

**Austrian Commission
for UNESCO**

Annual Report 2020

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Austrian Commission for UNESCO

Annual Report 2020



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Österreichische
UNESCO-Kommission
Austrian Commission
for UNESCO

FOREWORD



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Patrizia Jankovic, Secretary-General

In February of 2020, when the European Network of National Commissions for UNESCO met in Cascais, Portugal, nobody had any idea that this would be their last physically present meeting together for quite some time. After all, the representatives of the 199 National Commissions (NatComs) normally have several opportunities each year to come together and engage in exchange. The European Network of National Commissions is a forum that facilitates collaboration and a platform dedicated to exchange, cooperation, and the advancement of UNESCO's goals in the individual countries.

National Commissions for UNESCO are unique bodies within the UN system. They stand out for their many years' worth of profound knowledge concerning processes at the national level and within UNESCO itself. Moreover, one of their central concerns is to promote exchange between Member States, UNESCO, and civil society. They inform, advise, manage, and administrate with an eye to not only sustaining the "spirit of UNESCO" in the Member States but also helping it to constantly flourish.

The Austrian Commission for UNESCO (ÖUK) is an active participant not only in the above-mentioned European Network of National Commissions but also in the worldwide network of all National Commissions as well as in the German-speaking commissions' so-called Committee of Four, and it cooperates regularly with other National Commissions concerning specific issues. Such exchange, which is essential to our understanding of multilateral cooperation, is a central concern of the ÖUK above and beyond its diverse national responsibilities. It also benefits our domestic activities, be it thanks to the inspiration provided by other NatComs or via specific joint projects.

It was thus that we also succeeded in realising numerous activities together with other National Commissions even during the challenging "pandemic year" of 2020. The UNESCO Secretariat in Paris directed widespread attention to a position paper on the strategic transformation of UNESCO

originally initiated by the German-speaking National Commissions. And the broad support for this paper shown by numerous National Commissions demonstrated what a crucial role they play in the organisation. Close cooperation with other National Commissions also takes place with regard to multinational nominations; for 2020, one might mention the nomination of Lipizzan Horse Breeding Traditions and Timber Rafting for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Furthermore, several English-language publications concerning cultural diversity were translated for an interested German-speaking audience in collaboration with the other German-speaking Commissions for UNESCO. The National Commissions furthermore played a significant role in the preparatory work for UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and also faced great challenges in the area of education, which once again became a crucially important focus of UNESCO's efforts.

Even just this small selection of joint activities clearly shows how central these instances of cooperation are—and just how much constant and in part informal exchange enriches the work of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO and contributes to its success. For this, I extend thanks not only to our international partners but also to our sponsors and supporters in Austria as well as, of course, to the team of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patrizia Jankovic". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patrizia Jankovic



Sabine Haag, President

There can be no doubt that 2020 was an exceptional year. Back in early March 2020, when Austria's first lockdown was announced, most of us were probably expecting a swift return to normalcy. The fact that—and in what ways—the COVID-19 pandemic would end up shaping the entire year would seem to have been unimaginable at that point.

Soon, however, it became clear how deep reaching the effects of this crisis would be—and just how much they would have to do with UNESCO's mandate. UNESCO, reacting with impressive speed for an international organisation, set about implementing measures such as webinars on the most varied topics (e.g., from the field of education) as well as event series (e.g., concerning the situation of artists) and also came up with new ways in which to hold the statutory meetings of its various decision-making bodies.

The Austrian Commission for UNESCO (ÖUK) was likewise forced to adapt its 2020 plans. One of the ÖUK's core strengths—cooperation with diverse partners from public administration, science, research, and civil society—normally entails holding meetings, putting on workshops, and face-to-face exchanges between individuals. Particularly collaboration with civil society has been and continues to be strongly characterised by direct, immediate contact. Therefore, it was at first difficult to imagine how this exchange could continue in light of physical distancing and the restrictions imposed on personal contact.

It was hence all the more impressive how ways were quickly found to successfully sustain cooperation: established events that had been running for years, such as the annual UNESCO Associated Schools Conference or the Closed Conference on Cultural Diversity, were transferred to the virtual realm while entirely new formats were also developed. Noteworthy examples here include an event entitled "Virtual Salon: Intangible Cultural Heritage" as well as the online workshop series "Defending Artistic Freedom – Building Alliances". What's more, the ÖUK also participated in UNESCO's ResiliArt series, which placed front and centre

the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting artists and cultural workers. In April, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO bore witness to a ResiliArt Talk together with IG KiKK (representing cultural initiatives in Carinthia/Koroška) on the topic of culture and democracy, while a second such talk—which addressed challenges of international cultural exchange—took place in December together with the organisation VIDC / kulturen in bewegung. 2020 therefore made for great challenges but also opened up new opportunities and made possible new instances of cooperation—one example being an online discussion between intangible cultural heritage experts entitled "Impulses for a Practice-Oriented Redefinition in Post-Migrant Europe", which ended up involving international experts who would not necessarily have been able to participate on-site.

All this was made possible not only by the exceptional dedication of the ÖUK's employees but also by the flexibility and obligingness of our long-time supporters from the competent Austrian ministries. To them as well as to all of our civil society partners, I extend my sincerest thanks. And despite all the success enjoyed by the above-mentioned online formats, we do hope that 2021 and the years thereafter will once again bear witness to a more generous measure of physically present exchange and collaboration in real-world settings!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sabine Haag". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sabine Haag



75 Years of UNESCO – Quo vadis?

The preamble to the constitution of UNESCO, founded in London 75 years ago, lays down the organisation's mission of “constructing the defences of peace in the minds of human beings”. It is a mission that, since then, has lost none of its validity or necessity. Quite the contrary.

(First published in German in: Die Presse, 16 Nov. 2020)

By **SABINE HAAG**

On 16 November 1945, just a few months after war's end, representatives of 37 states signed the founding document of a special organisation of the United Nations intended to actively support the United Nations' peacekeeping mission by promoting international cooperation in the realms of education, science, and culture. UNESCO was brought to life in the spirit of the United Nations by a generation of politicians and intellectuals who had themselves directly experienced the horrors and consequences of two world wars within a historical context that, in numerous respects, differed quite drastically from today's

geopolitical situation. Particularly in recent years, for which many commentators have discerned a “crisis of multilateralism”, repeated (and certainly in part justified) criticism has been directed at both UNESCO and the UN system at large. Insufficient effectiveness, inertia, political co-optation, and the general question as to their overall relevance in our 21st-century world have been and continue to be topics in this regard. So just how necessary is an organisation whose fundamental structures and principles were established over three quarters of a century ago?

At the very latest, it is when acute global challenges emerge—of which the current pandemic has surely been

one of the most severe in recent years, just as the climate crisis will become one in the future—that one sees clearly how individual initiatives on the level of nation-states may briefly come into view but cannot possibly be successful in the long run. The COVID-19 pandemic has, as we know, touched off not only a worldwide health crisis but also a deep-reaching crisis of cultural life and education. And even if the details of situations in various parts of the world may differ, what we are dealing with here are in fact global phenomena: all around the world, educational and cultural institutions, universities, museums, and theatres were forced to close, massively hobbling communal life

worldwide with consequences that can hardly be predicted as of yet.

International Cooperation in a Transformed World

This crisis, then, is relevant to UNESCO's core themes and mandates to an extent that is virtually unmatched by any other event. And it was in fact UNESCO, as one of the central institutions dealing with educational and cultural issues on the international level, that was able to take swift steps. Alongside setting up a school closure monitoring system, establishment of a Global Education Coalition—consisting of multilateral partners, private-sector protagonists, and organisations from civil society—was a foremost priority in the interest of providing the support needed by Member States to improve distance learning and make it more integrative and fair. This body's activities in the various countries are diverse, ranging from the provision of publicly accessible educational offerings to the support of both learners and teachers as well as making available infrastructure and technical equipment. The "ResiliArt" movement, likewise initiated by UNESCO, addresses cultural professionals and attempts to network internationally to create opportunities as well as find responses to the questions raised by this cultural crisis while also lending an audible voice to those whom it acutely affects.

Most clearly visible this year is, without a doubt, one necessity: the reinforcement of international scientific cooperation, such as via active support of open science, the extensive opportunities of which are growing in their significance before the backdrop of this global crisis.

75 years after its founding, UNESCO now faces not only an entirely transformed world but also new problems. Despite increasingly scarce financial resources, the organisation's original, more or less classic responsibilities of promoting the protection of cultural goods or the preservation of our Earth's

environment, biodiversity, and natural resources have been joined by questions pertaining to digitisation, artificial intelligence, and the increasingly urgent problems posed by climate change as new components of its already broad spectrum of themes.

"At the very latest, it is when acute global challenges emerge [...] that one sees clearly how individual initiatives on the level of nation-states may briefly come into view but cannot possibly be successful in the long run."

Only as Strong as its Members

Criticism of UNESCO has been and will continue to be repeatedly voiced. UNESCO is reacting with ambitious reform efforts under the aegis of its current Director-General Audrey Azoulay. Numerous specific points of criticism, however, may also be owed to the fact that some of the expectations that exist for a multilateral organisation can only be fulfilled to a certain extent. It must be clear that UNESCO can only be as strong as its members allow it to be. And the degree to which they do so has, in turn, been subject to repeated fluctuations. In particular the withdrawal of the USA, an important source of funding and a strong geopolitical voice, has played a role in massively weakening not just the organisation itself but multilateralism writ large. Recent statements by the newly elected US president Joe Biden, however, provide hope that multilateralism may once again be accorded more importance and a greater role.

Over the past few months, UNESCO has proven that the system of multilateral cooperation conceived of 75 years ago has not become obsolete.

What's more, as the first UN organisation to refer explicitly to the fundamental principles of human rights (doing so even prior to the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its involvement of civil society) UNESCO was innovative even at its founding. And current initiatives such as the recently ratified Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region or efforts pertaining to the ethics of artificial intelligence show that UNESCO, in its capacity as a global laboratory of ideas, can still offer forward-looking, innovative solutions in the fields of education, science, and culture even after 75 years. We can therefore hope that this successfully charted course will be appreciated and permitted to continue. After all, global challenges require global solutions as well as strong institutions capable of their implementation.



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SABINE HAAG majored in art history as well as English and American studies at the universities of Innsbruck and Vienna, where she earned her doctorate in 1995. She worked beginning in 1990 as a curator at the *Kunstkammer* and at the Imperial Treasury of the *Kunsthistorisches Museum* in Vienna, which she later went on to head. Since 2009, Sabine Haag has been General Director of the consortium of federally run Viennese museums that includes the *Kunsthistorisches Museum*, the *Weltmuseum Wien*, and the *Theatermuseum*. She has been President of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO since 2018.

EDUCATION

With its adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, one of the points emphasised by the international community of states was the central role of education. The Agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) sketch out a long-term worldwide agenda aimed at initiating a fundamental change of course in human thought and action. A central element of these goals' implementation is education, because global sustainable development can only be realised if the concept of sustainability is anchored in educational systems worldwide.



UNESCO'S EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Towards a Fairer World for All

“No one shall be left behind”: this is the motto and objective of UNESCO's Education 2030 Agenda. And like no other year in recent history, 2020 demonstrated its importance. Indeed, last year saw millions of people—especially children and adolescents—robbed of their accustomed learning environments at least temporarily, with learners and teachers being forced to adapt to entirely new circumstances. And with that, long-familiar challenges such as digital transformation, climate change, social inequality, displacement, and migration had been joined by the aspect of a global danger to human health. In connection with this deep-reaching crisis, the entire year saw social division and the erosion of social solidarity repeatedly feature as hot topics of public discourse. This also raises the question as to how must education be conceived in order that people learn both to understand the societal changes taking place in our globalised world and to act accordingly. Addressing this question is central to UNESCO's current education agenda (Education 2030), the salient point of which is to enable every single individual to take responsibility as a “global citizen”. Education is also a fundamental human right: all human beings, over their entire lives, have the right to high-quality education and hence to opportunities for the future and the possibility of fundamentally transforming their lives.

Education Agenda – No One Shall Be Left Behind

Since education cannot be viewed independently of our era's global challenges, UNESCO's agenda for education is embedded in the UN's global 2030 Agenda, which enumerates 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Here, education plays a key role. SDG 4, for instance, shows how education needs to look in order to prepare people to deal with the global challenges that we face. But at the same time, education also has a role to play in the implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Crucial to the success of the education-related SDG 4 is the 2030 Agenda's universal character. Its adoption represents the first time that all of the world's states have obligated themselves to recognise education as an integral component of sustainable development efforts and to implement according measures. The 2030 Agenda is, after all, intended to benefit people all over the world. “No one shall be left behind”: it is an ideal that is more relevant than ever before.

SGD 4 – Quality Education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.



4.1. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys can complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education.



4.2. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education.



4.3. By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university.



4.4. By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.



4.5. By 2030, eliminate gender disparities at all levels of education and ensure equal access to all levels of education for all people.



4.6. By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults achieve literacy and numeracy.



4.7. By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development.



Relevance to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Education and the SDGs Education lies at the core of the 2030 Agenda. It plays a central role in the successful implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and it also has its own goal, **SDG 4**, which aims to: “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030.

New Challenges, Old Inequalities?

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the worldwide education situation cannot yet be reliably assessed. Initial research by UNESCO has shown that over the course of 2020, the majority of UNESCO Member States provided Internet-, television-, or radio-based solutions in order to facilitate the continuity of learning in this exceptional situation. But even so, initial data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics indicate that 100 million children and adolescents will fall below the minimum reading skill level due to the pandemic and that, in many countries, the progress made over the previous two years may end up being eliminated. What's more, a joint study by Education Finance Watch and the World Bank has established that 65% of the countries with low gross domestic products are slashing their education budgets while in the stimulus programmes of 56 countries, education spending accounts for only 2% of the total.

Without a doubt, the worldwide health crisis has exacerbated existing inequalities: economic divides are painfully evident, for one thing, while discrepancies in the breadth and depth of digital infrastructure are also playing a massive role in the context of the pandemic: the altered learning situation requires new methodological and technological approaches alongside Internet access and access to end devices, platforms, and digital solutions. The situation also shows, however, just how central the acquisition of appropriate digital competencies is—not only in order to improve technical skills as such but also to support emancipatory use of and well-considered relationships with new technologies.

SELECTED ACTIVITIES, 2020

The Austrian Commission for UNESCO assumes support and advisory functions that serve the various protagonists working to implement international educational programmes in Austria. In doing so, it orients itself toward the various current working emphases of UNESCO as a whole and in particular toward the global agenda Education 2030.

- **“Turning Point”: Education for the SDGs**

In 2019, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO created the position of “Youth Representative” in order to amplify the voices of children, adolescents, and young adults. The first individual to serve in this position, Youth Representative Ines Erker, established the event series “Turning Point. Youth for Sustainable Development” in order to get young people interested in working towards the global Sustainable Development Goals. This series' 2020 event, the motto of which was “Your Rights – Your World”, had to be transferred to the virtual realm and postponed until 2021 (25/26 January) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



- **Expert Panel on Global Citizenship Education, Global Learning, Education for Sustainable Development**

In March 2017, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO established the Expert Panel on Transformative Education / Global Citizenship Education.

2020 saw two new members join this group of experts: the new UNESCO Chair-holder Hans Karl Peterlini (UNESCO Chair for Global Citizenship Education – Culture of Diversity and Peace, University of Klagenfurt) and Irene Gabriel (observing member, Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research). Furthermore, a working group was formed to deal with various approaches to transformative education—especially Global Citizenship Education and Education

for Sustainable Development. In the worldwide UN context, these related approaches have gone through different developmental processes, are funded and supported in different ways, and are differently anchored in countries including Austria. The new working group should contribute to their harmonisation, utilising and amplifying synergies.

2020 also saw the expert panel consulted several times concerning answers to UNESCO questionnaires and with regard to the preparation of national policy briefs. These activities included participating in the completion of a survey on the Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the authoring of an official joint statement on Austria's first Voluntary National Review on the implementation of Agenda 2030 concerning SDG 4.

- **Presentation of UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report in Austria**

UNESCO regularly publishes Global Education Monitoring Reports in order to highlight international education policy developments in individual countries, to monitor, document, and analyse implementation of the Education 2030 agenda, and to formulate recommendations that help better facilitate Education 2030's implementation. Under the heading of "Inclusion and Education: All Means All", the current Global Education Monitoring Report addresses the inclusion of learners from all backgrounds in the sense of a society-wide process and places a particular focus on learners with disabilities and other limitations. The 2020 report was released by UNESCO in June 2020. The Austrian presentation of UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report then took place on 28 January 2021 as an online event staged in cooperation with the Austrian Foundation for Development Research (ÖFSE); it was participated in by a good 100 interested parties. Presentation of the report's central findings and recommendations by Bilal Bakarar (statistician and educational expert, Senior Policy Analyst of the Global Education Monitoring Report Team) was followed by considerations regarding the significance of this report in the context of Austrian educational policy by Gottfried Biewer (an expert on integrative special-needs pedagogy) as well as a panel discussion with Terezija Stoitsits (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research), Johanna Mang (Light for the World), and Katharina Müllebner (of the barrier-free access organisation BIZEPS – Zentrum für ein selbstbestimmtes Leben), which shed light on aspects of the Global Education Monitoring Report relevant to developmental policy.

- **Early Childhood Education, Childcare, and Childrearing**

2020 witnessed preparatory work towards the establishment of a new focus in the area of early childhood education, childcare, and childrearing. To this end, education researcher and nursery educator Lena Gruber developed a concept that now forms the basis for a set of guidelines on early childhood education. These guidelines, which are based on UNESCO's educational concepts, will be directed at educators and support them in their creation of early childhood education, childcare, and childrearing centres that do justice to children, people with disabilities, and issues of gender.



This Chair Is Not for Resting

The idea and mission of the new UNESCO Chair “Global Citizenship Education – Culture of Diversity and Peace” at the University of Klagenfurt.

Commentary by

HANS KARL PETERLINI

“To me, Global Citizenship Education goes hand in hand with constant learning, with being alive. So yes, Global Citizenship keeps me vibrant”, sums up Werner Wintersteiner, rightly considered one of this approach’s pioneers in Austria, in an interview on its both theoretical and action-oriented project to build a civil society that does not define itself regionally or nationally, instead choosing to take the entire world as its point of reference for a sense of belonging, solidarity, and responsibility. The book *Homeland Earth* by French philosopher and sociologist Edgar Morin can be viewed as something like Global Citizenship’s foundational programmatic text.

Morin’s idea is as simple as it is unsettling. It is grounded in the solid soil of this earth upon which we all stand, though our respective locations may differ greatly, have their own histories, be subject to climatic fluctuations, be fragmented by glaring socioeconomic disparities, and be shot through with severely asymmetrical power relations. While conceiving of this earth as a homeland does not necessarily entail giving up (for the most part national) frameworks of order, it does mean casting doubt upon their deceptive absoluteness and reliability. The fact

that the world does not end at everybody’s national borders, with everything beyond—even beyond high mountain ranges and unfathomable oceans—having to do directly with us, eliminates the illusion that it is enough to ensure decent conditions in one’s own country or state in order to live well. “Living well” also means grappling with those ethical questions that we can only avoid at the cost of repressing them, questions such as that of whether there

“While conceiving of this earth as a homeland does not necessarily entail giving up (for the most part national) frameworks of order, it does mean casting doubt upon their deceptive absoluteness and reliability.”

can at all be a good life for a select few if this entails poverty, war, misery, and hopelessness for others.

It is surely not a coincidence that a 1972 edition of the famous correspondence between Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud on the question of *Why War?* was prefaced with an essay by Isaac Asimov entitled, “The Good Earth Is Dying”. Based on his unsettling (and by now more than confirmed) analysis,

Asimov came to a simple conclusion: “...planetary problems require a planetary program and a planetary solution...” What can education, what can our upbringing contribute to this? Freud, in his reply to Einstein, had to disappoint the latter’s hope that he might be able to contribute childrearing and educational recipes for a more peaceful and responsible society. Einstein’s hope for solutions from the originator of psychoanalysis was futile even just due to the latter’s deep scepticism toward the idea that human beings could be altered in purely rational ways; too deep were his insights into the dynamics of repression and projection via which people ignore unpleasant things and transfer them to concepts of an enemy in whom we can then fight the very things that we cannot abide in ourselves.

In light of how we ignore the need that is spread all over our planet, how we rationally admit to but irrationally persist in destroying our own basis for life, and how we channel our repressed frustrations and economic deprivation into aggression toward our respective Others via both war and fatal indifference, these insights can also serve as a diagnosis of our present. In his answer to Einstein, Freud held that the only truly transformative antidote would consist of “All that produces ties of sentiment between man and man...”. Particularly in terms of perceiving interrelation-

ships and the corresponding development of a sense of planetary responsibility, rational knowledge falls short. Examples with which we are all familiar from our own selves show how even something like “ties of sentiment”—we might also say empathy, sympathy, or a feeling of responsibility—can be nationally tinged: when an aeroplane crashes or earthquakes occur in far-off places, media attention and the attendant emotional engagement are immeasurably higher if people from our own countries have fallen victim. The methodical nationalism with which we perceive and deal with the world also affects our ability to empathise.

It follows that Global Citizenship Education—as an approach to education that is in and of itself transformative—cannot limit itself to the rational and cognitive conveyance of knowledge. An approach like this needs to allow relationships to be experienced. Only when people learn to relate to what their actions cause elsewhere or in others can change become possible. And in light of the fact that pedagogy cannot replace politics (Franz Hamburger), Global Citizenship Education—in the spirit of Ivan Illich—aims not just to effect an “about-face” in individuals but also to facilitate reflection and change where economic and political practices are concerned. A necessary precondition for this is placing the global in a relationship with the local and the individual in a relationship with the collective; this embodies not dreamy universalism, but rather concrete efforts relating to small and individual things amidst a growing awareness of these efforts’ interconnection with the entire world combined with the simultaneous initiation of civil society-based processes aimed at altering structures and systems. The point is to open up spaces of experience and learning on numerous levels—in schools, in adult and continuing education, in places of informal learning, in politics, and in civil society.

Before this backdrop, the UNESCO chair “Global Citizenship Education

– Culture of Diversity and Peace” is meant to be a platform of action upon which to bring together, bundle, and disseminate initiatives that work on various levels towards raising awareness of planetary interconnectedness and responsibility. The application to establish this chair succeeded thanks in part to support from a great many people who are already active in this regard both in Austria and internationally. At the University of Klagenfurt, its core elements are the master’s degree programme “Global Citizenship Education” and the new MA programme “Diversity Education in School and Society”, which are

“Only when people learn to relate to what their actions cause elsewhere or in others can change become possible.”

joined by related research and teaching projects. But that would be a narrow radius: this professorial chair can only manage to fulfil its mission if it succeeds in entering into exchange with other initiatives—with institutions, associations, business, politics, and civil society, doing so locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Even just during the first few months since the chair was established at Christmas 2020, the enormous potential of the UNESCO network has been revealed: that which would otherwise have perhaps remained isolated, barely able to find a voice or a language, and sometimes even been prematurely smothered, is now finding opportunities for networking and visibility. It is thus the case that this chair can reinforce some things that would have existed anyway while also initiating some things that would not have otherwise existed—but by the same token, this chair will live only thanks to the life with which networking and exchange with the many valuable initiatives will fill it.

The “ties of sentiment” for which Freud hoped can also be understood

thusly: as forming relationships between people who make an effort. This chair is not for resting, but for asking uncomfortable questions and taking joyful action.

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HANS KARL PETERLINI has been a University Professor of General Educational Science and Intercultural Education at the University of Klagenfurt since 2014 and has occupied the UNESCO professorial chair “Global Citizenship Education – Culture of Diversity and Peace”, whose founding he initiated, since 2020. His emphases include personal and societal learning as transformative potential for a more socially just, peaceful, and ecologically mindful world. He accords special attention to processes that serve these goals within the context of coexistence characterised by diversity, ethnicisation, and migration.

UNESCO ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS IN AUSTRIA

“Learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together”



© C.A.N. Photograph

UNESCO ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS

Founded by UNESCO in **1953**

Over **11,500** educational institutions in **182** countries

Austria has participated since **1957**; **98** schools of all types in all **9** federal provinces plus **21** candidate schools

Guiding principles: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together

Themes: peace and human rights education, global citizenship education, education for sustainable development, cultural education, Sustainable Development Goals

Role of the ÖUK: national coordination, advising, informational activities, and cooperation; one three-day conference annually; *FORUM* magazine, website

www.unesco.at/bildung/unesco-schulen/: Central informational website with a list of all Austrian UNESCO Associated Schools, current events, projects, and school job openings

Austria's UNESCO Associated Schools are part of an international network of schools founded in Paris by UNESCO in 1953. This network brings together 11,500 educational institutions in 182 countries that share the common goal of anchoring the idea of peace in the minds of children and adolescents. For 66 years, the network has been employing high-quality education and innovative concepts in order to promote intercultural dialogue, sustainable development, and mutual understanding that transcends national borders. The UNESCO Associated Schools function as a beacon for the implementation of the global Education 2030 agenda, which was adopted by the United Nations in 2015. They have had particular success in implementing the global Sustainable Development Goal SDG 4.7 by helping young people become citizens of the world and educating them on the topic of sustainable development.

Austria plays a very active role in this international network and is currently represented there by 98 educational institutions. Themes for activities by the Austrian UNESCO Associated Schools are recommended by the Austrian federal coordinator to dedicated teachers who actively engage in exchange via the network and implement the goals of the Education 2030 agenda with support from the Austrian Commission for UNESCO.

2020 saw two educational institutions apply to UNESCO in Paris for official admission to the network of Austrian UNESCO Associated Schools. What's more, interest in joining the network remains widespread among Austria's schools, with 21 educational institutions currently holding candidate status.

SELECTED ACTIVITIES, 2020

- **UNESCO Associated Schools / 2020 Conference**

Since 1997, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO has been organising annual networking meetings for all of the Austrian UNESCO Associated Schools' contact persons.

These annual conferences make a significant contribution to further training and the exchange of ideas. In workshops and lectures, on field trips, and in numerous conversations, the UNESCO Associated Schools contact persons can acquire new knowledge and skills as well as encourage each other to take on challenging in-class projects specially designed for children and adolescents. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic along with its associated preventive measures and restrictions, it was not possible to hold 2020's annual conference in the usual way. In place of an in-person event, teachers took part in a virtual webinar on 15 October 2020. The topics discussed included "Demonstrating Civil Courage: Artistic Freedom". Furthermore, a "Market of Possibilities" offered teachers an opportunity to engage in virtual exchange. This event was participated in by representatives of 79 schools.

- **The Magazine FORUM**

The annually published periodical *FORUM* provides a colourful, variety-packed impression of the creativity and dedication that Austria's UNESCO Associated Schools bring to bear in implementing the guiding principles of UNESCO and their respective annual themes. The current issue of *FORUM* (vol. 32/2020) is entitled Education – Culture – Nature.

Contributions from 45 schools document the diversity of topics with which school students dealt practically in class during the 2019/2020 academic year. These contributions draw a broad thematic arc: while some students mounted exhibitions on the SDGs, others conducted lab tests of samples from



domestic bodies of water for microplastics or went outside to explore nature and the biodiversity of their regions. There were also numerous artistic efforts such as a radio project on multilingualism, theatre workshops dealing with themes such as human rights, gender identities, and civil courage in the digital realm, and creative projects in which students grappled with their own personal lockdown experiences in comics, texts, and pictures. School students from Retz, inspired by the International Youth Climate Movement, organised a "Climate Gala" and implemented measures to make their own schools more sustainable. Students also participated in platforms for exchange and for getting better acquainted with fellow students who had experienced displacement as well as involved themselves with the memorialisation and critical examination of the horrors of recent history. The teachers in charge of these students chose participative, innovative, and practice-oriented methods and conveyed these themes by way of projects, charitable initiatives, field trips, student exchange, and school partnerships.



All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights

SCIENCE

UNESCO's science programmes aim to promote lasting, sustainable, and humane development for all people and to ensure global peace. These objectives are pursued by way of numerous international research programmes as well as by building international and transdisciplinary research networks. Furthermore, special attention is paid to supporting the endeavours of women in the sciences.



THE UNESCO SCIENCE PROGRAMMES

Science is the cornerstone of modern, enlightened, democratic societies. Scientific research makes it possible for us to identify societal developments and challenges in the first place as well as to find answers to the questions of our times. Science is a fundamentally international undertaking: no state is capable of advancing research in isolation, and scientific exchange knows no borders. At UNESCO, all Member States work together to strengthen scientific research worldwide amidst the tension between scientific freedom and social responsibility. UNESCO promotes global research on the urgent questions of humankind and supports people in putting knowledge to use in order to build just and inclusive societies.

Core Themes of the UNESCO Science Programmes

UNESCO's science-related thematic focuses include climate change and the preservation of biodiversity, the advancement of knowledge pertaining to the protection of oceans and coasts, and ensuring the availability of drinking water. Exemplary here are the longstanding UNESCO programmes Man and the Biosphere (MAB), the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), and the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP), all three of which are devoted to researching and protecting the living environment of human beings.

In Austria, these programmes are overseen by the MAB and Geo/Hydro Sciences National Committees at the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

- **Man and the Biosphere**

The UNESCO programme Man and the Biosphere (MAB) develops the scientific and practical foundations upon which the natural basis of our existence as well as biodiversity can be preserved for the long term. The objective here is sustainable development of the relationship between humankind and the environment: achieving a balance between the protection of biological diversity, the promotion of economic and social development, and the preservation of our respective cultural values. This programme's World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently encompasses 701 biosphere reserves in 124 countries. In Austria, four biosphere reserves (Wienerwald, Großes Walsertal, Salzburger Lungau & Kärntner Nockberge, and Unteres Murtal) have been established so far.

Austria is also a highly active participant in the MAB programme's international decision-making bodies and committees. Austria's Günter Köck of the Austrian Academy of Sciences currently represents



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IHP – INTERNATIONAL HYDROLOGICAL PROGRAMME

1975: first multilateral programme for water research and water management – International Hydrological Programme (IHP)

8th IHP, 2014–2021: in its 8th phase, the IHP is devoted to improving water quality while taking into account local, regional, and global challenges

The core of this programme: sustainable water management, promotion and development of international water research, and global networking

Part of the **2030 Agenda**

Role of the ÖUK: informational platform for the programme, public relations work
Further information on the 8th phase of implementation can be found at: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/water-security/hydrology/IHP-VIII-water-security>



Relevance to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDGs and Science UNESCO's science programmes make a significant contribution to achieving and monitoring all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The natural sciences, technology, and innovation play particularly central roles, here, while the social sciences and humanities make their own contributions toward these goals' achievement by bolstering our understanding of current challenges. UNESCO's natural science programmes make their largest contributions toward the achievement of **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production), **SDG 15** (Life on Land), and especially **SDG 13** (Climate Action). The organisation's social sciences and humanities programmes most strongly support the realisation of **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). All science programmes also make important contributions to the realisation of **SDG 5** (Gender Equality) and **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals).



© Tómas Jónsson/Grínk

IGCP – INTERNATIONAL GEOSCIENCE PROGRAMME

Founded in **1973**

The core of this programme: worldwide scientific collaboration with an emphasis on North-South collaboration; currently focused on applied geosciences, above all with an eye to dealing with natural disasters such as earthquakes, landslides, and volcano eruptions

UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG) label established in **2015**

161 UGGs worldwide, of which **3** are in Austria

In Austria: overseen by the Geo/Hydro Sciences National Committees at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) as part of its Earth System Sciences Programme

Role of the ÖUK: central point of contact for the geoparks together with the ÖAW

the region of "Europe and North America" in the MAB Bureau. Furthermore, autumn 2020 saw Köck—who is also Austria's delegate to the MAB programme's International Coordinating Council—elected for his fourth term as this body's vice-chair.

• **IHP (International Hydrological Programme)**

UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) is the only intergovernmental programme in the UN system devoted to hydrological research, water management, and capacity-building in this field. Since its establishment in 1975, the IHP has developed from an internationally coordinated hydrological research programme into a comprehensive, holistic undertaking that facilitates education and capacity-building as well as the improvement of water resource management. This programme's underlying aim is to support an interdisciplinary and integrated approach to dealing with watersheds and aquifer management that also accounts for the social dimension of water resources and both promotes and helps develop international hydrological and limnological research.

• **IGCP (International Geoscience Programme)**

The International Geoscience Programme (IGCP), founded in 1973, supports geoscientific cooperative projects with research focuses that are precisely defined by UNESCO. These projects include the UNESCO Global Geoparks, of which Austria can boast three: Styrian Eisenwurzen, Ore of the Alps, and the transnational geopark Karawanken/Karavanke.

• **UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme**

The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, established in 1992, is an important source of impulses for international exchange between universities. This is attested to not least by the programme's over 600 UNESCO professorial chairs worldwide. Nine of these are at Austrian tertiary-level educational institutions.

➤ The Mežica mine in the Geopark Karawanken/Karavanke

- **UNESCO-L'Oréal For Women in Science**

The World needs Science – Science needs Women

The central aim of UNESCO's science programmes is to strengthen the role of women in science worldwide, particularly in the life sciences. The "L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Initiative" is part of these efforts. Every year, the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Awards Ceremony at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris sees five prizes worth € 100,000 each and fifteen "L'Oréal-UNESCO Rising Talents" scholarships awarded to outstanding woman scientists.

SELECTED ACTIVITIES, 2020

- **4 UNESCO-L'Oréal Scholarships in Austria**

Since 2007, L'Oréal Austria—in cooperation with the Austrian Commission for UNESCO and the Austrian Academy of Sciences and with support from the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF)—has been awarding four annual scholarships worth € 25,000 each to outstanding young women scientists in Austria. Eligible for the scholarships are researchers in the natural sciences, mathematics, and medicine.

These scholarships aim to recognise, support, and encourage young women by helping to create role models. They additionally serve to make the general public aware of excellent scientific achievements while also showing them the female face of research. 2020 winners:

- Alexandra Franziska Gülich, immunologist, University of Vienna
- Sandra Müller, logician, University of Vienna
- Veronika Pedrini-Martha, biologist, University of Innsbruck
- Anna Maria Wernbacher, chemist, University of Vienna



© L'Oréal Deutschland GmbH

Alexandra Franziska Gülich



© L'Oréal Deutschland GmbH

Sandra Müller



© L'Oréal Deutschland GmbH

Veronika Pedrini-Martha



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Anna Maria Wernbacher

The ceremony at which these scholarships were formally presented to their winners was held as a virtual event due to the COVID-19 pandemic and took place on 4 December 2020. The opening address was given by Georg Brasseur, president of the Division of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The evening also featured speeches by: Iris Rauskala, Section Head at the BMBWF, ÖUK-Secretary-General Patrizia Jankovic, and Wioletta Rosolowska, CEO / Country General Manager of L'ORÉAL Austria.

- **UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme**

In Austria, there are now nine UNESCO Chairs devoted to various UNESCO themes as part of the "UNIWTIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme". Two of these were newly established in 2020: alongside the UNESCO Chair for Global Citizenship Education – Culture of Diversity and Peace at the University of Klagenfurt, held by Hans Karl Peterlini (who has also authored a commentary for the present yearbook – see p. 10/11), the Carinthia University of Applied Sciences in Klagenfurt saw the establishment of the UNESCO Chair for Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas, whose first occupant is Michael Jungmeier.

These professorial chairs are viewed as particularly important players in the UNESCO context thanks to how that they function as #bridges between the academic world, civil society, and politics. Austria's nine UNESCO Chairs research, teach, and work in the most varied areas—ranging from the restoration of tangible cultural heritage to research on peace and conflict and on to bioethics, limnology, and the sustainable management of nature reserves. Common to all of them is their superb international networking in the UNESCO context as well as their work in innovative areas that involve up-to-the-minute questions spanning multiple disciplines.

The current occupants of Austria's UNESCO Chairs met virtually on 15 May 2020 in order to become acquainted, network, and explore possible collaborative opportunities. At this meeting, they concluded a plan to make these chairs' excellent work and their diversity more visible to the broader public as an initial step.



Protecting Unique Geological Features – Across Borders



The Trögerner Klamm Geotrail

© Jürgen Lamprecht

In conversation with **GERALD HARTMANN**, UNESCO Global Geopark Karawanken/Karavanke

The Geopark Karawanken/Karavanke has been recognised by UNESCO as a Global Geopark since 2013. How has this recognition affected the work going on at the Geopark?

Recognition as a UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG) has brought with it an enormous increase in appreciation for the special geological, natural, and cultural features of this transborder area. This UNESCO status was viewed as the ultimate legitimization of our decision to continue on our chosen path. The UNESCO Global Geopark designation and our inclusion in the Global Geoparks Network have also raised awareness of the international significance of this border region in the communities that lie within it— and the enormously enhanced regional (and above all transborder) cooperation and identity was given a common home, a common name: UNESCO Global Geopark Karawanken/Karavanke.

The Geopark Karawanken/Karavanke is one of only four transnational UNESCO Global Geoparks worldwide. What's special about the transborder cooperation between Austria and Slovenia at the Geopark?

UGG status was the missing link, the missing common identifier, for which our 14 communities and all of the partners in our own network had been searching for decades. Thanks to our history, there had always been a lot of things that tied this region together: a common language, a common natural environment divided by a national border, familial and friendly relations, and lots of transborder initiatives. What had been missing was this clear identifying feature that would unite it. The UGG designation has now given our bilateral cooperation here a unified face, a goal, and a strategic orientation as well as an official form. And in November 2019, this culminated in the recognition of the organisation that runs the park as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), which is the highest legal form of bilateral cooperation between public institutions.

On the whole, bilateral cooperation is challenging, and even an EGTC cannot resolve all of the attendant difficulties—but it does need to be stated clearly that UGG status represented the crucial factor behind our attainment of this legal form. Recognition as an EGTC has strengthened our UNESCO Global Geopark in an overall European context, significantly easing project activities that extend across all 14 communities and enormously increasing their strategic value.

Austria is home to two further UNESCO Global Geoparks (Ore of the Alps and Syrian Eisenwurzen). Alongside transnational cooperation with Slovenia at the Geopark itself as well as with numerous other states in the UNESCO network, does networking with Austrian colleagues also play a role in your work?

Collaborating with our Austrian colleagues is immensely important to us: the exchange of experience regarding the conduct of activities as a geopark provides us with crucial help in our everyday decision-making. And this sort of cooperation is likewise of great value in a strategic sense, not only in terms of our (as yet insufficient) legal anchoring in Austria but also in the realm of project development, programming, science-related cooperative arrangements, and mutual public relations work.

In your view, what would be necessary in order to improve the conditions under which (Austrian) geoparks do their work? And what would you like to see happen in the future?

UGGs are internationally recognised, but in Austria, this sort of recognition is entirely absent. What I mean here is the fact that the geoparks' responsibilities lack legal legitimization—which entails that in Austria, the designation often remains below the threshold of official and political perception. This makes our work quite a bit more difficult, since it

effectively means proceeding with no ability to plan and no security. Our “mini-teams” fight year in and year out to justify the geoparks’ existence. This needs to change soon so that our geopark agendas can be adjusted to match our actual goals—and so that the Austrian UGGs can continue to exist at all.

A central aspect of the UNESCO Geoparks programme is education and outreach work. You work to introduce both the local populace and tourists to this region’s geological heritage. What activities to this end are taking place?

The UGG now has a year-round programme consisting of organised offerings for both locals and guests, and all of the items on this programme focus on conveying the geological heritage of our region while also shedding light on significant aspects of our natural environment and cultural history.

The event series GEOFESTIVAL, which grew out of the European Geoparks Week, offers a programme that has been deliberately conceived to be quite broad (ranging from sport to culture) in the interest of reaching various target audiences. These events also convey information about special geological features.

And last but not least, our geopark runs its own annual educational programme in concert with schools. We’re currently at work on developing our own educational network for pre-primary, primary, and intermediate schools that has already been joined by several institutions. Our goal here is to establish a “Geopark Certificate”.

The aspect of research, which numbers among UNESCO’s “Top 10 Focus Areas”, is also central to UNESCO Global Geoparks. What’s the Geopark Karawanken/Karavanke doing in this respect?

The Geopark is currently pursuing intensive work on a scientific project pertaining to water usage in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair at Carinthia

University of Applied Sciences and the Geological Survey of Slovenia (GeoZS), and we’re also busy developing our own detailed research programme for the Geopark itself. Of particular importance to us is linking research with the public interest (in particular municipal agendas) at the Geopark in order to facilitate continual discourse on the topics of spatial planning, hazard zone planning, and water management as well as on disaster preparedness, protection, and intervention; such discourse is of essential importance to decision-makers within the Geopark’s territory.

Further interdisciplinary research activities are to be initiated by the Geopark’s panel of experts. And we’ve also made efforts to join forces with various institutions to develop permanent cooperative arrangements relating to research in the areas of geoscience, conservation, and botany.

All over the world, 2020 was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. What effects did this exceptional situation have on the Global Geoparks and especially on the Geopark Karawanken/Karavanke?

For one thing, it was enormously difficult to implement ongoing projects—and especially in our work together with external providers, the effects remained noticeable over a far greater period than “just” the lockdown phases. What’s more, the Geopark’s programming experienced an enormously high level of interest due to the pandemic—and while that was very pleasing to see, its full intensity hit us too early and too fast. Both of these factors left the entire Geopark team acutely overburdened.

The enormously increased interest in leisure activities as such also entailed huge challenges in terms of visitor traffic control, a huge amount of pressure on our park and our efforts to protect its special geological and natural features, and a sharp rise in individual motor vehicle traffic as well as visits to sensitive areas. The latter point also highlights something that will be one of our

biggest future challenges: developing a mobility concept in the sense of an organised and structured transfer system for locals and guests in order to massively reduce individual motor vehicle traffic and hence CO2 emissions.

UNESCO Global Geoparks quite generally stand out for how they protect the landscape and natural monuments with an eye to socially relevant questions such as climate change, the preservation of natural resources, and disaster preparedness. Where are the focuses of your work at the Geopark Karawanken/Karavanke in this respect?

In addition to what I’ve mentioned already, the things in our region that we need to address across all 14 of our communities include the reforestation of areas that have been deforested due to windthrow as well as unified, coordinated water management. And another important topic for us is the employment of (new) technologies (e.g., warning and monitoring systems) in disaster preparedness. We’ll surely be devoting a lot of time to this over the next several years—and here, as well, we hope to benefit greatly from the work we’re doing together with our Geoparks Network partners.



GERALD HARTMANN studied geography at the University of Klagenfurt. He has been employed by the working group ARGE Geopark Karawanken since 2013 and currently serves as Director of the UNESCO Geopark Karawanken/Karavanke. Since the beginning of his career, he has also been involved in various EU-level efforts (including Horizon2020, Interreg, EUfutuR, and NaKult projects).

CULTURE

Culture is the basis of social cohesion and a society's further development. And its diverse forms of expression—from historical architecture to living traditions and on to contemporary art—form the foundation of our world's sustainable development. UNESCO has dedicated itself to the furtherance of culture on all levels: it works worldwide to promote clear political conditions and legal frameworks for activities in the cultural field, providing support to Member States as well as local protagonists from civil society in order to protect cultural heritage and support cultural diversity.



UNESCO'S CULTURAL FOCUSES: CULTURAL DIVERSITY | WORLD HERITAGE | PROTECTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY | INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE | The working emphases of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO in the cultural field are oriented toward active implementation of UNESCO's seven culture-related conventions. Special attention is paid to promoting the diversity of cultural expressions, to the protection and safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and to the protection of cultural property.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Safeguarding and promoting the free development of the arts and culture

The aim of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is to employ suitable policies and measures to create an environment in which the arts and culture can flourish in freedom and enjoy protection from being subject to purely economic considerations. Core themes of this convention are: protection for the arts and culture in free trade agreements, active participation by civil society, preferential treatment of artists and other cultural professionals and practitioners from the Global South, and the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Diversity is to be facilitated at all stages of the cultural value chain:

- Creativity and artistic creation
- Cultural production
- Dissemination and distribution
- Access to and participation in the arts and culture

The Austrian Commission for UNESCO (ÖUK) functions as a National Point of Contact for questions on the Convention's implementation in Austria. A central concern is dialogue and cooperation with relevant stakeholders in order to create structures and overall conditions that are favourable to a diversity of cultural expressions in Austria.

Advising and Supporting Bodies

Expert Panel on Cultural Diversity: supports the ÖUK in coordinating all matters pertaining to the Convention

Working Group on Cultural Diversity: dialogue platform for the active involvement of civil society

“Cultural diversity can be protected and promoted only if human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, information and communication, as well as the ability of individuals to choose cultural expressions, are guaranteed.”

Article 2, Guiding Principles of the Convention



Relevance to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG 5: Safeguarding the diversity of cultural expressions goes hand in hand with the promotion of gender equality in the cultural field; the one cannot be achieved without the other. **SDG 8:** Decent Work: social and economic security is essential for both artists and cultural workers in order that they may engage in free artistic and creative work. **SDG 16** and **SDG 17:** A fundamental pillar of the Convention is participation by and partnership with civil society; only in this manner—in the cultural field, as elsewhere—can policies be shaped in a way that is transparent, participative, and needs-oriented.

SELECTED ACTIVITIES, 2020

- **ResiliArt Talks**

ResiliArt is a global movement of UNESCO that strives to raise awareness of the wide-ranging effects that the COVID-19 crisis has had on the arts and cultural sector. Numerous debates worldwide direct public attention to the limitations currently entailed by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as to cultural policy support measures. In Austria, two debates have been held: the ResiliArt Talk “Culture and Democracy”, a cooperative effort of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO mounted together with the Interessensgemeinschaft der Kulturinitiativen in Kärnten/Koroška (IGKIKK – an interest group representing Carinthian cultural initiatives), was devoted to the effects of the pandemic on cultural initiatives and the social situation of arts and cultural professionals. Second, as part of a cooperative effort with VIDC/kulturen in bewegung, the event series “Forum Fair Culture” was begun with the ResiliArt Talk “Current Challenges of International Cultural Exchange”. In focus were current challenges for arts and cultural professionals from the so-called Global South in Austria as well as international examples of good practice. In accordance with Article 16, which addresses “preferential treatment”, countries in the Global North have an obligation to extend preferential treatment to artists and other cultural professionals and practitioners from the Global South. Before this backdrop, participants in the second ResiliArt Talk discussed the course that needs to be set in the interest of ensuring fair and balanced cultural exchange beyond the current pandemic.

- **Demands of the Austrian Working Group on Cultural Diversity: Final Communiqué, 2020**

2020 saw the Austrian Commission for UNESCO host a renewed edition of the Closed Conference on Cultural Diversity. And as they have done quite fruitfully in past years, the participants—who hail from all fields of the arts and culture—analysed the current state of Austria’s implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In this conference’s final communiqué, the expert signatories pointed out items that must be acted upon in the interest of effectively protecting the diversity of cultural expressions beyond the present crisis. The current situation represents a wake-up call for politicians to bring about sustainable change—both substantively and in terms of the ways in which measures are developed and implemented. A shift in thinking needs to take place: away from short-term lifelines and toward solid, more crisis-resistant fallback systems developed in exchange with the arts and cultural sector. The experts called for decision-makers to take steps to prevent this sector’s post-crisis collapse and irretrievable loss.

- **Translation of the UNESCO Flyer on the Convention into German**
Together with the other German-speaking Commissions for UNESCO (Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland), Austria’s National Point of Contact for the 2005 Convention published German translations of the five UNESCO leaflets on “Artistic Freedom”, “Partnering with Civil Society”, “Digital Environment”, “Gender Equality”, and “Preferential Treatment”.



- **Interactive Workshop Series “Protecting Artistic Freedom – Building Alliances”**

This virtual workshop series of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO devoted itself to the theme of artistic freedom and its limitations. Together with protagonists from the arts and cultural field and interested parties, a space of exchange was created in which to strengthen alliances as well as develop strategies for artistic freedom’s protection. The kick-off event, entitled “Gemeinsame Freiräume schaffen für Frauen*, Queers, Trans* Personen in Kunst und Kultur” [Creating Common Free Spaces for Women*, Queers, Trans*Persons in the Arts and Culture], was held in collaboration with Fiftitu% (Linz). The second workshop, “Ökonomische Absicherung als Garant für künstlerische Freiheit” [Economic Security As a Guarantor of Artistic Freedom], was held in cooperation with the organisations TKI – Tyrolean Cultural Initiatives and the Tyrolean Artists’ Association. A third workshop (held in collaboration with IGKiKK – Interessensgemeinschaft Kulturinitiativen Kärnten/Koroška) focused on “Barriers in International Cultural Exchange”.

- **Implementation of the Convention – 3rd Austrian State Report**

Every four years, Austria—as a State Party to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions—must submit to UNESCO a report regarding the Convention’s implementation on its own territory (its “Quadrennial Periodic Report”). The third Austrian report was submitted in May of 2020. Its conclusions will be included in UNESCO’s third Global Monitoring Report, entitled “Re|Shaping Cultural Policies”, which is slated for release in February 2022.

Thoroughly in the spirit of the Convention, special care was taken to involve all relevant protagonists in preparing the Austrian report. Collaboration with individuals and entities was given special attention in the interest of ensuring the report’s participative nature. Quite generally, this Convention has proven to be an essential instrument via which to promote ongoing dialogue across sectors and also involve voices from civil society. The intent is now to expand this dialogue in order to do justice to the crosscutting character of cultural policy in the spirit of the Convention. And in this respect, the Working Group on Cultural Diversity serves as the backbone of its national implementation.



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© The Arab Fund for the Arts and Culture, Above Zero by Ossama Halal, 2014, Syria

CONVENTION on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

2005	adopted by UNESCO
2006	ratified by Austria
149	States Parties (148 states plus the European Union)
114	projects for the structural reinforcement of cultural creation made possible in
59	developing countries by the “International Fund for Cultural Diversity”
166	periodic, publicly available national reports on implementation, including
3	Austrian implementation reports (2012, 2016 and 2020)

Role of the ÖUK: maintaining the Convention’s Austrian Point of Contact

ÖUK Priorities: informing and advising, dialogue forums for inter-ministerial coordination and the involvement of civil society, representation of Austria in UNESCO organs on the Convention, public relations work

Places of Refuge: Safe and Free, but Not Quiet

Free spaces for the arts and culture are a prerequisite for the existence of diverse cultural expressions. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions defines artistic freedom as a comprehensive (human) right that includes more than “just” the freedom of artistic creativity in a narrow sense:

Artistic freedom can be ensured only when production, distribution, and participation are free from pressure and the exertion of influence—which also entails ensuring the social and economic security of those who work in the arts and culture.

According to reports by the NGO Freemuse, artistic freedom is under threat worldwide. Violations range from censorship to threats, lawsuits, incarceration, and even murder. In 2020 alone, the organisation registered 978 cases in 89 countries as well as online, including 289 cases of censorship, 82 incarcerations, and 17 murders. These threats to artistic freedom weaken the diversity of cultural expressions by endangering the existence of those who work in the arts and culture.

The establishment of artist residencies as safe refuges represents an effective way of lending support to endangered arts and cultural professionals. They allow artists to inhabit a place where they are safe and free but need not be quiet. Around 170 artists have found such refuge in over 80 cities worldwide since 2006, and these numbers are rising. In Austria, two residency programmes offer arts and cultural professionals such an opportunity. The Viennese project “Writers in Exile – Wien als Zufluchtsstadt”, run by the author’s organisation IG Autorinnen Autoren in collaboration with the translators’ society IG Übersetzerinnen Übersetzer, works together with the Writers-in-Exile Network to provide grants for authors and translators. And in Graz, the city government launched its “Writer in Exile” programme in 1997 as a visible sign of solidarity with endangered writers. Today, the invitations to stay in Graz as a place of refuge are extended by the cultural outreach association Verein Kulturvermittlung Steiermark in cooperation with the City of Graz – Department for Cultural Affairs.

The writers Julija Cimafiejeva and Alhierd Baharevich are currently living in Graz as grantees of the Writer in Exile programme. They spoke with the Viennese weekly paper *Falter* about the restrictions on artistic freedom in Belarus and on their lives as exiles in Graz.

“Feeding the Dragon”

By **THOMAS WOLKINGER**,

first published in German in *Falter* 49/2020, p. 18–19; condensed version

In Belarus, the regime is waging war on its citizens. Authors Julija Cimafiejeva and Alhierd Baharevich escaped to Graz.

In Minsk, says Julija Cimafiejeva, Sundays are about as quiet as they are here. The shops are closed while police and soldiers seal off metro stations and streets with barbed wire, armoured vehicles, and water cannons in order to prevent citizens from demonstrating. But despite all this, hundreds of thousands of them have been hitting the streets to demonstrate every week since summer began. They do so to express their rage at the regime of President Alexander Lukashenko, who has spent the past 26 years ruling Belarus as if the Soviet Union had never ceased to exist. Following the elections on 9 August, which featured massive fraud, he declared himself victorious—and he has since then had every protest beaten down by his henchmen, the heavily armed Karатели.

So the quiet of which Julija Cimafiejeva speaks is the calm before the storm, and she knows that the calm surrounding the Cerrini-Schlössl this morning on the Schloßberg in Graz is of an entirely different type. Graz’s old town, engulfed in the icy fog below, is frozen in lockdown-mode. Julija Cimafiejeva and her husband Alhierd Baharevich arrived here just a few days ago. Because they could no longer take

the unrelenting fear in Minsk, the fear that they might be arrested.

...1937, but with the Internet. [...] As then, so now: terror and cruelty, black marias waiting outside the flats, people afraid to listen to the footsteps on the landing, afraid of leaving the house and simply not coming back... People disappearing in broad daylight, and then being found. They're found in prison, and that's something to be happy about. At least they're alive. Thank God!

[Alhierd Baharevich: "The Last Word of Childhood. Fascism as Memory"]

Their trip into exile was anything but easy to organise: six-month visas, COVID tests, flights. But these two "Writers in Exile" are here, now, in a light-flooded flat with parquet flooring at this early-19th-century bourgeois residence perched magnificently above the centre of town. This building has spent many years serving as an "International House of Authors" under the aegis of Kulturvermittlung Steiermark and the Graz Department of Cultural Affairs.

"As then, so now: terror and cruelty, black marias waiting outside the flats, people afraid to listen to the footsteps on the landing (...)."

The two authors would like to have their stay in Graz viewed first and foremost as a normal trip. They're accustomed to travelling, they say, even if invitations to literature festivals have been absent this year due to COVID-19. Exile is just another of those things that are no longer like they were in the 20th century, says Alhierd Baharevich in the polished German he learned in Hamburg. Now, one can also raise one's voice abroad. Since the protests in Belarus began, some of the leading lights in that country's resistance movement have left—foremost among



Julija Cimafiejeva and Alhierd Baharevich

them Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who claims to have won the elections and is now demanding tough sanctions against Lukashenko from her base in Lithuania. "That's better than sitting around with COVID in a Belarusian jail," says Julija Cimafiejeva. And now these two, as well, have exchanged the violence in Minsk for tranquillity above

the rooftops of Graz. "We all do what we can."

When we leave the house, we go prepared. First, I dress carefully, in case I end up spending a night or two in the detention centre. Second, I intensively water dozens of my plants. Third, we leave our cat enough food for a few

days. (One of my friends says that her cat has become fat with all these Sunday rallies.) [...] It's important, too, to clear the history of your mobile phone, as these are often checked in the detention centres. Now ready, our small family brigade goes out into the street, into the unknown.

[Julija Cimafiejeva: Belarus Diary. 1 October]

(...)

One reason why the two had to fear for their freedom in Minsk was that they had publicly attacked the regime: Julija Cimafiejeva, a lyric poet, photographer, and translator born in 1982, had written in her Belarus Diary about the arrests of her friends and her brother, about her own fear of being arrested, and about the shame of the avtosaks, the prisoner transport vehicles, which she'd so far been spared. Alhierd Baharevich, who

"As far as the future is concerned, Alhierd Baharevich is more pessimistic than his wife."

was born in the Soviet Union in 1975, spent the 1990s screaming out his rage at the system in the punk band Prava-kacija [Provocation], and has since depicted the conditions of totalitarian rule in full-fledged novels, recently authored a brilliant essay on fascism. For it is fascism, in his view, that has returned to Belarus.

Not long ago, the situation for the two became even more precarious. Baharevich says that citations are currently being sent out en masse. "Who knows what we'll find in the mail when we return to Minsk?" It is said that 30,000 arrests have been made so far. Torture and serious cases of mistreatment in custody have been "widespread and systematic", writes the Graz-based human rights expert Wolfgang Benedek in his report for the OECD.

Fascists. It was summer when you shouted the word at them; we were helplessly watching thugs in balaclavas grab cyclists on the square simply because they were cyclists. [...] You shouted the word at them when they were hunting unarmed people outside the hotel 'Minsk', and the hotel guests were following the hunt from their windows. They watched, feeling that they had somehow ended up inside a time machine.

[Alhierd Baharevich: "The Last Word of Childhood. Fascism as Memory"]

Using Telegram channels like Nexta and Tut.by, Cimafiejeva and her husband follow the events in Belarus on a daily basis. "Our bodies are here in Graz," says Julija Cimafiejeva, "but our thoughts are still in Belarus." As far as the future is concerned, Alhierd Baharevich is more pessimistic than his wife. He fears that peaceful demonstrations have led into a dead-end. "By November, we felt like we were hitting the streets every Sunday in order to feed this terrible dragon." By "dragon", he means Lukashenko's security apparatus. "It's not a dead end—it's suicide."

And how will things continue after half a year in Graz? That depends on how things develop in Belarus, says Baharevich. "How long can Lukashenko maintain control over the country by violence alone? A month? A year?" In the meantime, there's enough to do. But he's especially captivated by one question—the "most important and most embarrassing", as he puts it. It would be simple to pin responsibility for everything onto the dictator. "But we Belarusians are also at fault. Why were we patient for so many years? Why did we allow all this?"



© Courtesy Aida Muluneh, Ethiopia and David Knut Projects. The Departure, 2016, Ethiopia

FACTBOX ARTISTIC FREEDOM

Cities of Refuge – Safe Havens for Writers at Risk:

170 artists in
82 states (as of 2017)
consisting of:
42 in Scandinavia,
31 in the rest of Europe,
6 in North America,
3 in South America

Violations of artistic freedom in 2020:

978 cases in 89 countries as well as online (Freemuse 2021)
Including
289 cases of censorship,
133 artists detained,
82 artists imprisoned,
17 artists murdered,
107 artists prosecuted

Links:

Freemuse Report, 2021: <https://freemuse.org/news/the-state-of-artistic-freedom-2021/>

UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, 2018: <https://www.unesco.at/kultur/vielfalt-kultureller-ausdrucksformen/news-vielfalt-kultureller-ausdrucksformen/article/unesco-weltbericht-2018-kultur-politik-neu-gestalten>

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Creativity, Identity, Continuity

The Stinatz Wedding, Bookbinding, the Amras Matschgerer, and Kneipp Therapy—all of these are part of Austria's intangible cultural heritage and reflect its substantive breadth. "Intangible Cultural Heritage" is the heading under which UNESCO recognises, documents, and safeguards cultural practices, rituals, experiential knowledge, and masterful craftsmanship. UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has made it possible to place traditional knowledge associated with using local resources in a sustainable manner firmly in the spotlight alongside "representative" culture. And since intangible cultural heritage is supported by human knowledge and skill, it conveys identity and continuity while also being characterised by creativity and ongoing development.



© Verein Amraser Matschgerer

The Amras Matschgerer



© Sixt-Fuchs

The Craft of Bookbinding

The Austrian National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

When customs and cultural practices are rendered more visible, there arises a new understanding of special regional characteristics and sustainable approaches to dealing with resources. And since Austria's ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009, the Austrian National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has served to collect and document the societal diversity of its "living heritage". Now totalling 133 elements, this list helps intangible cultural heritage to be better understood. Although an element's inscription entails no financial or legal claims, it is associated with an increase in public visibility and esteem. It also entails inclusion in a global community, for the criteria for admission to such national lists are determined in accordance with international standards set by UNESCO as a whole. And finally, the National Inventory makes visible locally and regionally specific variants of customs, celebrations, crafts, traditions, and language.

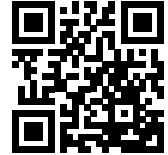
Communities, groups, and even individuals can apply to the Austrian Commission for UNESCO for inclusion in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Austria. An interdisciplinary **Advisory Panel on Intangible Cultural Heritage** makes the decisions regarding traditions' inscription as well as any nominations of national elements for one of UNESCO's three international lists. Alongside the respective National Inventories of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, three lists are also kept at the international level:

- The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity: makes intangible cultural heritage visible worldwide and raises awareness of the diversity of human cultural practices (includes Austrian elements such as Transhumance, inscribed in 2019).
- The Register of Good Safeguarding Practices for programmes, projects, and activities aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage: contains successful programmes and activities for safeguarding and passing on intangible cultural heritage that implement the Convention's principles and objectives in the best possible sense (includes Austrian elements such as Cathedral Workshops, inscribed in 2020).
- The List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding: consists of elements whose preservation is deemed by the affected communities and States Parties to urgently require the implementation of suitable measures (includes elements such as Whistled Language in Turkey, inscribed in 2017).



Relevance to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Intangible Cultural Heritage and Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) Intangible cultural heritage contributes to sustainable development worldwide. It ensures the basis for life, integrates considerations of ecological sustainability, and strengthens social cohesion. Many traditions embody sustainable ways of dealing with resources. One such example from Austria's National Inventory would be Meadow Irrigation in Tyrol, in view of how this tradition entails knowledgeable and sustainable use of the resource of water. Also noteworthy in this respect is *Odlatzbia Oröwen* in the Wiesenwienerwald (inscribed in 2020), in which the fruit of the wild service tree is gently harvested by hand. Since numerous such examples exist all over the world, 2020 saw UNESCO present an online tool that shows the relationships between the SDGs and practices that fall within the realm of intangible cultural heritage (see: <https://cutt.ly/1jiYzbg>).



SELECTED ACTIVITIES, 2020

• International Nominations and Inscriptions

In March 2020, Austria joined forces with Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, and Italy to nominate the element *Lipizzan Horse Breeding Traditions* for the international Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This list currently includes a total of 492 inscriptions from around the world.

In December 2020, the element *Craft Techniques and Customary Practices of Cathedral Workshops* was inscribed to the UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. This nomination resulted from a collaborative effort by a total of 18 cathedral workshops in five European countries (France, Germany, Norway, Austria, and Switzerland) including the workshops of the New Cathedral in Linz and St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. The Register of Good Safeguarding Practices currently lists 25 projects from 22 countries.



The Art and Craft of Stonemasonry

• New Admissions to the National Inventory

In 2020, the National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Austria grew by nine elements:

- Bad Mitterndorf Saint Nicholas Play (Styria)
- The Amras *Matschgerer* (Tyrol)
- The Vintner's Crown and Guardian tree in Neustift am Walde (Vienna)
- Stinatz Wedding - Stinjačka svadba (Burgenland)
- Kneipp Therapy as Traditional Knowledge and Practice after the Teachings of Sebastian Kneipp (Austria-wide)
- *Odlatzbia Oröwen* in the Wiesenwienerwald (Lower Austria)
- The Craft of Bookbinding (Austria-wide)
- The *Fuhr* on Lake Hallstatt (Upper Austria)
- The Art and Craft of Stonemasonry (Austria-wide)



Odlatzbia Oröwen in the Wiesenwienerwald

- **A Focus on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Education**

The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage lives from the creative process of its being transmitted from one generation to the next, and it is closely linked to the matters of education and outreach. In 2020, the project “Teaching and Learning with Living Heritage. Design and Creation of a ‘Glöcklerkappe’” was carried out in cooperation with the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet). This project, which saw the World Heritage Middle School of Bad Goisern integrate the theme of intangible cultural heritage into the teaching of various school subjects, was selected by ASPnet as an example of good practice and will be included in a UNESCO collection of educational materials for the integration of intangible cultural heritage in school instruction.



- **COVID-19 and the Virtual Salon**

The COVID-19 pandemic also changed the way work was done with and for the bearers of these traditions in Austria. Since it rarely proved feasible to hold physically present meetings during 2020, a “Virtual Salon” was created. This format centred on exchange with practitioners of the various traditions and on lending visibility to the measures they have implemented, to their activities, and to current challenges: How is the pandemic affecting intangible cultural heritage? What challenges have arisen as a result, and what initiatives and projects have been initiated? Such questions as well as others were a focus of these conversations, which revealed that many elements of intangible cultural heritage in Austria have been hit hard at least in part, but also that numerous measures and coping mechanisms have been developed in order to deal with these trying times.

- **Cultural Heritage and Diversity**

It is frequently believed that a state’s national inventory has to do exclusively with autochthonous customs and traditions. The fact is, however, that Austria’s cultural landscape is characterised by a broad diversity and plurality of living heritage. It was before this backdrop that 2020 witnessed an online discussion of experts on the topic of “Intangible Cultural Heritage in a (Post-)Migrant Europe” in cooperation with the organisation Brunnenpassage Wien. This event was devoted to the question of how intangible cultural heritage should be defined in the present day, as well as to querying just who and/or what entities do the defining. Invitations were extended to individuals who uphold traditions, knowledge, or practices already represented in the National Inventory (including Slovenian Field and House Names and Wedding Traditions in Stinatz/Stinjaki), and it also proved possible to arrange participation by members of minorities who deal creatively with their heritage (here, musical traditions of the Roma and the celebration of Yalda [the Persian winter solstice festivities]). Also involved in this discussion were representatives of UNESCO as well as members of Austria’s Advisory Panel on Intangible Cultural Heritage.



© Hilda Rescortis

CONVENTION for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

2003	adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO
2009	ratified by Austria
180	States Parties
492	elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
67	elements on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding
25	proven programmes, projects, and activities aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage
133	traditions in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Austria

Role of the ÖUK: awareness-raising in the interest of safeguarding, conveying, and supporting intangible cultural heritage in Austria, compilation of the National Inventory

ÖUK priorities in 2020: inscription of 9 further traditions on the Austrian National Inventory of ICH; emphases: ICH and education; traditional craftsmanship; resilience in times of COVID-19

- **livingheritage_at** Goes Instagram

The Instagram account livingheritage_at presents elements from the National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and/or Register of Good Safeguarding Practice on a weekly basis. To this end, the ÖUK cooperates with IGers Vienna, a group of amateur and professional photographers with nearly 30,000 followers, and it also organised an “Instawalk” on the topic of Jauken and high-flying pigeon sport in general in order to convey intangible cultural heritage to a broader audience via social media. A total of around 25 photographers took part in this “Instawalk” at Schönbrunn Zoo and presented their photos online.



© Marie-Theres Bauer

Instawalk at the Schönbrunn Zoo



© Katarzyna Makusz

High-flying pigeon sport photo from the Instawalk



https://instagram.com/livingheritage_at?r=nametag

Intangible Cultural Heritage in Times of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic left quite a deep mark on the year 2020 and on the lives of millions of people worldwide, who quite naturally included the bearers of intangible cultural heritage: numerous traditions and customs as well as other cultural sectors were influenced or restricted in their doings by the measures that were imposed in order to counter the pandemic. But before this backdrop, it was also shown how intangible cultural heritage—as an identity-forming component that lives from those who bear it—can be creatively adapted in exceptional situations. Over the past year, one saw various initiatives that exemplified how the bearers of living heritage dealt with these circumstances.

→ In the report below, Ludwig Wiener—head of the association Immaterielles KulturErbe Salzkammergut—details his own very personal experiences pertaining to how things went for relevant communities in the Salzkammergut region.



Easter 2020: socially distanced egg tapping

ICH in the Salzkammergut during the COVID-19 Pandemic. An Observational Report

Are we currently witnessing a transition between economic and socio-political eras, or are these actually just “difficult times” without any long-term effects? At present, we don’t yet know. But in the following, I would like to convey my personal impressions from the last 14 months with regard to how COVID-19 has affected our intangible cultural heritage in the Salzkammergut region.

Guest contribution by

LUDWIG WIENER

Pre-Lockdown: COVID-19 far off in the Distance

At New Year’s 2019/2020, as we celebrated the dawn of a new decade with plenty of fireworks and the firing of cannons both handheld and wheeled, our region had already become aware of a new and dangerous pathogen—but our own daily lives appeared unaffected by it. It was thus that the numerous traditions associated with the Christmas liturgy took place in their accustomed ways: the *Kripperlroas* provided

an opportunity to admire the many crèches that people had built with so much effort and love in churches, museums, and private homes, and 5 January—the last night of Christmas—saw bell-ringing *Glöckler* run through the villages with their elaborately worked illuminated caps. This was followed by the beginnings of Carnival—which, especially in the Salzkammergut, represents something like a fifth season of the year: dancing events, balls, parades, Carnival meetings, and the Rag Procession in Ebensee take place one after the other. For several years now, Fat Thursday has seen Bad Ischl play host to the *Geigenwanderung*,

or Fiddle Procession: in this event, (masked) musicians parade through the town along a thematic route, playing their instruments as they go. Their theme in 2020: paying homage to eating and drinking establishments and their culture. They hence paid visits to already-closed and still-open inns in Bad Ischl. At that point in time, nobody thought or could have even imagined that it would soon become impossible to visit an inn at all.

The First Lockdown Begins

As Carnival drew to a close, however, it became clear that massive restrictions



© Ludwig Wiener

Making the Rag Procession in Ebensee happen in 2020



© Michael Körner

The first *Genussgeigerei* at Bad Ischl's Lehartheater following the first lockdown

on social life were going to be unavoidable. Lent, traditionally a period of quiet and inner retreat, had arrived—but even so, the first lockdown and its closure of all hospitality establishments as well as the ban on meeting others at community organisations or privately represented an unprecedented situation.

“Its objective was and still is to promote those cultural assets that are absent from the various tourist boards’ touristic offerings.”

For many, this was the beginning of a period of introspection. And for me, as well, it was an opportunity to look back upon the activities of the association “Immaterielles KulturErbe Salzkammergut”. This association was founded in 2007 in reaction to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Its objective was and still is to promote those cultural assets that are

absent from the various tourist boards’ offerings. Doing so includes providing lively support to traditional inn culture, to music-making, singing, and traditional rhythmic clapping without a stage—among and together with the guests in attendance. This idea gave birth to new initiatives including the so-called *Genussgeiger* [Pleasure-Fiddlers], musicians who meet on the first Thursday of each month to make music together in one of the Salzkammergut region’s numerous hospitality establishments. Their *Genussgeigereien* are now participated in by up to 40 enthusiastic musicians. But mid-March saw these fiddlers, too, fall temporarily silent.

Event Postponed!

Numerous bearers of traditions were forced to change their plans and adapt their doings to the rapidly changing mitigation measures. And to my surprise, it also proved impossible to celebrate Easter and its many rituals in their usual forms: palm branches were blessed in “social distance blessings”,

and events like the traditional Palm Sunday processions were cancelled with no replacement. At this point, the most common information to be heard or read about previously planned events was: “event postponed”!

As spring progressed, it did at least prove possible to restart small-scale cultural activities in outdoor settings. But one of the most important celebrations of this season, that of erecting the maypole, was able to take place only in a reduced form so as to ensure the required distance between participants and onlookers.

Summertime Relaxations

From May onward, gradual relaxation of the various COVID-19 mitigation measures meant that get-togethers, events, and rituals could once again be planned. It’s thanks to this that, following a two-month break, it proved possible to organise the first *Genussgeiger* meeting in a sufficiently large event space. This involved removing the installed seats in Bad Ischl’s Lehartheater and positioning the musicians’



© Ludwig Wiener

Erecting the Maypole, 2020

seating in accordance with the rules in force. The host, cooks, and servers, for their part, worked from the stage while individual attendees listened from the galleries.

Other celebrations that normally take place at this time, such as Traunkirchen and Hallstatt's famed lake processions at Corpus Christi, had to be cancelled. But even so, people reckoned with the restrictions being lifted step by step—even if the quickly changing rules made it difficult to plan. The name of the game was therefore to adapt flexibly to the situation at hand, always remaining confident that the situation would soon begin to normalise.

Since it was emphasised that there would be no renewed lockdown, the people whose traditions centre on the autumn months were certain that their events would be able to take place—events such as the intangible cultural heritage element of Salzkammergut Bird-Catching. After all, the catching period sees the practitioners of this tradition wander the woods alone, with human gatherings being rather the exception and easy to avoid. Only at

the end of the catching period do people meet for the traditional bird show—an event where the local populace can admire the birds that have been caught.

Event Cancelled!

In October, it became apparent that restrictions would be returning. People therefore got to work on concepts and ideas intended to enable the various activities to go forward after all: activities like the celebrations of people's special birthdays on Lichtbratl-Monday in Bad Ischl, the bird shows, and the dancing events on St. Catherine's Day. But much like earlier in the year, developments unfolded rapidly—and even the safety concepts that had been devised could no longer “rescue” these events.

It was simply no longer possible to (further) adapt these traditional and living processes amidst such fast-changing conditions. It goes without saying that musicians attempted to live-stream or engage in exchange via social

“And as the third lockdown rolled around, one thing was clear: there was virtually no legal latitude for social activities.”

media in order to remain active in some form, but most found this unsatisfying. And since it seemed there was no end in sight, many bearers of traditions gave up on their elaborate preparations for the Christmas season, which would have included putting up large landscape crèches or the production of bell-ringers caps. The most frequently seen bit of information regarding already-publicised events and annual traditional events was: “event cancelled”. Many people then turned to sharing memories (photos, newspaper reports, videos) on social media as a way of staying mindful of these pre-COVID doings—always in hopes of being able to experience them

once again in the future. Even before Christmas, association heads ended up cancelling their 2021 Carnival events in order to avoid unnecessarily wasting the great effort involved in preparation.

And as the third lockdown rolled around, one thing was clear: there was virtually no legal latitude for social activities. The only traditions that could be practised were ones that require no large gatherings: hence, New Year's 2020/21 featured the clearly audible shots of handheld and wheeled cannons, and it did at least prove possible to admire Nativity scenes in the parish churches. Although the Rag Procession in Ebensee has been cancelled by the association responsible for putting it on, a few of its protagonists did get together for a socially distanced procession in their typical masks—unannounced, with no press coverage, and with no crowds in attendance. This was an important example and reminder of how elements of intangible cultural heritage live first and foremost from those who uphold them.

One can still hear Ebensee's rag-wearing procession participants calling out: “*Faschingtag, Faschingtag, kemmt's na boid wieda!*” [Carnival Day, Carnival Day, Come Back Again Soon!]



© Ludwig Wiener

LUDWIG WIENER, born in 1959, heads the association Immaterielles KulturErbe Salzkammergut and is also a bird-catcher and musician. Upon completion of his studies in forestry, he went to work as a scientist for a University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna research initiative aimed at combatting forest dieback before assuming a position at the Province of Salzburg's forestry department in 1988. He retired in 2020. Wiener lives together with his family in Bad Ischl.

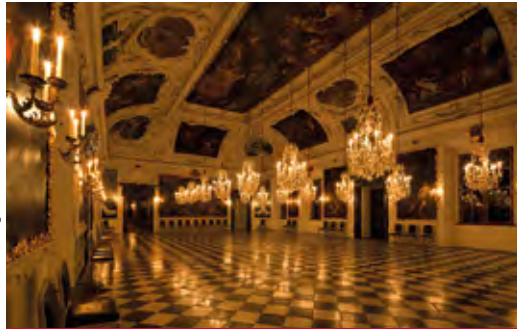
WORLD HERITAGE

International Commitment as a National Mission

1,221 cultural and natural sites of exceptional, universal value in 168 states currently enjoy special protection under the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage (also known simply as the "World Heritage Convention"). In Austria, which has been a State Party to the Convention since 1992, there exist 10 of these unique witnesses to human and natural history that need to be preserved for all of humanity and for future generations.



This year, the Wachau Cultural Landscape celebrated 20 years as a World Heritage site. This stretch of the Danube merits special protection on account of the splendid monasteries, medieval villages, castles, and terraced vineyards that dominate its landscape.



© Peter Gradischning

CONVENTION Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage

- 1972 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO
- 1992 ratified by Austria
- 193 States Parties
- 1,221 World Heritage sites worldwide
- 10 World Heritage sites in Austria

Role of ÖUK: coordinating office of the Austrian World Heritage Site Conference, support, information, and advising

ÖUK priorities: networking of Austrian World Heritage-related entities, World Heritage education, awareness-raising

2020's challenges extended to the protection of cultural property and nature, as well. While 2019's Austrian World Heritage Site Conference had still seen discussion of the problems and consequences associated with the phenomenon of "overtourism", the following year presented the opposite situation: the COVID-19 pandemic had not only brought the tourism industry to a nearly complete standstill, but also rendered acutely visible the vulnerability of institutions, places, and regions (and hence also World Heritage sites), in light of how all of these are heavily dependent upon the travel industry's value creation. Revenue losses of up to 90% not only have direct economic effects but can also jeopardise important investments in the preservation of cultural and natural monuments.

In the future, it will be all the more necessary to develop sustainable and resilient models for the use of World Heritage sites and to implement these as part of efficient management systems. But by the same token, individual positive effects are also seen when streams of international visitors dry up—such as in terms of giving stressed ecosystems a regenerative break.

🔴 Ten years ago, the UNESCO World Heritage Site "City of Graz – Historic Centre" was expanded to include the baroque Schloss Eggenberg. The bel étage of this palace has undergone very few changes since it was built and hence conveys an authentic impression of a baroque princely residence—like in this photo taken by candlelight.



Relevance to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG 11: The World Heritage Convention contributes to cities' and human settlements' sustainability by calling for the strengthening of efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage (Target 11.4). **SDG 13:** The protection of cultural heritage contributes to strengthening the resilience and the capacity to adapt to climate-related hazards and natural disasters (Target 13.1).

SELECTED ACTIVITIES, 2020

- **44th Session of the World Heritage Committee**

The annual session of the World Heritage Committee had been scheduled to take place in Fuzhou, China from 29 June to 9 July 2020. Of particular interest to Austria would have been the anticipated decisions on the World Heritage nominations "Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Danube Limes" as well as the "Great Spas of Europe". But as a consequence of the worldwide public health crisis, which made it impossible to hold such a large event, this World Heritage Committee session was rescheduled to take place together with the Committee's 14th extraordinary session in 2021.

- **Austria's World Heritage Sites:**

- **Networking and Exchange in Times of Crisis**

One of the main responsibilities of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO in terms of World Heritage is its role as the coordinating office of the Austrian World Heritage Site Conference. And fortunately, the closed conference of the Austrian World Heritage site managers, originally planned to take place in April, was able to take place in its accustomed manner in June. However, the 16th Austrian World Heritage Site Conference, planned for 9–10 November at Schönbrunn Palace with the theme of "Beyond Monuments? – Dimensions of Monument Protection and the Care of Monuments in the Context of the World Heritage Convention", had to be postponed indefinitely due to COVID-19-related developments. At the initiative of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO (ÖUK), three virtual meetings of the Austrian World Heritage site managers were therefore held in order to facilitate exchange and collaboration during the lockdown, as well.

- **Awareness-Raising and Public Relations Work:**

- **Text Modules on World Heritage in Austria**

An emphasis that has by now become quite important consists in enabling all 10 Austrian World Heritage sites to present themselves publicly and communicate in a unified manner. In order to offer a high-quality common resource in this respect, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO had Michael Huter, an experienced public educator and formulator of museum texts, create a set of text modules on Austria's World Heritage. The objective was to provide

an appealing and accessible text-based approach to Austrian World Heritage and its exceptional, universal value. The texts that he developed are now to be used by the Austrian World Heritage sites as well as other stakeholders in outreach as well as in press and public relations work.

- **The Heritage Fair MONUMENTO Salzburg**

For the third time, it proved possible to realise a shared appearance by the Austrian World Heritage sites and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO together with the Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture, Civil Service and Sport (BMKÖES) and the Austrian Federal Office for the Care of Monuments (BDA) at the international heritage fair MONUMENTO Salzburg (5–7 March 2020) in order to inform both the specialist community and the interested public about their work together regarding World Heritage and monument protection.



PROTECTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

Preserving Cultural Identities



© Jessica Johnston / unsplash

CONVENTION on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property

1970	adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO
2015	ratified by Austria
140	States Parties

HAGUE CONVENTION for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict

1954	adopted in The Hague; expanded by the Second Protocol in 1999
1964	ratified by Austria
133	States Parties

Role of the ÖUK: support, advising, and public relations work

ÖUK priorities: support of implementation, participation in the Cultural Property Panel, awareness-raising activities

Beginning with the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the period since 1954 has seen UNESCO adopt four conventions under international law aimed at protecting movable and immovable cultural property. In particular the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which celebrated 50 years of existence in 2020, is now increasingly in focus due to the global effects of the illicit cultural property trade.

SELECTED ACTIVITIES, 2020

• Cultural Property Panel

2020 saw the Austrian Commission for UNESCO continue its participation in the Cultural Property Panel of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). Together with the central national-level protagonists, above all the Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture, Civil Service and Sport (BMKÖES), the Austrian Federal Office for the Care of Monuments (BDA), ICOM Austria, Blue Shield Austria, and many others in this working group, efforts to effectively implement the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970) in Austria were driven forward and made visible.



Relevance to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG 13: The protection of cultural property correlates directly with strengthening the resilience and the capacity to adapt to climate-related hazards and natural disasters (Target 13.1). **SDG 16:** The implementation of the UNESCO Convention supports the recovery and return of stolen assets, in particular cultural property, and thus combats organised crime and helps to reduce illicit financial flows (Target 16.4).

☞ Cultural property, including archaeological finds, is at risk especially in regions of conflict—for which reason it must be protected from destruction as well as from plundering, theft, and illicit trafficking.

The Illicit Trade in Non-European Cultural Property: Experiences from Police Practice

Commentary by **ANITA GACH** and **FLORIAN MEIXNER**

The illicit trade in and/or unlawful removal of cultural property entails more than just irreparable damage to those societies from which the objects were originally taken—after all, the implications of illicit excavation, plundering, and smuggling for global security policy are likewise not to be underestimated. Leading international organisations, first and foremost UNESCO and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes), repeatedly point out the growing importance of the trade in plundered or stolen cultural property in terms of money laundering and organised crime. Moreover, and not unimportantly, the UN Security Council has emphasised how this business also relates to the financing of international terror. The UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, adopted in 1970, numbers among the central international legal instruments in the battle against this worldwide problem. This convention, which the Republic of Austria ratified in 2015, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020.



This supposed souvenir item purchased by a resident of Lower Austria was determined by the Peruvian Ministry of Culture's General Directorate of Cultural Industries and Arts to be a burial object from the Chancay culture and hence part of Peru's cultural heritage.

In Austria, several institutions and authorities are responsible for the Convention's implementation—above all the Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture, Civil Service and Sport (BMKOE) and the Austrian Federal Office for the Care of Monuments (BDA), with the Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF) and the Federal Ministry of The Interior (BMI) also playing important roles. In Austria's executive branch of government, the Cultural Property Office at the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria, is responsible for handling all crimes relating to art such as theft and fencing, interception, misappropriation, and fraud. Its area of competence is not, however, limited to domestic cases. The Criminal Intelligence Service Austria also carries out the functions of Interpol,

for which reason investigation requests arrive regularly from abroad: during 2020, such requests came with particular frequency from Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Iran, and Peru.

“Leading international organisations repeatedly point out the growing importance of the trade in plundered or stolen cultural property in terms of money laundering and organised crime. Moreover (...) the UN Security Council has emphasised how this business also relates to the financing of international terror.”

The Example of Peru

The Peruvian Ministry of Culture frequently discovers cultural property that has been stolen or unlawfully exported from Peru on an Austrian online platform. In such cases, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and/or Interpol Lima inform the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria about dubious offers. The various questionable objects are then secured by the competent provincial criminal investigation departments while investigations are initiated. In many cases, the owners of these objects are private individuals who purchased them in Peru, for example as tourist souvenirs. Other buyers, such as those who have lived and/or worked in Peru for long periods, could probably have been expected to show greater sensitivity in how they deal with that country's cultural property.

Such cases are difficult to prosecute, since the purchases in question were frequently made years in the past, illegal exports to Austria do not themselves constitute crimes, and/or the theft is difficult to prove due to absent or erroneous tracing. Restitutions is in accordance with the Federal Law on the Lawful Return of Cultural Goods (KGRG), which was formulated on the basis of the UNESCO Convention of 1970 and has only been in effect since 2016, have not yet been ordered since the relevant purchases have so far always been ones that occurred many years before.

At the beginning of 2021, a tube-shaped ceramic head was returned to the Embassy of the Republic of Peru. The head's reverse side is ornamented with concentric circles. This object is in the style of the Vicús culture and dates back to the period between 200 and 600 C. E. The Vienna Provincial Criminal Investigation Department determined that the object had been purchased at an antique shop by a Vienna resident during a stay in Lima. The purchaser had been assured that exporting it would not be a problem. And since the price was not high, its purchaser did

not know whether they were buying an original or a replica for tourists. It was later on, when this object was offered for sale on the Internet, that the Peruvian authorities became aware of this piece of cultural property from pre-Incan times.

Restitution typically takes place as a voluntary act. Many individuals have purchased cultural property in Peru unwittingly, with their questions on the legality of its export being answered there in the affirmative. This was also

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the case for a resident of Lower Austria who purchased a linen object on his trip to Peru. This would-be souvenir was determined by the General Directorate of Cultural Industries and Arts at the Peruvian Ministry of Culture to be a burial object from the Chancay culture and hence part of Peru's cultural heritage. (Ill.)

Being Careful about “Souvenirs”

The problem of the illicit trade in cultural property cannot be highlighted often enough. And this is by no means just about cultural property with a high price tag; even historically valuable objects are frequently sold for very little money. And as has been shown above, supposed souvenirs can turn out to be stolen or illegally exported cultural property years after the fact. Therefore, one should be extremely careful when purchasing art objects at home and abroad, making sure to ask extensive questions as to the provenance of those objects that one

is considering. UNESCO has mounted numerous valuable awareness-raising initiatives such as its Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws and its so-called Read Lists, which point out cultural property that is at risk. Other important initiatives have included the International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property (formulated by UNESCO back in 1999), which provides the basis for Austria's code of ethics concerning the trade in art and antiques.

An Important Tool: The Stolen Works of Art Database

It would be desirable for there to be more investigations concerning the stolen non-European cultural property listed in Interpol's Stolen Works of Art Database. This database can be accessed not only by the security authorities in all 194 Interpol Member States, but also by any interested individual who wishes to register as a user. Furthermore, 1 February 2021 saw it made available as an app. Entering an item into Interpol's art database makes it easier for public prosecutors and police forces to take action, and it also gives everyone involved in the art trade the opportunity to get informed about cultural property that has been stolen.

Illegally excavated objects remain problematic. For such objects, there quite naturally exists no tracing information. And for this reason, coordinated international efforts to harmonise the ethics rules for the trade in art and antiques as well as for the sale of archaeological objects are urgently needed.



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ANITA GACH heads the Cultural Property Unit at the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

In the realm of communication and information, UNESCO protects and supports the right to free expression of one's opinion, the safety of journalists, media independence and pluralism, and the development of knowledge societies founded upon universal access to information and the innovative use of digital technologies. In doing so, sustainably preserving as well as providing access to documents of all kinds—books, manuscripts, photos, films, and audio media—is essential and hence the focus of UNESCO's Memory of the World programme.

Areas of focus in UNESCO’s “Communication and Information” work include freedom of opinion and freedom of the press, the development of pluralistic media landscapes, and universal access to knowledge and information. Particularly in the context of rapid technological progress, ensuring the ethical development and use of new technologies is essential. And in the same way, press freedom and freedom of opinion must be protected and expanded utilising all available means. Both the safety of journalists and the ability of all people to access independent media are more important today than ever before.

DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE / MEMORY OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME

Documents are essential features of our society: they govern our every-day lives, ensure the transfer of knowledge, and form the basis for our understanding of historical pasts. It is hence all the more important that documents be preserved and remain accessible for future generations. UNESCO’s “Memory of the World” programme, founded in 1992, deals with themes relevant to the preservation of documents and employs its international register as a contribution toward making visible the documentary heritage of humanity. At the national level, the “Memory of the World” National Committee, which serves the Austrian Commission for UNESCO as an advisory panel, deals with this complex of themes and maintains the national register “Memory of Austria”, which contains and makes visible documentary holdings that are of significance to Austria.

The fact that the preservation of documents is by no means a static field of work is made clear by the increasing significance of digital documents, whose preservation continues to generate new questions and necessitate new attempts at finding solutions. This entails also dealing with cases where the priorities of digital culture and cultural heritage interact.

As this programme has been undergoing review since 2015 due to its increasing politicisation, new nominations for the various Registers are currently on pause both internationally and nationally.

“At a time of profound transformation, inequality and upheaval, UNESCO has redoubled its efforts to ensure freedom of expression, access to information and inclusive digital development worldwide. However, much more remains to be done. We call on all Member States and partners to join us and support our action to make sure communication and information can be maintained as a common good and a cornerstone of healthy, democratic societies.”

Audrey Azoulay, Director General of UNESCO



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MEMORY OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME

Preservation of and Access to Documentary Heritage

1992 programme founded

2015 Recommendation adopted

427 inscriptions on the International
Memory of the World Register

15 of these from Austria

59 inscriptions on the Austrian
National Register

Role of the ÖUK: administrative support of the National Committee, compilation of the National Register, awareness-raising.

ÖUK priorities: support of the National Committee, submission of international nominations, keeping and maintaining Austria’s National Register



„Memory of the World“ – History politics in international relations

Guest commentary by **AMBASSADOR
CLAUDIA REINPRECHT**

UNESCO is known above all in Europe for its protection of cultural heritage, thanks especially to its inscriptions of architectural works, historic city centres, cultural landscapes, and similar on the World Heritage List. A lesser-known fact is that it also strives to support the preservation and availability of important documents as part of its “Memory of the World” (MoW) programme. For

many years, this programme led a wall-flower-like existence. But 20 years after its establishment, the increasing success of its International Register—on which documents of global significance could be listed—sparked an upheaval within UNESCO that brought the organisation to the brink of financial collapse.

In 2015, a proposed inscription on the International Memory of the World Register associated with the “Nanjing Massacre”, which was essentially about pointing out Japanese war crimes, led to

a situation where Japan’s withdrawal from UNESCO was a real possibility. Nominations of documents aimed at the breakthrough of a certain historical narrative in connection with these events, including documents concerning forced prostitution in East Asia (associated with the harmless-sounding euphemism of ‘comfort women’), were submitted in increasing number and caused the pot to boil over. 2017 then saw Japan withhold its mandatory contribution of ca. USD 31 million, plunging

the organisation into an acute liquidity crisis and necessitating the development of an emergency plan.

Politicisation as a Danger to the Programme

The submission of documents on the “Nanjing Massacre” raised awareness of the Register’s potential for politicisation. This has since led to massive interventions in favour of or in opposition to these inscriptions on the part of all affected states, to the point where all of these states threatened to withhold their membership contributions and where dealing with this situation completely absorbed the MoW Secretariat’s few available resources.

The position of relevant experts, according to which the neutral listing of historical documents does not represent a judgement regarding their historical veracity, proved not only unrealistic, but—in light of many States Parties’ perceptions—untenable amidst the reality of international relations. This fact entails that inscriptions under the auspices of UNESCO do, in fact, amount to the legitimisation of their content in the eyes of the worldwide public, an effect that can then be harnessed propagandistically in the battle to dominate the discourse.

Even if inscription on the International Register had not been to represent a historical and political value judgment regarding the correctness of a certain historical narrative, the Register had come to embody a “bone of contention”. Not only did this contradict the true purpose of the programme and the Register, but it also ran and still runs directly counter to UNESCO’s peace-building mission.

Since the MoW Register’s inception, inscriptions have always been the domain of the experts who sit on the programme’s International Advisory Committee (IAC). And the authority to make final decisions on inscription has lain exclusively with the Director-General. Due to the excessive risk

of fracturing UNESCO and bringing it to the verge of financial collapse on account of a small programme that was, moreover, largely unfamiliar to the vast majority of Member States, the Member States decided to remove this matter from the hands of the experts and re-assume control.

In 2015, the IAC had already initiated a project to revise the statutes and guidelines that form the legal basis of the programme and Register. This process went into action during the late summer of 2016 with an online survey in which Austria (represented by the ÖUK and Austria’s National Memory of the

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World Committee) advocated the radical exclusion of controversial nominations in accordance with the model of the UNESCO Geoparks Programme, with nominations that concern multiple states being subject to consensus among those states prior to submission. This recommendation, however, did not meet with consensus among the experts. The Austrian recommendation to limit nomination rights to Member States was likewise rejected, in this case with reference to minority rights.

Suspension of the Register

Director-General Audrey Azoulay, following her election in November at the 39th Session of the General Conference, suspended the Register as one of her first official acts. This moratorium on new inscriptions would prove to be

a boon for the Secretariat’s efforts to implement the programme: it freed up resources for the MoW Secretariat’s actual work, which had until then been wholly absorbed by its efforts to deal with the nominations, in particular with the controversial ones.

There followed the establishment of an “Open-Ended Working Group” (OEWG) in 2018. The objective of the OEWG was to develop the “most appropriate legal framework” for the programme, since the existing legal bases were deemed lacking—above all due to insufficient transparency and involvement of the Member States. In light of this complex of issues, discussion was devoted to the nature of the programme and the matter of its governance structure. There was disagreement over the question of whether programme oversight should adhere to an intergovernmental, expert-led, or hybrid model.

The second thematic area with which the OEWG dealt pertained to the Register’s nominating process, where—as expected—dealing with controversial nominations proved to be the biggest sticking point. Here, there were essentially two schools of thought regarding whether or not “affected” Member States should have the ability to object to nominations and thus exclude them from the process. A group of Member States viewed such an exclusionary principle as an unacceptable right of veto. They held that there should at least be a limited-time dialogue process for cases in which objections are raised. A significant majority of Member States—a majority that was overwhelming but silent—saw no value in an additional (involuntary) dialogue process, but at no point were these states able to prevail.

It therefore came to pass that in the autumn of 2019, the OEWG presented the Executive Board with a report that laid out the contours of a new set of rules for the Register and/or the nomination process. Agreement had been reached on the introduction of a filtering function effected by channelling all nominations via the National Commissions

for UNESCO or relevant governmental authorities. All Member States likewise accepted the establishment of a hybrid governance structure: while the members of the IAC would continue to be appointed by the Director-General, programme oversight would be performed by a so-called Intergovernmental Body.

Discussion was also devoted to the establishment of a digital platform that could be used by Member States to review nominations. The question of exactly how this platform should look

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was under consideration until quite recently. The most important and difficult point was that of how to deal with controversial nominations. In this regard, however, agreement was largely reached on the establishment of a special two-track process for dealing with controversial nominations to which objections are raised.

At the conclusion of these deliberations, three thematic areas remained open—namely, the question of controversial nominations’ evaluation by the Register Subcommittee, mediation modalities in cases of controversial nominations, and controversial nominations’ status on the platform. While some Member States still insisted on compulsory mediation by UNESCO at large as well as that all dossiers, whether controversial or not, be submitted to technical evaluation and that controversial nominations remain on the digital platform, a number of Member States rejected these demands as potentially politicising.

A Solution in Sight?

At its autumn 2019 conference, the Executive Board decided to change the mandate of the OEWG to that of a “limited participation working group” (LPWG) in order to effect resolution of the remaining questions. The LPWG is to submit a final report containing its ultimate solution in April 2021. This entails greater pressure to achieve a result that enables the Register’s revival after four years of protracted negotiations, failing which a situation may need to be acknowledged where a stronger and stronger push to abolish the Register outright emerges. In view of the Register’s popularity, especially in Latin America and Eastern Europe, this does not seem very probable—but it is a possible scenario.

The reform process up to now has not yet produced an explicit solution concerning how to deal with the controversial nominations of the current cycle, in particular how to resolve things regarding the “Comfort Women” dossier. Over nearly 4 years of intergovernmental negotiations, this issue has been addressed only insofar as the Republic of Korea has emphasised multiple times that there should be no retroactive application of the new rules. This would, in fact, hardly be practicable even just for legal reasons. If the “Comfort Women” dossier, which received a positive evaluation by the experts, were now to be revived according to the old rules, three scenarios are conceivable:

The Director-General may make use of her prerogative to make her decision subject to a bilateral solution, she may reject the nomination and recommend re-submission subject to the new rules, or she may summarily approve inscription. In the event that this third route is taken, a veritable political and fiscal crisis becomes a real possibility.

It hence remains to be seen what 2021 will bring for the future of the MoW programme including its Register.



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AMBASSADOR CLAUDIA REINPRECHT has served in the Austrian Foreign Ministry since March of 2004. After diplomatic postings in Vienna, Brussels, Amman, and Hong Kong, Ms. Reinprecht took office as Austrian Ambassador to UNESCO in Paris on 1 August 2017. Her diplomatic career to date has involved work on a broad variety of issues ranging from multi-lateral efforts together with international organisations (in particular the United Nations) on matters including human rights, international humanitarian law and minority rights issues, and EU and economic relations with Eastern European third countries and countries in Central Asia as well as with the EFTA/EEA, to international justice and home affairs including the fight against human trafficking, terrorism, and organised crime.

PRESS FREEDOM

UNESCO is the only special organisation of the United Nations with a mandate to protect freedom of the press and freedom of opinion. The organisation works to promote these freedoms worldwide and support the development of independent and pluralistic media. It also works to ensure the safety of journalists all over the world.

In the context of these efforts, the Windhoek Declaration of 1991 represents an important milestone. This document states clearly that an independent, free, and pluralistic press is essential for the emergence and further development of democracies as well as for economic development. Its signatories also make reference to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which identifies freedom of opinion and freedom of expression as human rights that are fundamental.

Particularly in regions beset by crises and conflicts, UNESCO supports free and independent media in their initiation and nurturing of processes that promote democratisation and the safeguarding of peace. UNESCO supports numerous projects for the training and professional development of journalists. And UNESCO also views journalists' safety worldwide as a central theme.

At the same time, today's employment of digital technologies in order to personalise and moderate content can limit freedom of opinion while easing the dissemination of mis- and disinformation. Misleading or false information undermines societal trust and endangers access to information that is reliable and verified. This, in turn, brings with it the risk of distorting citizens' understanding of critical topics and disrupting democratic processes.



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“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



Relevance to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In terms of freedom of the press, the **SDG 16** plays a major role - most importantly in terms of substantially reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms, developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels, and ensuring public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

Safety of Journalists

In the context of supporting press freedom, the safety of journalists is one of UNESCO's central areas of work. For this reason, the organisation publishes an annual report of the Director-General, the 2020 edition of which once again brings horrifying numbers to light. In 2018/19, UNESCO registered a total of 156 journalists murdered worldwide. What's more, a look at the entire past decade reveals an average murder rate of one journalist every four days. Crimes committed against journalists go largely unpunished: over 880 murders of journalists have been registered by UNESCO over the past 10 years, and over 90% of these cases have yet to be solved. Altogether, the work of journalists worldwide is being undermined by restrictions on the freedom of opinion as well as by continual attacks both online and physically. Above all women journalists are subject to harassment and threats, especially on the Internet. UNESCO's diverse efforts in this area regularly result in great success. And it is particularly pleasing that the winners of the UNESCO Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize in 2016, 2017, and 2018 have since been released from custody and are now pursuing their work once more.

UNESCO Prize, 2020

Since 1997, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize has been awarded every year on World Press Freedom Day (3 May). This prize is named for the Colombian journalist Guillermo Cano Isaza, who was murdered outside the headquarters of his newspaper *El Espectador* in 1986. It is worth USD 25,000 and recognises individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the defence or promotion of press freedom, often doing so at great risk to themselves.

2020's prize went to the Colombian investigative journalist Jineth Bedoya Lima. Lima, who was born in 1974, concentrates in her work on armed conflicts and peace-related processes in Colombia while also paying special attention to sexual violence towards women. In 2000, she herself fell victim to severe sexual violence when she was kidnapped and raped while researching the arms trade for the daily *El Espectador*. Three years later, she was kidnapped by members of FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). In her statement upon the prize's conferral, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay pointed out issues including the enormous risks to which especially female journalists are subject in many parts of the world.

APPENDIX

THE AUSTRIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

Under Section 2 of its statutes, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO serves as a National Commission pursuant to Article VII of the Charter of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Its activities are of a non-profit nature.

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Youth Advisory Panel

Advisory Panel on Cultural Diversity

Working Group on Cultural Diversity

Advisory Panel on Intangible Cultural Heritage

Advisory Panel on Information Preservation / Memory of the World National Committee

UNESCO-WELTERBESTÄTTEN IN ÖSTERREICH

1996 **Historic Centre of the City of Salzburg**
www.salzburg.info

1996 **Palace and Gardens of Schönbrunn**
www.schoenbrunn.at

1997 **Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape**
www.welterberegion.at,
www.salzkammergut.at

1998 **Semmering Railway**
www.semmeringbahn.at

1999 **City of Graz – Historic Centre and**

Schloss Eggenberg
www.graz.at
www.museum-joanneum.at/de/schloss_eggenberg

2000 **Wachau Cultural Landscape**
www.weltkulturerbe-wachau.at/2001

2001 **Historic Centre of Vienna**
www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/grundlagen/weltkulturerbe/2001

2001 **Fertő/Neusiedler See Cultural Landscape** (jointly with Hungary)
www.welterbe.org
www.fertotaj.hu

2011 **Prehistoric Pile Dwellings Around the Alps** (jointly with France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland)
www.pfahlbauten.at

2017 **Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe** (jointly with Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Ukraine), with Austrian properties in the Dürrenstein Wilderness Area (Lower Austria) as well as in the Kalkalpen National Park (Upper Austria).
www.wildnisgebiet.at
www.kalkalpen.at/de

BIOSPÄRENPARKS IN ÖSTERREICH

2000 **Großes Walsertal**, Vorarlberg
www.grosseswalsertal.at

2005 **Vienna Woods**, Vienna / Lower Austria
www.bpww.at

2012 **Lungau/Nockberge**, Salzburg/Carinthia
www.biosphaerenpark.eu
www.biosphaerenparknockberge.at

- 2019 **Lower Mura Valley**, Styria, The world's first 5-country biosphere reserve (Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, and Serbia) www.amazon-of-europe.com

AUSTRIAN UNESCO GEOPARKS

- 2004 **Styrian Eisenwurzen** www.eisenwurzen.com
- 2013 **Karawanken/Karavanke** (together with Slovenia) www.geopark-karawanken.at
- 2014 **Ore of the Alps** www.geopark-erzderalpen.at

INSCRIPTIONS ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

- 2012 **Falconry**, a Living Human Heritage (multinational nomination by altogether 18 states) www.falknerbund.com
- 2012 **Schemenlaufen**, the carnival of Imst www.fasnacht.at/imscht/unesco.html
- 2015 **Classical Horsemanship and the High School of the Spanish Riding School Vienna** www.srs.at
- 2017 **Resist Block Printing and Indigo Dyeing in Europe** (multinational nomination with Germany, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary)
- 2017 **Avalanche Risk Management** (bilateral nomination with Switzerland)
- 2019 **Transhumance** the Seasonal Droving of Livestock along Migratory Routes in the Mediterranean and in the Alps (multinational nomination with Greece and Italy)

INSCRIPTIONS ON THE INTERNATIONAL ICH REGISTER OF GOOD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES

- 2016 **Regional Centres for Craftsmanship: a strategy for safeguarding the cultural heritage of traditional handicraft** www.werkraum.at www.textiles-zentrum-haslach.at www.handwerkhaus.at
- 2020 **Craft techniques and customary practices of cathedral workshops, or Bauhütten, in Europe, know-how, transmission, development of knowledge and innovation** www.dombauwien.at/dbw www.dioezese-linz.at/mariendom

AUSTRIAN UNESCO "CREATIVE CITIES"

- 2011 **Graz – "City of Design"** www.graz-cityofdesign.at/de
- 2014 **Linz – "City of Media Arts"** www.linz.at/Kultur/cityofmediaarts.asp

EINTRÄGE IN DAS MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

- 1997 **Vienna Dioscurides** Austrian National Library www.onb.ac.at
- 1997 **Final Document of the Congress of Vienna 1815**, Austrian State Archives www.oesta.gv.at
- 1999 **Historical Collections (1899–1950)** Audiovisual Research Archives of the Austrian Academy of Sciences www.pha.oeaw.ac.at
- 2001 **Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer** Austrian National Library www.onb.ac.at
- 2001 **Schubert Collection** Vienna City Library www.wienbibliothek.at
- 2003 **Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem** Austrian National Library www.onb.ac.at
- 2005 **Brahms Collection** Vienna Society of Friends of Music www.musikverein.at
- 2005 **Collection of Gothic Architectural Drawings**, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna www.akbild.ac.at/Portal/einrichtungen/kupferstichkabinett
- 2005 **Bibliotheca Corviniana** Austrian National Library (jointly with Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, and Italy) www.onb.ac.at
- 2007 **Tabula Peutingeriana** Austrian National Library www.onb.ac.at
- 2011 **Arnold Schönberg Estate** Arnold Schönberg Center www.schoenberg.at
- 2011 **Mainz Psalter** Austrian National Library www.onb.ac.at
- 2013 **The "Golden Bull"**, Austrian State Archives (jointly with Germany) www.oesta.gv.at, www.onb.ac.at
- 2017 **Philosophical Nachlass of Ludwig Wittgenstein** (jointly with Great Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands) www.onb.ac.at
- 2017 **Historical Documents on the Semmering Railway** Vienna Technical Museum www.technischesmuseum.at

AUSTRIAN UNESCO CHAIRS

- UNESCO Chair on Conservation and Preservation of Tangible Cultural Heritage**, established in 2019, University of Applied Arts Vienna | Occupant: Gabriela KRIST www.dieangewandte.at
- UNESCO Chair for Bioethics**, established 2015, Medical University of Vienna | Occupant: Christiane DRUML www.meduniwien.ac.at
- UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Security**, established in 2015, University of Graz | Occupant: Gerd OBERLEITNER www.uni-graz.at
- UNESCO Chair on Integrated River Research and Management**, established in 2014, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences | Occupant: Helmut HABERSACK www.unesco-chair.boku.ac.at
- UNESCO Chair for Peace Studies**, established in 2008, extended in 2014, University of Innsbruck | Occupant: Wolfgang DIETRICH www.uibk.ac.at/peacestudies
- UNESCO Chair in Cultural Heritage and Tourism**, established in 2011, University of Salzburg, Department of Communication Science, Transcultural Communication | Occupant: Kurt LUGER www.kurt-luger.at
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Patrizia Jankovic and Claudia Isep

Editors

Marie-Theres Bauer
Cristina Biasetto
Friederike Koppensteiner
Klara Košťal
Florian Meixner
Martina Mertl

Translation

Christopher Roth

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Ursula Meyer

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