In 2011, the Directorate for Cultural Heritage had launched a programme to support municipalities in strengthening local competence and capacity building through the production of heritage plans. Last year, the programme had been assessed in two external evaluation reports, with some very interesting results.

Municipal authorities in Norway played a crucial role in safeguarding the cultural heritage environment, including land use and social planning. They were also responsible for identifying and managing cultural heritage sites of local interest, but often lacked sufficient the tools and knowledge required. The programme had therefore aimed to:

- highlight and strengthen cultural heritage as a political field in the municipalities;
- strengthen the democratic base of the heritage field in local communities;
- build and strengthen local competence and capacity through co-operation models, networks and knowledge sharing;
- encourage, facilitate and promote public participation in mapping, documenting and sharing of knowledge on local history and heritage;
- provide documentation, mapping, overviews and priorities of local heritage through the adoption of local heritage plans.

The programme had been based on the following elements:

- economic incentives to produce the local heritage plan were granted to every municipality that had decided to implement one;
- economic incentives to municipalities that explored cooperation models, for instance between museums and municipalities, between different municipalities and between associations and municipalities;

- establishing networks and arenas for knowledge sharing, with a particular focus on strengthening the role of the Norwegian regional heritage administrations (which were politically autonomous);
- providing guidance and knowledge through established networks and forums (e.g. National association for urban planners, National association for local cultural workers) and through websites, guidelines and step-by-step guides.

As a result of the programme, 94% of Norwegian municipalities had either adopted a local heritage plan or were currently working on one. More than 40% of the municipalities that had received a start-up grant had said that they would not have prepared a local heritage plan without it.

The programme had also helped to improve local community awareness, engagement and participation in heritage issues, building a stronger civic society. Municipalities were now more capable, aware and willing to take their responsibility and role in heritage management, with some reporting that the programme had strengthened co-operation between all those involved in cultural heritage management at municipal level. In fact, 83% of the municipalities that had received a start-up grant said that their cultural heritage work had been improved. Some said that the programme had created far better ties with civil society and strengthened the sense of belonging to a community. It had also led to increased focus on cultural heritage as a resource for local development and improved awareness of the diversity of cultural heritage.

Hovland concluded by presenting three new national goals for Norway's cultural environment policy:

- "Everyone shall have the opportunity to get involved in and assume responsibility for the cultural environment";
- "The cultural environment shall contribute to sustainable development through integrated land use and social planning";
- "A diversity of cultural environments shall be preserved as a basis for knowledge, experience and use".

Approved by Parliament in 2020, they had been very much inspired by the Faro Convention and its principles, focussing on involvement, sustainability and diversity rather than on conservation and [protection measures](#). Seven indicators had been established to monitor goal attainment. This white paper is now available in English and published on the Norwegian Government [website \(https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/meld.-st.-16-](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/meld.-st.-16-)

[20192020/id2697781/](#)).

The first results from indicators on the first national goal about involvement in the cultural environment had been published recently. According to a population survey conducted by Statistics Norway, 42% of respondents said they were very or somewhat interested in cultural sites and environments; 6% participated actively in heritage-related voluntary work; and 10% had been involved in protecting local cultural environments in the last 12 months. The results had also showed that residents in rural areas were more likely to be involved than those living in urban areas. These figures would be important in the debate on how to continue the follow-up of the programme and the new national goals.

Slovak Republic

“The DIY culture movement starting 90s is very much in the Faro spirit, with local communities mobilising to preserve cultural heritage.”, Ms Zuzana Ondrejkoval, Cultural Heritage Division of the Monuments and Sites Protection Department at the Slovak Ministry of Culture

Ms Zuzana Ondrejkoval from the Cultural Heritage Division of the Monuments and Sites Protection Department at the Slovak Ministry of Culture presented a case study on community mobilisation to renovate castle ruins as an example of the application of the Faro Convention principles in the Slovak Republic.

The Slovak Republic had signed the Faro Convention in 2012 and ratified it in 2013. Ondrejkoval said the Slovak Republic was a country of castles as it had around 300 nationwide, 100 of which had been listed as national cultural monuments. Unfortunately, 90% of the castles were in a very poor condition, mainly in ruins. Today, 56 castles had been renovated, conserved and rebuilt using various methods.

The DIY culture movement had started in the 1990s when the first civic associations and NGOs were founded and people started to mobilise in different cultural spheres. Many became aware of the monuments and their value. The movement had sprung up around three monuments in disrepair: Lietava Castle, Katarinka Monastery and Uhrovec Castle, with three different associations conducting the renovation work. Inspired by this, the Save the Castles

Association was set up in 2002 with 29 member associations.

In 2010, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic introduced a special subsidy system – “Let’s renovate our house” – to support this movement and help volunteers and associations. The fund’s annual budget had significantly increased since 2010 and now stood at €12 000 000.

In 2011, pilot projects had been launched to conduct conservation work on castles with the help of the unemployed. In particular, the Castle Saris and Uhrovec associations had enlisted jobseekers to perform tasks like cutting back grass and removing stones, etc. At first, 50 jobseekers had been involved in the joint project of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Labour, and now more than 600 took part each year. The success rate of grant applications had also increased to 85%.

A decade after its launch, the castle conservation programme had had a considerable impact by improving the condition of many monuments, developing knowledge of traditional building crafts, increasing public access to monuments and raising awareness of cultural heritage.

Ondrejko also spoke about the European Heritage Days as another example of Faro Convention implementation in the Slovak Republic. Since a new programme co-ordinator had been appointed four years ago (the Association of Historic Towns and Villages of Slovakia and ICOMOS Slovakia), the number of events held had risen dramatically from 17 to over 300 per year, increasing public participation and community engagement.

Ondrejko concluded with another example of best practice in the form of Project Pro Monumenta run by the Monuments Board. This preventative maintenance project for immovable cultural monuments involves three expert teams which tour Slovakia inspecting cultural monuments and providing advice to owners on repair work. This practical support was particularly appreciated by the owners of monuments and helped them view institutional input in a more positive light.

Spain

“The Faro Convention is a tool to achieve the goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.” Mr Sergio Vidal, Technical Adviser at the Deputy Directorate General for International Relations and EU Affairs at the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport

Mr Sergio Vidal, Technical Adviser at the Deputy Directorate General for International Relations and EU Affairs at the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport used the example of the San Millan de la Cogolla Foundation to illustrate the application of the Faro Convention principles in Spain.

The San Millan de la Cogolla Foundation had been a Faro Convention Network Active Members since 2017. The origin of the San Millan de la Cogolla Foundation dated back to 1997, when the Monasteries of San Millán de Yuso and Suso were declared UNESCO World Heritage sites and the San Millán Foundation was set up the following year to implement, through this heritage, the complex principles of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972). The need had arisen because under Article 5 of that Convention, States Party needed to adopt a general policy aimed at giving cultural and natural heritage a role in the community life, but no further specifications were made. In contrast, the Faro Convention (2005) provided this theoretical and methodological framework that helped to implement the UNESCO principles.

The San Millan de la Cogolla Foundation was established to promote public awareness in all matters concerning cultural and natural heritage (preservation and enjoyment). Its main aim was to make sure people were not just spectators, but also makers and caretakers of cultural and natural heritage. With programmes for children and young people too, the foundation had had a positive impact on local tourism, using cultural heritage as an economic driver.

The foundation’s activities included: workshops on traditional building crafts, scriptoria workshops with local people, dramatized guided tours and school exchanges between Riojann Finish and Serbian pupils as part of the Heritage Hubs project. This project had received a Europa Nostra 2021 Award in the category: education, training and awareness raising projects.

Vidal concluded by noting that the San Millan de la Cogolla Foundation’s had increased public

participation and engagement, leading to new citizens' initiatives forming part of a local and international heritage community network.

Ukraine

“Communities can use the available resources to successfully develop the region, the community itself, promote heritage and use funds raised to preserve, protect and revitalise monuments and thus, increase the attractiveness of the region.” Ms Iryna Strashnenko, International Co-operation Department at the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy

Ms Iryna Strashnenko of the International Co-operation Department at the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy presented her country's experience and best practices in implementing the Faro Convention (ratified in 2013).

Strashnenko started with a few words about the Small Cities – Big Impressions project launched by the Government of Ukraine during the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018. The project focused on small cities, towns and villages in Ukraine with a population of up to 50 000. The project's aims had included:

- fostering the integration of cultural heritage into community life;
- introducing the understanding of the necessity of the sustainable use of cultural heritage;
- intensifying the involvement of different stakeholders in the use of cultural heritage resources and creative industries for the socio-economic development of communities;
- facilitating the economic development and tourism in small towns, which went in line with the preservation, popularisation of the cultural heritage available on their territory;
- building a sustainable and inclusive society, characterised by a high quality of life, cultural diversity, individual and collective well-being, social justice and cohesion, economic productivity in a decentralised environment.

During the first pilot year of the project, the Ministry had received 158 applications, from which eight successful projects were selected. These projects have shown that communities could

use the available resources to successfully develop the region, the community itself, promote heritage and use the funds raised to preserve, protect and revitalise monuments and thus, increase the attractiveness of the region.

In 2019, projects had been submitted from all over Ukraine with 74 projects being selected. Funds to support the projects came from the state budget (61%) and local, regional budgets and various sponsors (39%). Polls had shown the projects had a 100% positive impact on supporting community cohesion.

Strashnenko then zoomed in on three places where the implementation of Faro Convention principles had been the most visible and effective.

The first was the town of Tulchyn, which was associated with the life of Ukrainian composer Mykola Leontovych and his famous New Year's song *Shchedryk*, which had been adapted as a Christmas carol and became known worldwide as the "The Carol of the Bells" a century earlier. The "Small Cities – Big Impressions" programme had supported three initiatives: the "Leontovych – Art-Quarter" project (2018), the "Revitalisation of the Museum of Mykola Leontovych" project (2019) and the "From *Shchedryk* to the Carol of the Bells" festival (2019). As part of the creative cluster associated with Leontovych, the town had also launched an annual opera festival to showcase and preserve both its tangible heritage (Potoki Palace, a wonderful example of Baroque architecture) and intangible musical heritage, in a move that was of vital importance for local economic and social development.

The second example Strashnenko gave was the village of Vilkovo in the Odessa region, which had been a melting pot for central and eastern Europe cultures and traditions for centuries. The Danube Feasts gourmet festival aimed to safeguard and develop local intangible heritage – the region's unique and diverse cuisine – and help the community understand heritage's role in preserving and developing identity.

Lastly, Strashnenko spoke about Slavutych, Ukraine's youngest town which had been built to house those evacuated after the Chernobyl disaster in 1986. The Slavutych 86 Film and Urbanism Festival celebrates the town's unique urban style and invites guests and local residents to take a "fresh look" at it. The project aimed to generate and spread new meanings, ideas and experiences that can bring people closer to utopia. Based on the ideas of cultural decentralisation and using contemporary cinema as a vehicle, the festival included a range of cultural events (including concerts, educational workshops, mini-festivals and cinema workshops for children), screenings of cinematographic works and documentary films and

public debates to encourage the public to interact with this unique urban space.

Q&A Session

Participants raised interesting points and shared their insights and experiences

Manana Tevzadze of the Georgian National Committee of the Blue Shield and ICOMOS Georgia, thanked the seminar's organisers and the speakers for their interesting and insightful presentations. Tevzadze outlined the work of the Cultural and Natural Heritage Platform that brought several civil society organisations and heritage activists under one umbrella. Founded after the failed campaign to save Sakdrisi-Kachagiani gold mine some years ago, it has been campaigning for the protection of various cultural heritage sites and locations ever since. In most cases, however, these campaigns had been unsuccessful and she thought this was mainly due to a lack of instruments for participatory decision-making.

In the words of Tevzadze, the Faro Convention was Georgia's "favourite Convention for civil society". Since its ratification, ICOMOS Georgia had strongly lobbied for its implementation and held several international and regional workshops on the topic. It had also translated the Convention into Georgian and disseminated it to the relevant stakeholders. Most importantly, whenever cases of non-observance of the Convention had occurred, they had cited the relevant provisions in their statements and petitions to decision-makers in both the legislative and executive branches of government. The provisions of the Convention had also been used in several lawsuits concerning damage to heritage.

According to Tevzadze, no legislative changes had been made since the ratification of the Convention to enable better implementation. Nor was there much desire among legislators to bring about those changes, which would result in a more protracted process – unlike quick top-down decision-making.

In an example of positive action, however, Tevzadze explained that when amendments were being made to the Constitution a few years ago, the platform had managed to block an attempt to remove the article enshrining Georgian citizens' right and duty to protect heritage. By launching an appeal and triggering a public debate, the platform had prevented this move.

Tevzadze said that, unfortunately, decisions which were not in the spirit of the Faro Convention were being made on behalf of the national and local authorities each day. Several campaigns had been organised recently to halt the construction of infrastructure which put communities' tangible and intangible culture at risk, including a highway and a hydro-electric power plant.

Heritage communities did exist in Georgia, but their power remained limited. Although they were being invited to take part in decision-making processes, in most cases, the final decisions were not based on and did not reflect the views of experts and society groups and were not in line with the principles of the Convention. For the most part, these were short-sighted decisions that did not take into consideration the longer-term vision for the protection and integration of cultural heritage and its usage in economic development and social cohesion.

In her final words, Tevzadze expressed her gratitude to the Council of Europe and underlined the importance of holding the Faro Regional Seminar to share various success stories and experiences and discuss challenging issues related to cultural heritage. She voiced the hope that the voice of civil society would be heard in Georgia in future so that it would have more success in its efforts to protect Georgian heritage, which was also that of humankind.

Marina Taktakishvili of the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation expressed her gratitude for being able to jointly organise the Faro Regional Seminar and stressed the importance of exchanging best practices and success stories. She said the Faro Convention had a special importance for those working in the field of intangible cultural heritage as it offered new ways to foster more active public participation and create better understanding of the significance of cultural heritage preservation, its use and potential.

Marine Mizandari from the Georgian National Trust expressed her gratitude for this highly interesting seminar, which had provided an opportunity to reflect on the current situation in Georgia with regard to cultural heritage-related issues and to seek possible ways for solving them. Mizandari highlighted the importance of presenting a more balanced picture of the situation on the ground in Georgia and engaging more civil society organisations to work with national and regional authorities.

As previous speakers had mentioned, there were still many concerns about cultural heritage in Georgia. Even though Georgia had ratified the Faro Convention in 2011, the country was lagging behind other countries that working in the Faro spirit. She said the Faro Convention

was like a bible for civil society organisations and that Article 10 of the Convention on cultural heritage and economic activity was especially relevant for Georgia.

The legal implications of the Faro Convention created some problems in Georgia and prevented legal, practical and operational mechanisms from being introduced to enable the implementation of the Convention principles. Unfortunately, cultural heritage policy in Georgia was still very “aggressive” and detrimental to the country’s cultural and natural heritage.

Closing Remarks

“The principles of the Faro Convention are very much alive and more relevant than ever.” Ms Dorota Nigge from the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

Ms Dorota Nigge from the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture expressed her gratitude for the interesting exchanges and inspiring examples of community involvement in protecting and managing cultural heritage, direct accounts of implementation and all the activities carried out in the spirit of the Faro Convention. Listening to these stories and presentations had made it clear that the principles of the Faro Convention were very much alive and more relevant than ever, in particular in the context of Covid-19 crisis. Today, policy makers had a particular responsibility to continue efforts to put people and human values at the centre of cultural heritage and to emphasise the value and potential of cultural heritage as resource for sustainable development and quality of life in changing societies. The ideas set out in the Faro Convention preamble were a key concept of cultural policy at EU level.

Nigge identified five main takeaways from the seminar:

- 1. “It takes time and energy to set up a policy framework, but it also requires efforts at all levels to implement the Faro principles.”**

Experiences of countries that had recently signed or ratified the Convention demonstrated the importance of the process itself. For instance, the process took seven years in Italy from signature to ratification and in Estonia, six years of intense

efforts by the working group had been required prior to signature and ratification. Only afterwards could the real implementation work begin.

2. “Participatory governance is vital. People are at the centre of cultural heritage.”

Results which were truly driven from the bottom up could only be produced through an open and inclusive process. Several examples of this had been given, including co-creation processes, multi-stakeholder platforms, ever-growing trees, Faro connectors and Faro friends. Mutual trust was a prerequisite for shared responsibility and conversation was more crucial than conservation. Conservation was a dialogue that respected different interpretations of cultural heritage.

3. “Learning from one another and facilitating dialogue is important.”

Exchanging best practices, study visits, networking and partnerships strengthened community awareness of the importance of protecting and promoting cultural heritage. In this context, formal and informal education for heritage, heritage awareness raising and the vital role of intergenerational dialogue had been mentioned on many occasions over the two days.

4. “Civil society needs to cast its net far and wide to receive funding.”

Civil society needed support to apply the principles of the Faro Convention. At EU level, funding programmes for culture included Creative Europe and Heritage Hubs. The first calls for proposals under the Creative Europe 2021-27 programme had been published a few days ago. This would certainly be an opportunity to build new partnerships and co-operation projects. Volunteering for cultural heritage was definitely an essential element of participatory approaches as it led to engagement. For the very first time, preserving cultural heritage had been made a priority for volunteers working for the European Solidarity Corps.

5. “The Faro Convention is very much about people’s feelings and emotions.”

It was a living convention. Stories from Georgia and other places showed that the Faro Convention related to peoples’ personal relationship with their heritage. This emotion had also been clear from the examples of member states that have not yet ratified the Convention when they had presented activities in the spirit of Faro Convention.

In her concluding words, Nigge underlined that the European Commission would continue promoting, jointly with the Council of Europe, the principles of the Faro Convention and supporting further signatures and ratifications. The Council of Europe had been a very

important partner for the European Commission during the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018 and today was a member of the Commission Expert Group on Cultural Heritage – a policy forum for discussion, bringing together member states, stakeholder organisations, experts, civil society and other EU institutions.

Nigge thanked the organisers for a very rich virtual journey to Georgia and for the brilliant moderation and leadership of the seminar and expressed high hopes for the final results of the joint Faro Way project, including the Fourth Regional Seminar in Romania and the final conference in Portugal.

“Faro brings citizens into the game, but it does not play parties off one another.” Ms Kathrin Merkle, Head of Culture and Cultural Heritage Division, Council of Europe

Ms Kathrin Merkle, Head of Culture and Cultural Heritage Division in the Council of Europe’s Directorate of Democratic Participation extended her gratitude to all participants for a very intense walk along the Faro Way in Georgia and across Europe. Although it had only been a virtual walk, Merkle expressed her hope that there would soon be an opportunity to actually go to Georgia to truly experience its very rich cultural heritage in person.

It had been a very inspiring seminar, highlighting the principles of the Faro Convention, but also providing vivid, practical examples of its use and application. All that had allowed us once more to understand this Convention’s potential and the importance of working for it in a participatory way.

The Convention put forward ideas that stood out from more traditional top-down approaches to cultural heritage. It brought citizens into the game, but did not play parties off one another. Merkle expressed her hope that the presentations would have inspired deeper appreciation of the Convention and maybe even dissipated possible concerns from those that had yet to join the Faro community.

As the principles of Faro were observed, they trickled into the debate on cultural heritage and cultural heritage management, and the importance of people, stories and narratives was increasingly being recognised. These developments needed to be consolidated, particularly in situations where economic, legal or land-use related factors posed major obstacles to

participatory management.

The cases presented at the seminar showed that imaginative solutions could indeed be found to overcome those obstacles on various levels. The initiatives presented also illustrated the role that heritage could play in addressing big societal issues like discrimination, poverty and quality of life. While the Convention embraced divergent approaches to heritage that could imply conflict, dialogue was also part of the Faro mindset and the toolbox of the Faro package. After all, the strength of this democratic approach laid in the freedom to respectfully agree to disagree, an important idea at the Council of Europe.

This seminar would not be the last to be held within the joint project. Romania would host the Fourth Regional Seminar in September, bringing together south eastern European countries. Merkle thanked the Romanian National Institute for Heritage for being a valued partner.

To wrap up the joint project, a final, major event would follow in November, bring together high-level representatives from the 47 Council of Europe member states to discuss strategies for ensuring greater stakeholder involvement in future national and international actions. This two-day event would present the conclusions of the four regional seminars and all project outcomes in full, including a policy guidance document for member states for implementing the Convention, additional publications produced as part of the project and with a new innovative tool, a roleplaying game called Your Faro Way. At this final conference, government statements to facilitate further co-operation between all heritage stakeholders through the adoption and active use of the Convention principles were anticipated.

In her final words, Merkle thanked partners at the European Commission for the excellent co-operation on this joint project and expressed her readiness to hold a meeting and see how this mutually shared agenda could be moved along, building on the Faro principles and linking them ever more closely to global challenges. Merkle thanked the Georgian authorities for their efforts and for enabling this Third Regional Seminar to take place in rather difficult circumstances.

It was important to be stubborn, courageous, creative and innovative when working on culture and on heritage. This year marked the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Faro Convention. Three new countries had joined this year and with the momentum created, the Faro Way seemed to be a very good way.

“These seminars played a crucial role in improving the level of implementation of the Faro principles.” Ms Manana Vardzelashvili, Head of the UNESCO and International Relations Unit at the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation

Ms Manana Vardzelashvili, Head of the UNESCO and International Relations Unit at the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation expressed her gratitude to the Council of Europe and Faro team for the tremendous efforts made in arranging this very important seminar. She thanked all the participants for sharing such interesting examples, which formed a sound basis for implementing the Faro Convention. It was very important to be led by the Council of Europe towards improving cultural heritage governance level and active community engagement.

Vardzelashvili said Georgia was a rather new democracy and although it had made some achievements in applying the Faro Convention, many challenges remained and assistance and support were required to move forward. Sharing best practices, challenges and solutions from such a wide range of countries provided motivation and encouragement to continue.

These seminars played a crucial role in improving the level of implementation of the Faro principles. Increasing the awareness of all stakeholders enabled a more participatory process and democratic and cohesive cultural heritage management.

In her concluding words, Vardzelashvili stressed the significance of implementing joint projects aimed at awareness raising, improved participation and democratic governance of cultural heritage and expressed readiness to actively collaborate with all the stakeholders for better application and implementation of the Faro Convention.