



**Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

# The Right to Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development – Results of the Participatory Survey

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# 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end **poverty**, **protect the planet**, and **ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity**.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have 17 Goals, 169 Targets and 232 Indicators.



Source: [undp.org](http://undp.org)



# Heritage as a Driver of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The fourth specific target of SD **Goal 11 (Target 11.4)** is:

“Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage”.

Cultural heritage and creativity are reflected across many of the goals and targets of Agenda 2030 , including those which concern fostering:

- cultural diversity and intercultural understanding (Introduction, para. 8),
  - education (Goal 4 / Target 4.7),
- the creative economy and tourism (Goal 8 and 12 / Targets 8.9 and 12.b),
  - urban planning (Goal 11),

while indirectly acknowledges the impact of cultural heritage/culture on:

- securing decent work (Goal 8),
- reducing inequalities (Goal 10),
  - climate actions (Goal 13),
  - gender equality (Goal 5),
    - innovation (Goal 9),
- peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16),
  - food security (Goal 2).

# Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005)

- promotes an **integrated model of socially sustainable development**, based on the principles of participation, dialogue, democracy, inclusiveness and citizenship/individual rights, taking into account the new opportunities of the digital age, as well as the economic, social and environmental challenges of the 21st century,
- offers a **concept of "heritage communities"**, in line with contemporary social and political imperatives that require deliberation and a bottom-up approach at all levels of decision-making, thus significantly shifting the focus from national to local forms of heritage protection,
- encourages different interpretations of cultural heritage, being also aware of the role of emotions (post-Enlightenment paradigm), but **affirms the Enlightenment paradigm** in the relationship of the individual/community towards cultural heritage and their engagement in its enjoyment and exploitation,
- offers **a new perspective in cultural heritage management**, based on the dialogical overcoming of conflicts arising either from the different interests of the stakeholders or from divergent views of the (common) cultural heritage.

*„...heritage is redefined by Faro as a verb, not a noun“*

(Graham Fairclough 2009, 29).

# The Faro Convention and sustainable development: good practices

## 1) connecting and empowering people and reducing inequalities

- bringing people together on the basis of an interest in a particular type of cultural heritage, sometimes overlooked, less known, even "invented", and striving for the public/common good
- fostering the democratic mind, participation, deliberation, solidarity and awareness of the public/common good

## 2) Sustainable tourism and exploiting the economic potential of cultural heritage

- guaranteeing quality of life in urban and rural areas
- a critical attitude towards the economic imperatives to "commodify" cultural heritage

## 3) Environmental and ecological sustainable development

- building sustainable agriculture
- prudent use of natural resources

## 4) Overcoming ethnic, religious and other conflicts in society.

- the "Faro Convention Methodology", which involves an inclusive and dialogical approach in addressing the challenges arising from different understandings and evaluations of past events

### Sources:

Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals: Policy Guidance for Heritage and Development Actors, ICOMOS, 2021

Heritage is Ours: Citizens Participating in Decision Making, Europa Nostra Finland, 2018

Cultural Heritage in Action: A Catalogue of good practices, Europa Nostra, 2020

Web conference 2020: Fostering heritage communities: Proceedings, Interpret Europe, 2020

Heritage as a means for societal challenges, Live Magazines, 2019

Museums involving communities: Authentic Connections, Kadoyama, M., 2018

Heritage and Beyond, Council of Europe, 2009

The Faro Convention: The Report from the Swedish National Heritage Board, 2014

Between Imagined Communities of Practice: Participation, Territory and the Making of Heritage, 2015



# Dealing with the Right to Heritage and Sustainable Development (Survey No 1)

Addressed to the national coordinators of HEREIN Network (European Cultural Heritage Information Network).  
17 June - 13 July, 2021.

Received 12 completed questionnaires: Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Serbia, Croatia, Poland, Flanders (Belgium), Luxembourg, Norway, the Czech Republic, Greece and Slovenia.

## Parts of the Survey:

1. Legal provisions/strategies concerning Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by integrating cultural heritage /heritage communities.
2. Documents / strategies defining the role of cultural heritage / heritage communities in achieving SDGs.
3. Exercising cultural rights in relation to SDGs implementation.
4. Prioritization, the adaptation of national policies, other heritage policies concerning SDGs implementation.
5. Policies concerning the participation of public, heritage experts, and heritage communities in developing sustainable development policies / actions at the national/regional/local level
6. Additional questions

# **1. Legal provisions / strategies concerning Sustainable Development Goals by integrating cultural heritage/heritage communities**



Legal provisions / strategies concerning SDG's implementation by integrating cultural heritage / heritage communities

**FINDING 1.1.**

In recent years, most European countries covered by our analysis have either adopted or updated legal commitments or implementation strategies related to the implementation of sustainable development, in line with the 2030 Agenda:

- Some countries have started to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in **a holistic and targeted manner**, for example **Flanders, Luxembourg and Switzerland**.
- National development strategies of **Slovenia and Croatia** **outline the connection of their strategic goals to the SDGs**.
- **Poland** has already committed itself in principle to the implementation of the SDGs in 1997, with a reference to this **commitment in its Constitution**. In **Serbia** **no specific legal provisions** on achieving 2030 Agenda SDGs have been adopted but several legal acts and documents are in line SDGs.
- Government programmes of **Sweden, Norway and Finland** are **built on sustainable development**. The programme of Finnish Prime Minister Sanne Marin's Government for instance includes entries addressing all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The Scandinavian countries are also at the top of the international rankings in terms of SDGs implementation indicators (See UN / Bertelsmann Stiftung study, 2021).
- **Greece** launched in 2019 **ambitious** and **all-embracing Institutional mechanism** to ensure the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs.

Legal provisions / strategies concerning SDG's implementation by integrating cultural heritage / heritage communities

**FINDING 1.2.**

There are different approaches to integration of cultural heritage and defining the role of heritage communities in the national implementation strategies of the 2030 Agenda:

- In **Luxembourg, Flanders** and **Finland** cultural heritage or references to it are **not integrated** in the national sustainable development strategy.
- National sustainable development strategies of **Czech Republic, Slovenia** and **Croatia** include **specific articles or chapters** on culture and / or cultural heritage in relation to SDGs.
- The **Swedish** national strategy **does not refer directly** to cultural heritage or heritage communities, but rather to the Swedish Constitution, which in this respect already incorporates the key principles of the 2030 Agenda, also to other framework programmes such as State cultural environment or “Policy for a designed living environment”
- On the other hand, informants from **Serbia** and **Poland** **cite cultural laws** that link heritage themes to sustainable development.
- The informant from **Greece** highlights recent **activities and projects of the Ministry of Culture and Sport** related to cultural heritage and sustainable development within Institutional mechanism.

## **2. Documents / strategies defining the role of cultural heritage / heritage communities in achieving Sustainable Development Goals**



Documents / strategies defining the role of cultural heritage / heritage communities in achieving sustainable development goals

**FINDING 2.1.**

Some of the countries covered by our analysis have not yet adopted a strategy document defining the role of cultural heritage in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals:

- **Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Serbia, Flanders and Poland** have not yet adopted such document. Polish informant is referring in this regard to the articles of the Constitution concerning the cultural/heritage rights of the Polish people and minorities, Flemish informant to The Flanders Heritage Agency's internal document on heritage and sustainability.
- **Croatia** is currently preparing a national plan for the development of culture and media, which will also include provisions concerning the protection of cultural heritage.
- **Switzerland** adopted a document in 2020, **Sweden** in 2019, **Slovenia** in 2019.
- Informants from **Finland, Greece and Norway** cite several other documents from recent years on the relations between cultural heritage and the SDGs.



Documents / strategies defining the role of cultural heritage / heritage communities in achieving sustainable development goals

### FINDING 2.2.

Some of the already adopted national strategy documents that define the role of cultural heritage in the implementation of the SDGs also include references to the role and importance of heritage communities, but not necessarily with reference to the Faro:

- The document Message on the Promotion of Culture (2016-2020) **define the key lines** of the **Swiss** Confederation's cultural policy (cultural participation, social cohesion, creativity and innovation).
- In the National World Heritage Strategy, **Sweden** highlights as **key principles democracy at local and regional level**, the rights of national minorities and indigenous communities, the role of civil society in decision-making, but without mentioning or referring to the Faro Convention.
- **Flanders, Finland** and **Slovenia** have also **committed themselves** in their governing documents **to the democratic involvement of all stakeholders in heritage conservation**.
- Informant from **Poland** points out that under Polish law, **heritage communities have the right to participate in the planning process and in the formulation of local laws**, including in the field of spatial planning.

*Switzerland, Luxembourg, Finland, Norway, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia have already ratified the Faro Convention, Belgium and Poland are signatories, while the Czech Republic, Sweden and Greece have not yet signed or ratified the Convention.*

### **3. Exercising cultural rights in relation to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals**



## Exercising cultural rights in relation to SDGs implementation

### FINDING 3.1.

Informants from all countries – with the exception of Luxembourg – state that their countries have integrated the right to heritage into their legal environments.

### FINDING 3.2.

In all countries – with the exception of Luxembourg, Switzerland and Slovenia – these legal commitments, most often written in the constitution, refer directly to heritage rights.

### FINDING 3.3.

In all countries legal commitments in the field of cultural rights include the right to participate in cultural life, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of creation:



- Informants from the **Czech Republic, Finland, Serbia** and **Greece** in this respect **refer to articles in their national constitutions**, while informants from **Switzerland, Sweden** and **Poland** **refer either to articles in cultural development strategies or to specific cultural laws**.
- Informants, in particular from **the Scandinavian countries** and **Greece**, stress **the importance of cultural heritage and creativity in the context of socially sustainable development**, inclusion of all members of society, strengthening of trust and community building.
- A **Slovenian** informant **highlights in more detail the articles of the Cultural Heritage Strategy 2030 concerning the right to cultural heritage** (comparison with the Faro Convention, balance between private and public right to heritage, monument protection and demolition of cultural heritage sites).



## **4. Prioritization and the adaptation of national policies, other heritage policies concerning the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals**



## Prioritization and the adaptation of national policies, other heritage policies concerning SDGs implementation

### FINDING 4.1.

Most countries have not adopted specific legal or policy documents that, in the context of pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals, in their policies prioritize cultural heritage through the empowerment of heritage communities. Sweden, Finland, Norway, Croatia and Slovenia have adopted such documents.

### FINDING 4.2.

The Scandinavian countries have also adopted several action plans in recent years addressing the implications of climate change for cultural heritage and heritage-related activities.

### FINDING 4.3.

Informants from some countries also mention other actions/plans aimed at strengthening the role of heritage communities in the implementation of the SDGs at national level:

- **Switzerland** has adopted an ambitious, comprehensive and all-inclusive programme for the integrated adaptation of society to social and ecological sustainable development – **Baukultur** (2020).
- **Sweden** has developed **several pilot projects** in recent years to develop new ways of integrating all heritage actors in different institutional settings.
- **Poland's** National Programme for the Protection of Monuments focuses on various educational and promotional activities concerning an integrated approach **to creating social awareness of the importance of cultural heritage and the system of its protection at local level.**
- **Greece** launched **several projects and activities** designed at the level of different ministries and in cooperation with different cultural and educational institutions and mass media, aiming to promote among the general public sustainable development, social cohesion and to counter racism as well as to contribute to the integration of vulnerable groups, in particular refugees/migrants, Roma, ex-addicts, the unemployed and prisoners.



## **5. Policies concerning participation of public, heritage experts, and heritage communities in developing sustainable development policies / actions at the national/regional/local level**



Policies concerning participation of public, heritage experts, and heritage communities in developing sustainable development policies / actions at the national/regional/local level

## FINDING 5

Informants from all countries – except Luxembourg – respond that the interested public, heritage experts and heritage communities are involved in the development of sustainable policies at national/regional/local level.

- **Switzerland** has reinforced these aspects at the level of public policies of the **cantons and municipalities**.
- In **Serbia**, heritage experts contribute with their **opinions concerning cultural heritage policies**.
- In **Croatia**, the creation of a governance structure and participation, including in the field of cultural heritage management, is **provided for by legislation**.
- In **Poland**, according to the Revitalisation Act, **the authorities are obliged to invite the interested public to participate**.
- In **Finland**, **participation**, earlier limited mainly to the activities of NGOs, **has been extended to a broader spectrum of citizens**, facilitated by various online platforms in the form of e-democracy.
- An informant from **Sweden** mentions **various pilot projects** related to the creation of sustainable tourism, the changed role of museums with a focus on sustainable development, various projects designed in a higher education environment and a number of initiatives by local authorities.
- An informant from **Greece** mentions **various forms of international projects** to raise young people's awareness of the importance of cultural heritage and various educational programmes.
- A **Slovenian** informant cites national **cultural programmes from the last fifteen years** which provide an environment for the development of a dynamic and creative intercultural environment.

## 6. Additional Questions



## 6.1. What do you consider the main obstacles in strengthening the role of heritage communities in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals?

- **Sweden:** **Obstacle-unable to see local benefit from achieving global goals.** Global Goals are often looked upon as complex and confusing, adding to the “target focus” of today. / Need understanding the power of SDGs that they are a door opener to discussions with other organizations, businesses, politicians etc. / Understanding the key: that local action and contribution is essential to achieve global goals. By achieving SDGs local issues and goals benefits from it.
- **Belgium (Flanders region):** I consider the main obstacle is the **indirect impact of the role of heritage/heritage communities in achieving SDG's.** There are other more important and urgent priorities in achieving sustainable development goals. They have political preference.
- **Norway:** Communities are consulted, but often **lack legal means to influence decisions**
- **Croatia:** The greatest obstacles are a **lack of sufficient and diverse financial resources** as well as crises such as the current COVID-19 pandemic which has uncovered the vulnerabilities of the heritage sector.
- **Poland:** Still **low social capital, and lack of knowledge and awareness on heritage role,** among both local officials and inhabitants. Still low readiness among officials to implement effective participatory measures of good quality. Unconsolidated regulations and policies in the field of heritage and spatial planning and environmental matters.

## 6.2. What are the main priorities to be addressed in the future, what should be done and who should be involved?

- Sweden:** Since Sweden has identified the SDGs for public health, gender equality, sustainable communities and innovation as national priority in the Action Plan for Agenda 2030, heritage sector (on all levels national/regional/local) should specify and explain the benefit of cultural heritage to the goals in the national action plan. **A national policy for Cultural Heritage contribution to SDGs** would be helpful. That could be a collaboration between national government agencies (10) that has developed strategies for Cultural Heritage work and the Swedish National Heritage Board. In addition, involving County Administrative Boards and heritage communities.
- Luxembourg:** **Future recommendations of the OMC group** on the cultural dimension of sustainable development
- Norway:** Consultations should have a **stronger focus on documentation and mapping of community rights, interests and resources.**
- Poland:** Better understanding of usefulness of local strategies, **higher awareness of interdisciplinary character of local heritage assets – officials.** Better knowledge of heritage and its beneficial role for community – communities. More comprehensive policies, linking cultural heritage and sustainable development – central, regional administration and municipalities. The improvement of spatial planning system to integrate aspects mentioned above – government.

# Participation of Heritage Communities in the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (Survey No 2)

Addressed to the heritage communities that participated in 2018 European Heritage Days in Slovenia  
17 June and 13 July, 2021  
Received 13 questionnaires

## Parts of the Survey:

1. Enjoying and Exploiting the Right to Cultural Heritage in Slovenia
2. Awareness of the right to enjoy and benefit from cultural heritage (Faro, 2005)



# 1. Enjoying and Exploiting the Right to Cultural Heritage in Slovenia

## 1.1. Informants report obstacles to their right to use or benefit from cultural heritage when:

- **seeking advice and explanations** from state/municipal authorities or heritage experts (3x);
- **accessing information on heritage** (2x).
- failure to take initiatives or **bureaucratic complications** in the efforts to inscribe new units on the cultural heritage list / insufficient or **diffuse information** about a particular type of cultural heritage / **lack of responsiveness or interest of heritage professionals** (1x).
- **not faced such problems** (2x)
- **perseverance and mutual help as tools to overcome problems** (2x).
- One of the informants emphasises the **changes in the field of communication and networking in relation to cultural heritage**, as they have been often called upon to cooperate by the institutions, which is the result of their long-standing efforts (1x).

## 1.2. Informants report that, when seeking for advice or other assistance, they turn to:

- **public institutions** (10 times marked),
- municipal authorities (8 times marked),
- development agencies (3 times marked),
- state institutions, such as the Ministry of Culture (3 times marked),
- private institutions (2 times marked),
- and research institutes (1 time marked)

## 1.3. ) Informants perceive the cooperation between the involved stakeholders as:

- very bad (1x)
- bad
- neither bad nor good (3x)
- **good** (8x)
- very good (1x)

## 2) Awareness of the right to enjoy and benefit from cultural heritage (Faro, 2005)

A) Familiarity with **the concept of "right to cultural heritage"**:

YES / 7

NO / 6

B) Familiarity with the term **"heritage community"**:

YES / 5

NO / 8

The majority of informants (9) consider that the right to **cultural heritage derives from the rights of a) the individual; b) the community; c) universal human rights**. Two informants respond that it derives from the rights of a) the individual and c) universal human rights, and two that it derives from b) the community.

Informants consider that cultural heritage belongs either to **a) the individual, b) local communities, c) the national or regional community, d) the transnational or European community, e) is a universal common good** or marked only the last mentioned category - i.e. it is a **universal common good (e)**.

In response to our survey question directed to heritage communities in Slovenia, **the majority of informants answered that they support the inclusion of the right to heritage in Slovenian legislation** "which would empower interested individuals and the public to actively participate in matters of protection and development of cultural heritage".

However, when asked what aspects this right should include, they highlight:

Informant A: "The Faro Convention already allows us (to exercise the right to cultural heritage), since Slovenia has ratified it. **Awareness-raising is needed at all levels**".

Informant B: It is important to "preserve the identity of the individual, the community and to work in harmony with all stakeholders for the sustainable development of cultural heritage. **More communication, exchange of views.**"

Informant C: "It is certainly very important that individuals and associations can be actively involved, but expertise is also important in the decision-making process. Sometimes it is precisely in **having everyone deciding everything that major discrepancies arise and damage is done...** Regulations are important, but they are not enough if no one respects them ..."

Informant D: "**Sometimes this right brings more obstacles than incentives,** because everybody wants something, but nobody would financially support the restoration or maintenance of cultural heritage. In the end, the heritage is deteriorating and the blame falls on the owner or the local community/state... Rather, we would tend to say that cultural heritage, in terms of the protection and maintenance of cultural objects, should be dealt with by experts and qualified employees (in public institutions, local authorities, cultural heritage protection institutes, state institutions, those who manage and finance cultural objects ...)."

Informant E: The right to heritage must "always derive from a genuine cultural heritage that links the trinity: bearer – heritage – site. **It must not be manipulated or exploited for purely commercial purposes in disguise.** To this end, it must acquire a symbol, a label of genuine cultural heritage in the eyes of the public."

# CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis has identified some **key factors** that determine the potential role of heritage communities in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, but which are **not directly linked to the right to cultural heritage**:

- the specificities of socio-integrative discourse,
- conceptions of solidarity and the public/common good
- the presence of sustainable development imperatives in society
- the role of civil society and civic movements in society,
- political culture and institutional set-up

Our analysis also shows that **there is no single, even less transferable, formula**. However, examples of good practice from different contexts, European and otherwise, can inspire at all levels of decision-making.

Our analysis has also shown that **countries are becoming more aware of the importance of cultural heritage** and related activities not only for environmental but also for socially sustainable development.



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