

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PABSEC**

THE CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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REPORT

on

**Protection of the Cultural Heritage
of the PABSEC Member Countries**

Rapporteur: **Mr.Constantin DRAGOMIR** (Romania)

1. Introduction

The Second Meeting of the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee which was held in Moscow on 4-5 May, 1994 decided, upon the proposal of the Romanian delegation supported by other delegations, to put on the agenda of its Third Meeting in Chisinau on 28-29 September, 1994 as the main item "Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the PABSEC Member Countries". The main draft report was prepared by the Romanian delegation, while the International Secretariat also received information and proposals from the delegations of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine which were used in preparing the final drafts of the Report and the Recommendation on this subject.

2. The Cultural Heritage of the Black Sea Region: European and Global Context

Bringing a message from the past, the historical and cultural monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of age-old traditions. Today people are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. Therefore, the common responsibility to safeguard the historical and cultural heritage is universally recognised.

The Black Sea geo-cultural region, as crossroads and a bond between Europe and Asia, East and West since early times, has its own specific features. Here different cultures, traditions and religions have intertwined, influenced and enriched each other. This gives the Black Sea area a prominent place of its own on the global cultural scene.

Many monuments from this area have been inscribed on the World Heritage List which was established under the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted by UNESCO Member States in 1972. The Convention remains until today the most authoritative and important international document in this domain. The completion of the List is an ongoing process, for example, in 1994 three Georgian monuments - Mtskheta, Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati - have been recommended for the inscription in the World Heritage List. Ukraine has applied for the inclusion of two archeological and architectural sites - one located in the ancient city of Khersones (Sevastopol District) and the other in Olvia (Mykolaiv Region). The placing of monuments on the List brings them to international attention and opens ways to attract technical and material assistance needed to maintain and preserve our cultural heritage.

Among other international instruments helping to protect the cultural heritage are the European Cultural Convention, the European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Architectural Heritage of Europe adopted by the Council of Europe, as well as the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the Venice Charter (International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites). Setting out the universally accepted international standards and principles of the protection of the cultural heritage, these documents also serve as a legal basis for the activities in this field of UNESCO, ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites), the World Heritage Fund and the World Heritage Committee, CDCC (Council for Cultural Co-operation) of the Council of Europe, the European Union structures, as well as other international and European organisations and third countries with which the Black Sea countries can cooperate in order to exchange experiences, enhance expertise and mobilise resources needed for the cultural heritage conservation and protection programmes.

3. Regional and National Aspects

The problem of protecting the cultural heritage has been approached at the regional level, within the framework of the Black Sea Cultural Cooperation. The Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information which was signed by all the PABSEC member countries on 6 March, 1994 stresses the need for cooperation aiming at the preservation of historical and cultural values and historical and cultural monument protection. Article 4 of the Convention states that "the Parties will promote cooperation and joint projects in the fields of ... museums, research and publication of scientific works on archaeology, ethnography, history and art, historical and cultural monument protection by encouraging and facilitating:"

- "visits to exchange information and to collect materials on protection of historical and cultural values and conservation and cooperation aiming at the preservation of historical and cultural values";
- "organisation of exhibitions of fine art and historical heritage";
- "exchange of exhibits, information as well as experts among museums and other cultural institutions and organisation of joint scientific projects in archaeology and studying ancient civilisations";
- "measures to simplify the access of experts of the Parties archives, library and museum stocks".

The importance and long-term character of the Black Sea Cultural Convention should be stressed, as it forms the legal foundation and framework for all the activities in the cultural and humanitarian sphere in the region. The Assembly's Recommendation 3/1994 on the Ratification and Implementation of the Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information adopted by the Third Plenary Session of the PABSEC in Bucharest in June 1994 continues and will continue to be relevant, both

for those countries which have ratified the Convention and those which are still in the process of doing it. It is important to follow up on the implementation of Recommendation 3/1994, as well as Recommendation 4/1994 (on the Joint Research Programme on the History of the Black Sea) as useful instruments assisting in the protection of the cultural heritage and in developing regional cooperation in this sphere.

Today one can see serious problems facing the member countries in preserving and protecting their national cultural heritage, especially in the countries where the socio-economic changes and difficulties of the transition period have diminished the role of cultural affairs among other national priorities.

It is important that the heritage protection component should become an integral part of any urban or rural development projects, starting from the initial planning stage. The protection of the cultural environment is as important as that of the natural environment, and environmental education with a strong historical and cultural content is of great importance for city planners, architects, civil engineers, local and central government officials, as well as for all our citizens in order to raise the public awareness of the rich cultural heritage of each member country and cultivate a sense of respect for our cultural and spiritual values.

The situation is especially grave in the regions of conflict and instability, such as the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan or the civil war in Georgia in 1991, which have caused a great damage to the cultural and historical monuments located there. Under such circumstances, first and foremost, only mutually acceptable political solutions aimed at the peaceful resolution of conflicts can pave the way to the restoration of normalcy and create conditions for the protection of the cultural heritage.

Some countries have already adopted new legislation regarding the cultural heritage protection in line with the international standards, in particular, Romania adopted Law No.11 on 7 March,1994. It also has a Programme for the evidence preservation and restoration of cultural assets called "Dacia Protpat".

In many countries efforts are underway to complete the inventories of protected cultural and historical monuments. Since it is impossible to safeguard the cultural heritage effectively before having identified the assets of which it is comprised, it is therefore essential to compile national protective inventories. These national protective inventories, or National Cultural Heritage Lists, should be designed for subsequent use as constituent parts of a consolidated regional protective inventory, or the Black Sea Cultural Heritage List.

Another important initiative which the member countries can undertake for the betterment of the protection of our common heritage is the establishment of the Black Sea Cultural Heritage Foundation as a body which would coordinate efforts, accumulate financial resources and ensure the involvement of various government, non-government and private

organisations in the elaboration and implementation of priority projects in the field of the cultural heritage.

4. Cooperation and Joint Projects

At present a number of cooperation and joint projects aimed at the protection of the cultural heritage are underway or being planned in the member countries:

1. Archaeology:

- Working group for the study of funeral archaeology devoted to the research and popularization of less known aspects of the Thraco-Geto-Dacian civilisation in the Black Sea area, namely funeral rites and rituals, mutual influences and contacts with the great classical civilisations - Greek, Hellenistic and Roman (Joint programme for the scientific research and preservation of funeral monuments - Participants: Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Russian Federation, Georgia, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey).
- International programme of research and public exhibitions on "The Evolution of City Life in the West Pontic Area" (Participants: Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Bulgaria).
- Second international symposium of funeral archaeology on "Tumuli from the Iron Age in South-Eastern Europe: rites and rituals, offerings, mutual permeation" in Tulcea, Romania, 18-24 September, 1995
- The annual international colloquium on "Ancient Civilisations in the Black Sea Area" in Constanta, Romania.

2. Preservation of historical monuments:

A. Programme Themes:

- Byzantium and Byzantine heritage in the Black Sea area (architecture, wall painting and icons, decorative arts, circulation of patterns, artists);
- Preservation and restoration of caves - Hellenistic, Roman, Roman-Byzantine, Byzantine, post-Byzantine monuments, either painted or not,
- Influence of the Muslim and Turkish civilisations: an original and forceful cultural creation; local syntheses;
- The Black Sea area: a merger of East and West; the originality of local syntheses;
- Monuments of the 19th and first half of the 20th century - universal styles and local trends, "modernity" between necessity and fashion.

B. Working Methods:

Joint research teams set up according to the themes;

- field work;
- indexes, consolidated reports published either in independent volumes or in a periodical which could be named "The Black Sea - Arts and Civilisations";
- annual symposia held on rotation basis in the member countries and devoted to themes mutually agreed upon;
- workshops;
- joint research, restoration and preservation work;
- exchanges of experts, including field documentation, library and archives work;
- exchanges of publications, foundation of the Library of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation located in Istanbul, Constanta (Romania) and a city in each Black Sea country;
- computerised storage of the results of the research on the programme themes.

This programme proposed by the Romanian delegation is to be carried out in the period 1994-2000 with an estimated cost of 200,000 \$. The costs could be met by using funds available from national governments within the framework of existing programmes, as well as from private and international sources, and by establishing the Black Sea Cultural Heritage Foundation.

ICOMOS - Turkey (Turkish National Committee of ICOMOS) is planning, with the contributions and sponsorships of national and international organisations, in Istanbul in September, 1995 an International Inter-Regional Symposium on "Historical Preservation and Site Conservation Management" (Cultural Areas - Mediterranean, Middle East, Black Sea and Caspian, and Central Asia).

3. Modern and Contemporary Art

The aim of this programme with the participation of art historians, researchers and curators is to enlarge the field of investigation of a cultural area whose specific features can be identified in the artistic creation.

The programme can include the following themes:

- circulation of artists and patterns; lasting artistic styles and techniques in the Black sea area;
- European travelling artists in the Black sea area in the 19th century; defining the national specificity;
- Making known the common artistic heritage;
- Listing the works of art in the museums and in the collections of the countries participating in the programme.

Within the framework of this programme the following actions are envisaged:

- itinerant thematic or monographic exhibitions and publication of the exhibition catalogues;
- symposia and workshops;
- publication of the album of the travelling artists' work;
- publication of research on this subject.

4. Ethnography

The following joint projects can be undertaken:

- Joint teams from the Black Sea countries for the comparative study of folk culture in the Black Sea area. Suggested themes: Folk architecture; Family patterns in rural communities; Ceremonial bread in a wider cultural context;
- Documentary tours, on a mutual basis, of the ethnographic museums in the Black Sea countries;
- Exchange of exhibitions and itinerant exhibitions on specific ethnographic aspects of the Pontic area (photos, documentary films, cassettes);
- Cooperation of ethnographic museums in the Black Sea countries within an institutionalised network; periodical meetings of experts with the aim of drawing up a coherent programme of concerted action concerning the scientific study, the preservation and popularisation of the folk civilisation of the Black Sea countries;

5. Conclusion

The most reliable guarantee for the improvement of the condition of our national historical and cultural assets is the accession of each member country to the universally recognized international agreements and conventions on the protection of the cultural heritage.

At the national level, the member countries need to take steps to enact special legislation or to modify existing legislation with a view to protecting the cultural heritage; in doing so, they should ensure maximum information-sharing and mutual use of available expertise.

Taking into consideration financial limitations, it is important to explore the possibilities of cooperation in this field with international organisations and institutions, as well as attract private funds.

The drawing up of national lists of historical and cultural monuments and sites (national protective inventories, or National Cultural Heritage Lists) and a consolidated regional protective inventory, or the Black Sea Cultural Heritage List would help to identify our assets which are in need of protection.

The establishment of the Black Sea Cultural Heritage Foundation as a coordinating body for all the heritage-protection measures in the region can make a substantial contribution to the expansion of the regional cooperation in the conservation of the cultural heritage helping to organise and facilitate joint projects, exchanges and contacts among museums, historians, archaeologists, researchers, restoration specialists and government officials dealing with monument conservation and protection.

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