

Country :Albania

Committee : UNESCO

Agenda Item :Preserving Cultural Heritage

Albania, country located in southeastern Europe, has a long and rich cultural history dating back thousands of years. Albania is a small country in Balkans. Agriculture and traditions are important to the country .Its traditions were shaped by the influences of ancient Illyrian tribes, Greeks, Romans and Ottomans. However, several periods of upheaval threatened the intergenerational transmission of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). During communist rule from 1945-1990, the regime suppressed cultural diversity. Then in the late 1990s, many Albanians emigrated abroad due to economic hardship. Both events disrupted the generational exchange of cultural knowledge within communities.

During the communist period from 1945-1990, the isolationist regime actively suppressed public expressions of local identities and cultural diversity. Since transitioning to democracy in 1991, Albania has collaborated internationally through projects like ethnographic inventories and training initiatives to strengthen protection. From 1998-2005, UNESCO helped inventory over 500 tangible and intangible elements, supporting early governmental projects. However, limiting factors like economic instability and large-scale emigration in the 1990s hampered intergenerational transmission of traditions within communities. More holistic, community-based approaches are now required.

The Ministry of Tourism and Environment acts as the lead agency working through the National Council for Cultural Heritage and its 12 regional Cultural Houses/Institutes. The 2015-2020 strategy prioritized vulnerability assessments, establishing a national inventory, facilitating expertise transfer through apprenticeships, raising public awareness, and building networks among stakeholders. However, remote areas still lack sufficient coverage for comprehensive documentation and transmission programs. Strengthened coordination between government bodies, cultural organizations and experts is needed to implement targeted, participatory safeguarding action plans.

To further build preservation capacities nationwide, targeted initiatives are suggested. These include cultural tours promoted jointly by the regional Institutes and schools as platforms for interactive, experiential learning. Networking workshops could facilitate community-led documentation of underrepresented expressions and cultural landscapes. Pilot apprenticeship programs pairing elders with youth apprentices aim to safeguard expertise-reliant traditions. Reviving festivals celebrating calendar customs and saints days helps reconnect dispersed ethnic groups to shared roots. Public cultural displays could nourish heritage appreciation and national pride in the richness and diversity of Albanian culture. With enhanced cooperation and community empowerment mainstreamed through grassroots efforts, the nation's living cultural heritage systems can thrive securely across generations.

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