



# Living Heritage, Civil Society, Sustainable Development

Rome (Italy),  
13-14 November 2023

International Conference celebrating 20th anniversary ICH UNESCO Convention

**ABSTRACT BOOK AND SPEAKERS**

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November**

**Chamber of Deputies**

Sala della Regina, Piazza di Monte Citorio 1

**16.00 - 17.30**

I Session

**20 Years of UNESCO Convention on ICH.**

**A general introduction**

**Coordinator**

**Pier Luigi Petrillo**

Pier Luigi Petrillo is Full Professor of Comparative Heritage Law at the University of Rome Unitelma Sapienza and Director of the UNESCO Chair on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Comparative Law. He is also Director of the School of Advanced Studies in Culture, Politics and Democracy. He is Professor of Cultural Heritage and of Lobbying Law at the University Luiss Guido Carli (Italy). He has been working on cultural heritage, identity rights, and democratic processes for about two decades. He has been Chief of Cabinet, Head of the Legislative Office, Legal Adviser to several Ministers of Environment, Culture, Agriculture, European Policy, University. In the UNESCO context he has edited numerous nomination dossiers (to WH, ICH and MAB), and was President of the Evaluation Body of the ICH UNESCO Convention in which he is currently member of the Global Network of Facilitators. Since 2020 He is the President of UNESCO MAB Program National Committee. He is, among others, author of the volumes *The Legal Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (Springer 2022) and *Teoria e tecniche del lobbying* (Il Mulino 2020, also translated into Portuguese, Spanish and English).

**Speakers**

**Janet Blake**

Janet Blake is a Professor of Human Rights Law at Shahid Beheshti University (Tehran) where she teaches Human Rights Law, International Law and Environmental Law. She has been a member of Committees of the International Law Association related to Cultural Heritage Law since 2012 and is on the editorial board of two leading international cultural heritage journals. Since 1999, she has worked with UNESCO on developing, drafting and implementing the 2003 Intangible Heritage Convention, is a UNESCO Global Facilitator and the Director of Persian Garden Institute for Living Heritage, an Iranian NGO accredited to the 2003 UNESCO Convention. Her publications include *International Cultural Heritage Law* (2015) and *UNESCO's 2003 Intangible Heritage Convention – A Commentary* (2020, with Lucas Lixinski), both published by Oxford University Press, and *Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Practical Interpretation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention* (Edward Elgar, 2023).

Abstract. This paper comprises, in part, a reflection of the past 20 years of the life of UNESCO's 2003 Intangible Heritage Convention, attempting to assess its impact on the heritage in question, the cultural communities related to it and on heritage safeguarding/protection in general. Two fundamental contexts of the treaty's development namely human rights and sustainable development, are considered here and the ways in which they have shaped both its conception and also its later implementation. In addition, the contribution of this treaty to the corpus of cultural heritage law as well as other areas of international law, in particular human rights and environmental law is also considered. Starting from the period of developing the idea of a new standard-setting instrument in this area – including identifying and defining the subject-matter – it examines what it was intended to achieve and then looks at the degree to which this has come about. In addition, other less intended outcomes are also explored, both positive and negative. This also illustrates some of the complexities of undertaking its obligations as we see in jurisprudence on the national international levels, particularly regarding the controversial issue of animal welfare and rights as well as the wider human rights aspects of its implementation. There is no doubt that this treaty has achieved much in terms of shifting the discourse surrounding heritage protection and in placing bearer communities, and the groups and individuals that

comprise them, much further towards the forefront of this. There is still a long way to go in realizing this participatory aspect, but substantial impacts have been felt already and a developing role for non-state actors (including at the intergovernmental level) is likely to be an important feature of the future development of the 2003 Convention. Finally, this paper seeks to identify one or two other areas in which further developments can be expected over the next few years.

### **Elisabetta Moro**

Elisabetta Moro is an Italian Full Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Naples “Suor Orsola Benincasa”. She teaches History of Gastronomy in the Mediterranean Area at the University of Naples “Federico II”. She is the Co-founder and Co-director of the Mediterranean Diet Virtual Museum ([www.mediterraneandietvm.com](http://www.mediterraneandietvm.com)). She is member of the Assembly of the UNESCO Italian National Commission, and President of the Scientific Committee of the UNESCO Chair in Intangible Cultural Heritage and Comparative Law at the University of Rome UNITELMA -Sapienza. She has an intense activity of dissemination of the Intangible Cultural Heritage collaborating with RAI Television, BBC, CNN. Author of: *Secrets of the Mediterranean Diet. Eat Well and Stay Well* (Il Mulino); *Athena, Jesus Christ, and the Traffic Light* (Bloomsbury).

*Pride and Prejudice. Intangible cultural heritage, academia, and common sense.*

Abstract. The application of the 2003 UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage has given rise to two diametrically opposed trends. On the one hand, the pride of heritage communities that obtain international recognition of their heritage and national institutions that approve and promote the dossiers. On the other the prejudice of a part of the academic world that believes that the cultural life of communities should be spontaneous and not heterodirected. Pride and prejudice are two positions that cohabit the contemporary cultural political field.

## Lucas Lixinski

Dr Lucas Lixinski is Professor at the Faculty of Law & Justice, UNSW Sydney. He teaches, researches, and writes extensively on a range of topics in cultural heritage law and management, particularly in relation to intangible cultural heritage. He is the author of *Intangible Cultural Heritage in International Law* (Oxford University Press, 2013), and co-editor (with Janet Blake) of the award-winning *The 2003 UNESCO Intangible Heritage Convention: A Commentary* (Oxford University Press, 2020). He often assists communities, governments, and international organizations on projects related to heritage safeguarding.

*The Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention at 20: New (Economic) Challenges and Horizons.*

Abstract. The Convention for safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage has, much like intangible cultural heritage itself, been constantly recreated in many fundamental aspects. At present, three occupy the minds of UNESCO and many key stakeholders in this space: (1) intangible cultural heritage in urban settings; (2) intangible cultural heritage and climate change; and (3) economic uses of intangible cultural heritage. I was one of the members of the expert meeting on the latter, which took place in late September. A Guidance Note is currently being developed on the topic, for adoption by States Parties in December 2023. This talk will discuss the possibilities and pitfalls of economic uses of intangible cultural heritage, and what this turn towards economics might mean for how we think about the safeguarding of this vital wellspring of identity and social cohesion.

## Humberto Cunha Filho

Bachelor's, Master's and PHD of Laws. Full Professor of the Graduate Program in Constitutional Law -Master's and Doctorate- at the University of Fortaleza. Leader of the Study and Research Group on Cultural Rights. President of the International Meeting on Cultural Rights, since 2012. Lawyer of the Union-Brazilian State. Visiting Professor at the University of Milan - Bicocca. Member of the College of the Doctorate in Law of the University of

Sassari. Visiting Professor at the University of Le Havre. Member of the Ceará Academy of Legal Letters, of the Institute of Lawyers of Ceará and Honorary President of the Brazilian Institute on Cultural Rights. He is the author of dozens of legal works, such as the book *Theory of Cultural Rights: Foundations and Purposes*, in Portuguese and Spanish.

*Analysis of the Impacts of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Latin America and Caribbean Region*

Abstract.

Linked to the legal universe, it will emphasize the national normative structures that pre-exist the Convention, especially the so-called General Cultural Laws, observing whether and how they were changed because of the incorporation of the Pact into the different legal systems. The multiplier effect of the Convention within the countries will also be analyzed, based on the observation of the ramifications and multilevel safeguard structures of the PCI, created, or strengthened by the Convention, especially as a result of the valorization and protagonism recognized to the Communities. Outside the legal universe, the speaker will try to find explanations for the number of assets included in the Convention's lists, driven by the curiosity that representative assets, those at risk and good practices are not proportional to the population or territorial dimension of the countries.

**17.30 - 19.00**

II Session

**Living Heritage and Civil Society**

Coordinator

**Alessandra Broccolini**

Alessandra Broccolini is an Associate Professor at the Department of Social and Economic Sciences at Sapienza University of Rome where she teaches Cultural Anthropology and Anthropology of Cultural Heritage. Since 2016 she is president of

the Italian Society for Museography and Demoetnoanthropological Heritage. From 2017 to 2023, she has been member of the Scientific Committee of the Maison Méditerranéenne de Sciences de l'Homme (France). She has conducted research in Italy and written several papers on intangible cultural heritage, festive phenomena, carnivals, identity politics, biodiversity- and traditional knowledge, ethnographic museums, ecomuseums, and participatory processes in cultural heritage. He has done extensive work on intangible cultural heritage inventories for several UNESCO nominations aimed at the inscription to the Representative List of the 2003 UNESCO Convention.

## Speakers

### **Barbra Babweteera**

Barbra Babweteera is the Executive Director of the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) where she has served for the last 7 years including in the capacity of Deputy Executive Director. She holds a Master's degree in Management Science and a Bachelor's degree in Law. She is a Member of the Board of Trustees with the International National Trusts Organisations (INTO) UK, a Member of the Board of Directors with the Uganda National NGO Forum and a Board Member with the Centre for Women in Governance. CCFU is a registered non-governmental Organisation that strives to promote an appreciation of culture as vital for human development that responds to our national diversity. We are a member of INTO and are accredited to the 2003 Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. We are currently serving on the Evaluation Body of the 2003 Convention.

Abstract. Uganda is a rich country endowed with both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. With over 65 ethnic groups and 45 languages, diverse cultural practices, norms, values and principles, traditional herbal medicines and natural forests and grassland where these are extracted and local culinary make Uganda a preferred destination for cultural tourism. Uganda

ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. Pressed with survival needs, however, cultural aspects are often given low priority by the government. The negative attitude towards culture which is structurally cultivated among the population compounds the matter. Most of the interventions for cultural heritage safeguarding are thus, implemented by civil society.

Despite the increased visibility of the culture sector in the country over the past 5 years (media coverage, debates on culture in tertiary institutions), there have been limited efforts by the government to promote culture and this is evidenced in limited political will, poor resourcing (budget, human resource and lack of a dedicated Ministry of culture) and the national education curriculum content that has very little of our local content on heritage. To this extent, civil society has endeavoured to fill the gap through provision of capacity building for State and non-State actors, research and documentation, advocacy for a supportive legal and policy environment and providing direct financial support for the safeguarding efforts.

In my presentation, I intend to focus on Uganda's experience in promoting living heritage and the role that CSOs play. I will further talk about the link between cultural heritage safeguarding and sustainable development.

### **Nahla Abdallah Emam**

Prof. Nahla Emam is a respected academic, who is at the forefront of preserving Egypt's Intangible Cultural Heritage, as a professor of Folk Habits, Beliefs, and Traditional Knowledge and anthropology at the High Institute of Folklore, her expertise is widely acknowledged. Since 2016, Prof. Emam represented Egypt in the Convention of Safeguarding ICH, highlighting her global commitment. Nationally, she plays a key role in Cultural policies as an advisor of ICH in the Ministry of Culture. With a Ph.D. in Folklore and degrees in Anthropology and Sociology, she is a significant figure in the UNESCO Category (2) Center for the Arab States in Sharjah, UAE, reflecting her commitment to heritage safeguarding. Prof. Emam also serves as a member of the evaluation body for the Safeguarding ICH Convention (2003),



representing the Arab region.

Abstract. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, communities, groups, and individuals in Egypt, as well as Orientalists, have shown interest in habits, beliefs, manners, handicrafts, festivals, rituals, and traditional knowledge. In essence, this pertains to Intangible Cultural Heritage, even before the term itself came into common use or anthropological systemic studies began in Egypt.

Although NGOs are non-profit organizations, in the context of Intangible Cultural Heritage. It represents a win-win situation. This is because the benefits for the practitioners are valuable both morally and financially. The paper aims to stimulate a discussion regarding certain fixed terms that we need to be more flexible about, such as “over-commercialization” and de-contextualization”.

The safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is a collaborative effort involving governments, NGOs, and the private sector. Neglecting any one of these components in this triangle renders the safeguarding measures incomplete.

The paper dives into the efforts of NGOs to safeguard ICH in Egypt, starting from the establishment of the first ethnographic museum to the proliferation of hundreds of NGOs both focused on ICH in general and in specific domains.

Finally discussing the responsibility of the convention's facilitators to raise awareness about the role of NGOs in safeguarding ICH and securing the convention of Intangible Cultural Heritage accreditation.

### **Antonio Leo Tarasco**

Antonio Leo Tarasco is Head of the Legislative Office of the Ministry of Culture since November 2022; he previously held the position of Deputy Head of Cabinet of the Minister for the South and Territorial Cohesion. He obtained the national scientific qualification (A.S.N.) for the functions of full professor of Administrative Law (2017 and 2023), after having obtained that of associate professor in June 2015. A lawyer (2001), a PhD from the Second University of Naples and a specialist (cum laude) in Administrative Law and the Science of Administration (2003), he

was a researcher (open-ended) in Administrative Law from 2007 to 2010 at the Faculty of Law of the Federico II University of Naples, where he also taught Administrative Law, as an adjunct professor, at the Faculty of Architecture and the School of Specialisation for Legal Professions. He is the author of numerous writings on various topics of public and administrative law. Among them: *Il patrimonio culturale e le sue immagini. Diritto, gestione e nuove tecnologie* (ed. by., Editoriale Scientifica, 2022); *Diritto e gestione del patrimonio culturale* (Laterza, 2021, IV rist.); *Il patrimonio culturale. Concetto, problemi, confini* (Editoriale Scientifica, 2019); *Il patrimonio culturale. Modelli di gestione e finanza pubblica* (Editoriale scientifica, 2017); *Corte dei conti ed effetti dei controlli amministrativi* (Cedam, 2012); *La redditività del patrimonio culturale. Efficienza aziendale e promozione culturale* (Giappichelli, 2006); *Commentario al Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio* (ed. by, with G. Leone, Cedam, 2006); *Beni, patrimonio e attività culturali: attori privati e autonomie territoriali* (Editoriale scientifica, 2004); *La consuetudine nell'ordinamento amministrativo. Contributo allo studio delle fonti non scritte* (Editoriale scientifica, 2003).

**Abstract.** The presentation examines the limits of the current Italian legislation on ICH. In particular, it analyses the problem of the "democratic nature" of the selection processes of ICH elements and the identification of the characteristics of so-called "communities". Moreover, profiles of the relationship between state and regional intervention in the field of inventorying and supporting intangible cultural heritage elements are addressed. Lastly, the recent jurisprudence of the Council of State of 2023 (Plenary Council, 13 February 2023, no. 5; sect. VI, 10 July 2023, no. 6752) is critically analysed, pointing out that it improperly fills the gaps left by the state legislature, reaching results that are to be considered unacceptable under the law on cultural heritage and the constitutional values of private property.

### **Gulnara Aitpaeva**

Dr. Gulnara Aitpaeva has directed the Aigine Cultural Research Center since 2005. Her career spans leading the Anthropology Department and serving as Vice-President for Academic Affairs at

the American University in Central Asia (1996-2005). Aigine CRC emphasizes cultural heritage, education, and applied social research, seeking to unify folk and scholarly perspectives. The Center received accreditation under the Convention 2003 in 2015. Gulnara served as the country representative in UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee on ICH in 2012 -2016 and acted as an expert in the Subsidiary Body. Presently, she holds the position of vice-chair of the Evaluation Body of the ICH Committee. With over 90 publications, her research delves into Kyrgyz literature, epics, sacred sites, and cultural heritage.

Abstract. My intervention explores the influence of the 2003 Convention in unveiling previously less visible practitioners of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. It investigates the limited comprehension of civil society and the role of the Convention in its broadening. It analyzes how UNESCO lists serve to unite diverse civil society sectors. Additionally, it emphasizes the influence of shared ICH elements in shaping and reinforcing a collective regional identity.

### **Christian Marchesini**

Christian Marchesini, 50, is the owner of the Monte Gradella farm in Fumane di Valpolicella, where he manages 34 hectares of family-owned land. However, his influence and engagement in the agricultural sector go far beyond his business activities. In fact, Christian Marchesini has a history of active involvement in the Italian agricultural scene. He has served as national vice-president of winegrowers within Confagricoltura, a major agricultural union. In addition, he has been sector president in both Confagricoltura Verona and Confagricoltura Veneto, demonstrating his commitment at regional and local level. His dedication to the territory and the wine industry is reflected in his long experience in the Consorzio di Tutela Vini Valpolicella. He began as a councillor in 2005, and was subsequently appointed president of the consortium in 2012. His leadership continued to be appreciated, as he was re-elected as president in 2014. Although he chose not to run in subsequent elections, his return to the role of Consortium president in July 2020 demonstrates the trust and esteem he enjoys within the Valpolicella wine

community.

Abstract. The intervention will focus on the relationship between man and food, viticulture and the role of agriculture, entrepreneurship in agriculture, as well as the Valpolicella grape drying technique.

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November**

**Senate of Republic**

Sala Santa Maria in Aquiro, Piazza Capranica 72

**10.00 - 11.30**

III Session

**Living Heritage and Sustainable Development**

Coordinator

**Mark Thatcher**

Mark Thatcher is full professor of Comparative Public Policy and Politics of European Heritage at the University Luiss Guido Carli. He obtained First Class honours in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Balliol College, Oxford and then qualified as a Barrister in London. Thereafter he returned to Oxford, going to Nuffield College, where he was awarded his doctorate. After teaching at the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, he went to the London School of Economics, where he became full Professor of Comparative and International Politics in 2008. He has also been visiting professor at Sciences Po, Paris and a Fellow of the Robert Schuman Centre, European University Institute. His research interests lie in comparative public policy and regulation in Europe. At Luiss, he is focused on comparative policies towards cultural heritage, both in countries such as England, France and Italy, and also at the EU level. He is interested in different forms of cultural heritage- from historic buildings to the protection of traditional food and wine. He sees cultural heritage as being not only linked to issues of identity and beauty but also being part of important markets and affecting economic and urban development.

## Speakers

### **Tullio Scovazzi**

Tullio Scovazzi, now retired, was professor of international law in the Universities of Parma, Genoa, Milan and Milan-Bicocca, Italy. He is an associate member of the *Institut de Droit International*. He occasionally participates, as legal expert, in international negotiations and meetings relating to cultural heritage, the protection of the marine environment and human rights.

Abstract. The principle of sustainable development, which originated to address the relationship between development and the environment, has been transposed to also cover the relationship between development and culture.

The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet the developmental and cultural needs of present and future generations.

As confirmed by the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Paris, 2003), the concept of intangible cultural heritage has a strong social component, providing a sense of identity and continuity to a bearer community that constantly recreates and reinterprets it.

To be sustainable, economic development must ensure that heritage is not denaturalized or standardized. The bearer community should be the primary beneficiary of benefits, both in moral and financial terms.

No international rules so far address the application of intellectual property rights to intangible cultural heritage. As they are currently understood, such rights could ensure benefits to the bearer communities. However, they could also denaturalize the heritage and facilitate its misuse by interested entities that have little or nothing to do with it.

### **Kirk Siang Yeo**

Mr Yeo Kirk Siang is currently the Senior Director of Heritage Policy at the National Heritage Board (NHB) of Singapore. He

currently oversees the development of national policies and initiatives to safeguard and promote Singapore's tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and to engage communities in the research and promotion of cultural heritage in Singapore.

His work includes the implementation of the first nationwide intangible cultural heritage survey, the establishment of the intangible cultural heritage inventory and the Stewards of Singapore's Intangible Cultural Heritage Award that promotes and supports practitioners of ICH. In addition, he was involved in the successful inscription of Hawker Culture in Singapore on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. He also oversees the development and administration of the National Heritage Board's Heritage Research Grants which provides funding for the research efforts of academics and non-government organisations on different aspects of heritage, particularly ICH.

Kirk Siang is currently on the Evaluation Body (2021-2024) for the 2003 Convention on Safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

Before joining the National Heritage Board, he was involved in the development of policies and strategies for the built environment and sustainable development at the Ministry of National Development.

*Living Heritage and Sustainable Development: Experiences from Singapore.*

Abstract. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) acknowledges the importance of intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a driver for sustainable development, while also contributing to peace and security.

For Singapore, a highly urbanised city-state with diverse ethnicities and cultural practices, living heritage serves as an important contributor to sustainable development goals and fostering social cohesion. The presentation will highlight the experiences and case studies from Singapore, to illustrate the positive links between living heritage, in supporting sustainable development outcomes, including food security, health, sustainable livelihoods, as well as social cohesion and peace.

### **Alessio Re**

Alessio Re is, since 2018, Secretary General of the Santagata Foundation for the Economy of Culture. An architect with a doctorate in "Restoration and Conservation of Architectural Heritage and Landscape," he has professional and academic experience in the field of cultural and environmental heritage management policies and projects, with specific interests in the relationship between cultural and environmental heritage and territorial development, preparation of management plans for cultural and environmental heritage (UNESCO designations), community planning (EU calls), and incubation and management of projects and entrepreneurial initiatives in the cultural sector.

Abstract. Nowadays, after a long period of limited attention, there is a wide awareness and literature presenting culture and creativity, in all their different forms and expressions, as a resource, or we may say a "capital", for sustainable economic development. Intangible cultural heritage and its complex web of meanings attached to the living expression of cultural heritage have assumed a more evident relevance in such processes. Still, many of the economic related questions linked to ICH have to be adequately investigated.

### **Angela Bellia**

Angela Bellia's work concerns aural architecture, sonic heritage, and archaeology of performance of music and dance. After her research activities at the University of Zürich, at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, she carried out her research at the Institute of Fine Arts at the New York University, devoting her attentions towards the reconstruction of the performative dimension in antiquity. Thanks to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Programme, she carried out her research devoting her attentions towards archaeology of sound and archaeoacoustics as new approaches to the study of intangible cultural heritage. She has been the Chair of the Italy Chapter of the Marie Curie Alumni Association. She also received the "MCAA Outstanding Contributor Award", the "Premio Giuseppe Nenci" from the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa, and



the ITWIIN Award “Exceptionally Creative Woman”.

Angela Bellia regularly serves as an evaluator and an expert member in the committees for the evaluation of European projects and for national research agencies in Europe. At present, she is the Principal Investigator of the project AURAL funded by the European Commission and MUR. Apart from a number of volumes and contributions in journals and edited volumes, she edited the special issues *From Digitalisation and Virtual Reconstruction of Ancient Musical Instruments to Sound Heritage Simulation and Preservation*, and *Sonic Heritage*. Among her articles: *Rediscovering the Intangible Heritage of Past Performative Spaces: Interaction between Acoustics, Performance, and Architecture*.

*Sonic heritage: sustainable development of acoustic environments as intangible heritage.*

Abstract. The development of interactive tools aimed at involving visitors as “soundwalkers” of virtual reconstructions of archaeological sites and of places of historical-cultural and architectural interest, as well as of their soundscape, is opening up new research perspectives on the relationship between sound and multisensory interaction in a virtual and living environment and its sustainability. Indeed, over the last few years, it has been possible to experience new opportunities for multisensory design that combine modeling tools and techniques and Virtual Reality experiences in the sonic heritage field as living heritage in which the acoustic context can stimulate audience participation as well as the full involvement of the visitor’s perceptual apparatus.

Therefore, this paper will focus on how the immersive multisensory experience can provide a deeper knowledge of cultural identities and spaces where sound - as a set of music, voices, ambient sounds and noises -, is produced and perceived encouraging listeners to actively engage with their sonic environment. Furthermore, by focusing the investigation on “sonic heritage”, this paper aims to contextualize and enhance the knowledge of anthropophony, geophony and biophony in the past and in the present in order to consider them as intangible heritage to be known, preserved and disseminated.

**11.30 - 13.00**

IV Session

**The future of Living Heritage in the digital Era**

**Coordinator**

**Giorgio Sotira**

Giorgio Sotira is an Italian manager, with more than 20 years of experience. After 7 years of experience in M&A advisory, he started his career at C-level. He was for 5 years deputy chairman of Cinecittà, the largest studios in Southern Europe; since 2018 he is the CEO of Civita, one of the leading Italian companies in cultural sector, active at global level. He also served in the public sector as CEO of a marina and as Representative of the Italian Government in the University for Foreigners “Dante Alighieri”. He has over 10 years of activities in some bodies of Italian associations (Confindustria, Assonime and Coldiretti). He holds a Law Master’s Degree obtained at Luiss University of Rome and a Master’s Degree in Banking and Finance obtained at Queen Mary University of London.

**Speakers**

**Matteo Rosati**

Matteo Rosati is an expert on international cooperation for the protection and promotion of culture. After experiences with other agencies, he joined UNESCO in 2005. He is currently in charge of the Culture Unit at the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, where he works on the conceptualization, coordination and implementation of the Bureau’s Culture programme with a special focus on South-East Europe. His expertise spans cultural heritage safeguarding and management, cultural cooperation, and the enhancement of culture for sustainable development. Matteo Rosati holds a master’s degree with honours in communication sciences and international relations. He is a member of several scientific and advisory bodies

and guest lecturer in different master programmes.

Abstract. Digital technologies have advanced more rapidly than any innovation in our history, being in continuous and rapid development and reaching out to all aspects of our interaction with others and with our environment. The digital shift can help make our world more just, more inclusive, and more sustainable, but it can also threaten privacy, erode security, and fuel inequality. This also applies to our cultural heritage. Digital technologies have a significant role in protecting and increasing access to cultural heritage in all its forms of expression. The safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, in particular, implies community-based, inclusive and participative processes for which digital tools and platforms offer promising perspectives. On the other hand, the same technologies can bring along new threats to this kind of heritage, opening the way to misinterpretation and misappropriation, or widening the divide between individual experiences, social practices, and their cultural spaces. The capacity to effectively manage these developments for safeguarding purposes while mitigating their potentially negative impacts depends both on the intrinsic features of the various intangible heritage elements, as well as on their wider contexts. Adapting to the digital shift requires a re-orientation of related normative and governance frameworks, as well as resources, knowledge, and specific individual and collective competencies. Not all of our intangible cultural heritage will survive in an increasingly digital future. Some elements will benefit from it or be more resilient, while others will be substantially transformed. New elements will be generated and some practices will fade away, in line with the concept of a “living heritage”.

### **Ebtisam Al-Wehaibi**

Ebtisam AlWehaibi is an Expert in the field of intangible cultural heritage and the General Manager of Intangible Heritage at the Heritage Commission of the Ministry of Culture. Mrs. Ebtisam is an accredited facilitator by UNESCO in the field of cultural heritage, In addition to her active membership in the Saudi ICOM (International Council of Museums) Board of Directors and the

Saudi ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) Board of Directors. Mrs. Ebtisam has a deep passion for safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage through capacity building initiatives with local communities contribution to the development and sustainability of the national cultural heritage.

#### Abstract.

Robot Sara: Saudi robot that was introduced at the "Leap 2023" international technical conference in Riyadh. Sara is not just a robot; she is a technological masterpiece developed through joint efforts between the Saudi Digital Company and Qss.

Cultural Hub: a digital interface for Saudi culture to preserve and enhance the cultural wealth of the Kingdom. This is achieved through a unified online platform. The platform allows users to browse different types of cultural asset images, along with their descriptions and locations. Users can also explore historical and cultural sites through an interactive map. Additionally, they can browse and search a cultural registry that includes theaters, libraries, and museums. Users can also explore digital collections of cultural artifacts, manuscripts, rock art, inscriptions, and other digitally stored cultural assets. Furthermore, individuals could share their own cultural assets with the cultural community through the Culture Portal blog. The website supports all languages, including sign language.

Digital Applications: IH National Inventory Platform (using web-semantics and graphic visualization, 'IH national inventory platform' proposes a broader conceptual and visual navigation through close to 2000 elements inscribed on Saudi Arabia national list); Virtual Reality (utilizing VR technology to provide interactive visit to heritage sites, providing information about site, point of interest, and 360 image of the site), Reality Capture (using RC technology to build an accurate 3d model of the site to study and research site findings, element and history), Heritage Registers (using online registries to document sites and categorizes as archaeology, urban heritage sites), Basmat Turath (online Courses using Virtual application to build capabilities for people interested in heritage to participate), 3D Laser Scanning (to raise important and precise details such as facade and valuable decoration, all details monitored with high point density exceeding millions of points), 3D Scanning Tablet (document architectural details inside the building, it performs 3d

scanning in all directions to get building measurement and length), Drone (using Drone, it will support to reach to inaccessible sites to take high quality photos and video to be documented and archived).

Future Projects: Virtual tour development for heritage sites; Metaverse implementations; eLearning platform development; verifying heritage site information in interactive maps and worldwide visitor applications; Develop virtual guide.

### **Rimvydas Laužikas**

Prof. Rimvydas Laužikas is a digital heritage research and communication professor at the Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University. Rimvydas' research interests cover the digital communication of cultural heritage, history and heritage-based identities, and the history of gastronomy. He has written four monographs (with co-authors) and more than 50 scholarly articles in the fields of his interests. He participates in international expert groups (such as the Evaluation Body of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage), projects (such as TETRARCHs, CARARE), and COST Actions (such as SEADDA and ARKWORK). Rimvydas Laužikas served as the primary supervisor of nine PhD dissertations.

*Musealised or Alive: effects of social media communities on intangible cultural heritage preservation.*

Abstract. The rising global importance of social networking sites (SNSs) renders them a relevant new theatre for negotiating and constructing perceptions of reality. This paper aims to understand the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) related communities participating in SNS communication and the impact of SNSs (as a digital environment) on the preservation of ICH. To address this aim, a case study of SNS conversations on Facebook on ICH in contemporary Lithuania was conducted. The key concepts for understanding the process and structure of SNS conversations are based on: (i) UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO..., 2003); (ii) semiosphere theory, developed by Yuri Lotman (1922–1993), the leading figure of the school of cultural semiotics associated with the University of

Tartu, Estonia (Lotman 2005); (iii) the theory of the art nexus, developed within the agentive anthropology of material culture of Alfred Gell (1998).

Because SNSs play a vital role in the development and strengthening of communities, they have a powerful impact on the preservation of ICH. The ICH-related community (as a semiosphere) is blended, acting in both the virtual and physical worlds. Community members are driven by existing community knowledge – particular schemas that are accepted by and intelligible for members of the community.

SNSs also increase access to ICH for more people in more communities. The representations of ICH-related objects on SNS catalyse conversations as (in the context of Gell's theory) a process of semiotic abduction (distribution) of the agency. The result of the process is the emergence of new meanings and interpretations of ICH intended for members of communities with a broad set of interests. That means promoting the diversity of ICH functioning in contemporary society.

Conversations on SNSs can develop dialogically or non-dialogically, and communities (as semiospheres) were strengthened in both cases. However, the strengthening of communities on SNSs can also have negative spill-over effects.

### **Evrim Ölçer Özünel**

Prof. Dr. Evrim Ölçer Özünel is a Folklore Studies faculty member at Ankara Hacı Bayram University, Türkiye specializing in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, storytelling, museology, and sustainable development and ICH. She holds prominent positions at the UNESCO-accredited Institute for Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO, and the UNESCO ICH Evaluation Body. Prof. Özünel actively contributes to various expert committees. Her extensive research and publications span folklore studies, intangible cultural heritage, museology, and folkloristics. Additionally, she is an accomplished international storyteller and author, including books focused on the therapeutic potential of intangible cultural heritage during emergencies.

Abstract. As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding for the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the significance of digitalizing cultural heritage is growing. The ongoing digitalization process is set to play a pivotal role in various academic domains in the years to come. It is essential to examine the intersection of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and digitalization in this rapidly evolving digital era. Predicting how this dynamic yet delicate ICH structure will be influenced by digitalization remains challenging. Nevertheless, addressing this issue should commence with a close examination of the Convention's text. In this presentation, we delve into the searches, crossroads, and expectations related to the digitalization of intangible cultural heritage. We begin by exploring the digitalization trials on the Convention's official website. Next, we navigate the key challenges and opportunities at the juncture of our transformative digital age. Finally, we conduct an in-depth analysis of the positive and negative aspects of the expectations that arise at this critical crossroads. This exploration sheds light on the evolving landscape of ICH in the digital era, highlighting the ongoing efforts to safeguard and promote intangible cultural heritage while embracing the digital tools and platforms of the 21st century.