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GreenHeritage.
The impact of
Climate Change
on the Intangible
Cultural Heritage



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Comitato di Redazione



Presidente: Alfonso Andria andria.ipad@gmail.com

Direttore responsabile: Pietro Graziani pietro.graziani@hotmail.it

Direttore editoriale: Roberto Vicerè redazione@quotidianoarte.com

Comitato di redazione

Claude Livadie Responsabile settore
"Conoscenza del patrimonio culturale" alborelivadie@libero.it
Jean-Paul Morel Archeologia, storia, cultura moreljp77@gmail.com
Max Schvoerer Scienze e materiali del
patrimonio culturale schvoerer@orange.fr
Maria Cristina Misiti Beni librari,
documentali, audiovisivi c_misiti@yahoo.it

Francesco Caruso Responsabile settore
"Cultura come fattore di sviluppo" francescocaruso@hotmail.it
Territorio storico, ambiente, paesaggio
Ferruccio Ferrigni Rischi e patrimonio culturale ferrigni@unina.it

Dieter Richter Responsabile settore
"Metodi e strumenti del patrimonio culturale" dieterrichter@uni-bremen.de
Informatica e beni culturali
Matilde Romito Studio, tutela e fruizione
del patrimonio culturale matilderomito@gmail.com
Adalgiso Amendola Osservatorio europeo
sul turismo culturale adamendola@unisa.it

Segreteria di redazione

Eugenia Apicella Segretario Generale univeur@univeur.org
Monica Valiante

Progetto grafico e impaginazione

QA Editoria e Comunicazione

Info

Centro Universitario Europeo per i Beni Culturali
Villa Rufolo - 84010 Ravello (SA)
Tel. +39 089 858195 - 089 857669
univeur@univeur.org - www.univeur.org

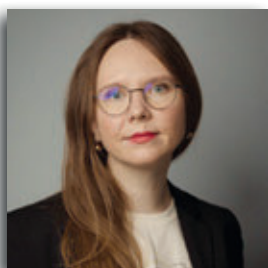
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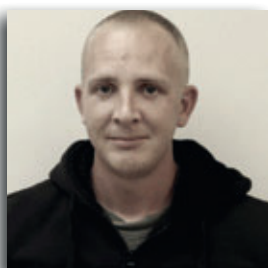
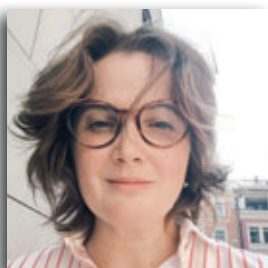




Climate Change Awareness in the Areas of Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding



Kitija Balcare, Elīna Gailīte, Rita Grīnvalde, Sandis Laime
Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia – ILFA



In the project “GreenHeritage. The Impact of Climate Change on the Intangible Cultural Heritage” consortium, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia (ILFA, in Latvian: *Latvijas Universitātes Literatūras, folkloras un mākslas institūts*) participate as experts on intangible cultural heritage (ICH). The authors of this article work as researchers at two ILFA's departments, the Archives of Latvian Folklore and the Department of Arts. Observing and exploring the interlinkages between intangible cultural heritage and climate change (CC) was new and challenging for us. However, after an intense and exciting period of research, which involved both studying academic literature in various fields and consulting professionals from environmental science, geography, climatology, ichthyology and other disciplines, we can humbly say that we have gained new knowledge and a little more understanding. With this publication, based on our project research, we want to share some of our findings not only with the project partners but the wider community of “Territori della Cultura” readers.

The main responsibility of the ILFA team was the implementation of the GreenHeritage Work Package 2, “Needs analysis & development of GreenHeritage Methodology”, which took place in 2023 and was carried out in close cooperation with the other partner institutions. Given the task of needs analysis (T2.1), D2.1 “Research Protocol” was first established. It served as the guiding document for further research and presented the core methodological tools to be used for the needs analysis and mapping exercises, including detailed practical instructions. The task was coordinated by ILFA and carried out in cooperation with other project partners, National Research Council (Italy, CNR), Foundation Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Climate Change (Italy, CMCC), European University Centre for Cultural Heritage (Italy, CUEBC), Foundation of Historical Heritage of Santa María la Real (Spain, FSMLR), and University of the Aegean (Greece, UAEGE-

AN). The ILFA research team took stock of different definitions of ICH at national (Greece, Italy, Latvia and Spain) and EU levels and provided a common definition, they coordinated and did research capturing data in partner countries and across EU regarding types of threats linked to climate change and provided causal links or probabilities of causation between climate change and ICH degradation.

To accomplish the needs analysis task, ILFA developed a suitable primary and secondary data retrieval methodology as well as approaches to data analysis. The data were retrieved via a structured online survey and semi-structured interviews, analysis of UNESCO lists and national ICH inventories, public legal and policy documents, studies of research literature and mass media monitoring. The comprehensive and complex data analysis was carried out in 14 case studies. Those were vivid examples of ICH and CC encounters in each of the partner countries, Greece, Italy, Latvian and Spain. ICH of Greece was represented in three case studies: CS4 "Agricultural and Dietary Tradition of Carob in Crete" (UAEGEAN); CS5 "Mandras (Paddocks) of Lemnos" (UAEGEAN); CS6 "Traditional Practices of Wild Edible Plants in Crete" (UAEGEAN). Italian partners carried out altogether four case studies: CS7 "Art of Dry-stone Walling, Knowledge and Techniques in Cinque Terre and Amalfi Coast" (CUEBC and CMCC); CS8 "Festival of the Ceri / Race of the Ceri- Gubbio" (CNR); CS9 "Madonna Avvocata Festival" (Amalfi Coast, CUEBC); CS10 "Network of Big Shoulder-borne Processional Structures" (CUEBC). There were two case studies from Spain: CS13 "Transhumance in the Cantabrian or Northern Third of Spain" (FSMLR); CS14 "Valencian Paella, "the Art of Uniting and Sharing"" (FSMLR). Latvia was represented by CS11 "Lamprey Fishing and Preparation Skills in Carnikava" (ILFA). To get a better understanding of ICH situation regarding CC in other European countries and regions, four additional case studies were carried out by ILFA: CS1 "Puffin Harvesting and Hunting" (Denmark); CS2 "Alpinism" (France, Italy, Switzerland); CS3 "Wine Culture in Germany"; CS12 "Skating on Natural Ice" (Netherlands). All case studies are represented on the Green Heritage Interactive Map available at: <https://map.greenheritage-project.eu/> The Latvian case study is further elaborated in a separate research article, "Perspectives on Climate Change Impact on Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Case of Traditional Lamprey Fishing" in the special issue of "Anthropological Journal of European Cultures".¹

¹ Laimē S., Balcare K., Gailīte E., Grīnvalde R., Vaivade A. Perspectives on Climate Change Impact on Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Case of Traditional Lamprey Fishing. *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*, Volume 33, No. 1 (2024): 26-36. Available at: https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/ajec/33/1/ajec330104.xml?fbclid=IwZxh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR0Vvsj4HBZVV1WxPdVZPvTqPU6en4UVdBF3FYzzE6o-iEKLosWvRfAhloeg_aem_GJAVU4heE4jox7tBv5dd8g

The ILFA deliverable D2.2 “Primary and secondary data research findings” presented the output of the complex study of the primary and secondary data, thus providing a comprehensive overview of the overall situation. The current publication takes a closer look at the data collection methodology and the research findings from (1) the structured survey; (2) the international UNESCO lists of ICH; (3) national inventories of ICH; (4) periodic reporting under UNESCO’s 2003 Convention.

Structured Survey

One of the data collection methods carried out by ILFA was the structured online survey “The Impact of Climate Change on the Intangible Cultural Heritage”. Its objective was to get an overview of CC effects on ICH in the EU territory. More particularly, the goal was to identify the general trends in the impact of specific CC types on ICH.

During the survey, representatives of UNESCO National Commissions and other national ICH organizations of the EU member states were asked to comment on the impact of CC on the ICH in their countries. The survey sought to ascertain the attitudes of the bearers of tradition, local communities, ICH institutions, municipalities, and the national government towards CC as well as the measures taken to improve the situation.

The survey consisted of the introductory part and consent and was continued with the following questions and queries:

1. How does CC affect the local ICH currently?
2. How will CC affect the local ICH in the future?
3. Considering the following CC impacts (rising temperatures, droughts, melting snow and glaciers, rising sea levels, biodiversity loss, etc.), which traditions (ICH forms) are affected and how?
4. How do the different stakeholders perceive the problem? Have the CC problems been noticed by the ICH bearers and practitioners?
5. Have the CC problems been noticed by local communities?
6. Have the CC problems been noticed by officials responsible for the ICH safeguarding?
7. Have the CC problems been noticed by others (e.g., journalists, researchers)?
8. Have any solutions been proposed (e.g., through practical actions, planning documents) at community level?
9. Have any solutions been proposed (e.g., through practical actions, legislation, planning documents) at municipal (local authority) level?

10. Have any solutions been proposed (e.g., through practical actions, legislation, planning documents) at regional level?
11. Have any solutions been proposed (e.g., through practical actions, legislation, planning documents) at national level?
12. Data collected during the GreenHeritage project will be visualized in an interactive map. If you refer to a specific tradition affected by climate change, please, provide the geographical coordinates or address that best describes the geographical distribution of the tradition (it can be either the entire country or a specific region, municipality, city, village, etc.).

Additional requests were to provide titles and links to the respective legal acts and policy documents; relevant WEB links or other useful resources on the subject; publications on the subject; additional comments on the subject; information on the contributor's role in relation to the ICH element, institution, position and contact details.

The online survey on the impact of CC risks on intangible cultural heritage, prepared by the research team, consisted of 12 thematic questions, eliciting the views of stakeholders and specific national ICH nominations.

The questionnaire was sent individually to representatives of the 27 Member States of the European Union: firstly, to the representative of the national inventory focal point that had prepared the country's periodic report on the implementation of the UNESCO 2003 Convention; secondly, to the National Commission for UNESCO of each EU Member State. The first invitation to complete the questionnaire was sent on 22 May 2023. For those contacts who did not complete the questionnaire within the deadline, a second invitation was sent on 19 June 2023, and, in some cases, a third invitation was sent to the experts individually responsible for the ICH field in a particular country.



Fig. 1. Traditional irrigation in Austria, by Herbert Haulbauer, unesco.at



Fig. 2. The Bellringers of Patsch in Austria, by Hermann Schmiderer, unesco.at

By 4 August 2023, 14 respondents from different fields representing 10 EU countries had completed the survey, including Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Ireland (3 respondents), Latvia, Lithuania (2 respondents), Spain and Sweden. Representative of Belgium responded individually that she did not see an impact of CC on ICH and, therefore, will not complete the survey. The lack of responses from representatives of other EU countries may indicate a lack of relevance of the topic in specific countries or a lack of competence to describe the impact of CC on ICH.

Most respondents indicated that ICH was not yet being addressed at national level in terms of CC impacts. In cases where the impact of CC on ICH has been identified, those who expressed concern were the tradition bearers themselves. This was most evident in northern Europe in the case of Sweden and in southern Europe in the case of Spain. In Spain, for example, ICH is even proposed by the tradition-keepers as a solution to CC, where, for instance, the use of a timber-rafting approach to reduce CO2 emissions is encouraged.

The examples of ICH offered by the survey respondents concerned traditions that involve contact with nature (boating, bird catching, outdoor activities in designated CC-affected areas) or where the raw material is found in nature (wooden crafts, pottery, fishing). Altogether 14 respondents provided 33 ICH national examples as potential case studies for further research about CC risks for sustainability of these traditions.

Respondents mostly mentioned CC risks such as extreme weather conditions (heavy rainfalls, strong winds, high temperatures, etc.), floods, drought, sudden change in temperatures, lack of ice, thaw cycles, ground erosion.

The CC theme appeared in strategic documents at national level, but in general, without being linked to specific ICH themes. Exceptions were those cases, such as the Sami in the North, who also promoted the topic at the political level. In official public discourse, for example in Bulgaria and Croatia, the CC theme also appeared in the context of cultural her-



Fig. 3. Alpinistic knowledge of mountain and ski guides in Austria, by Johannes Mair Alpsolt, unesco.at



Fig. 4. Avalanche risk management in Austria, by Friedrich Juen, unesco.org

itage, but mostly as a possibility for the future, not as a present situation.

When describing journalists' interest in the impact of CC on ICH, respondents pointed out that the topic of CC is frequently covered by the media, with calls to action, but without direct link to the ICH future. However, international media rather than local media mostly covered the impact of CC on ICH traditions.

When identifying the perceptions of different influencers on the impact of CC on ICH, respondents mentioned academia (especially anthropologists) as the most knowledgeable audience, but such perceptions were said not yet to be present in society at large.

The national examples of ICH proposed by the survey respondents for further research were the following:

1. Alpine transhumance in Austria
2. Alpinistic knowledge of mountain and ski guides in Austria
3. "Odlatzbia Oröwen" in Austria
4. Traditional Irrigation in Austria
5. The Bellringers of Patsch in Austria
6. Local Healing Knowledge in the Pinzgau Region in Austria
7. Avalanche Risk Management in Austria
8. Traditional fishing in Bulgaria
9. Mat weaving from aquatic plant in Bulgaria
10. Traditional clay pottery in Bulgaria
11. Mediterranean Diet in Croatia
12. Heroic vines Valdobbiadene in Italy
13. Floral decorations for the Feast of Corpus Christi in Italy
14. Transhumance in Italy
15. Holly Wells in County Clare in Ireland
16. Hawking Falconry in Ireland
17. Boyne Currach in Ireland
18. Timber-rafting on Gauja river in Latvia
19. Cross crafting and it's symbolism in Lithuania
20. Hollow tree beekeeping tradition, Varėna region, Musteika village, in Lithuania
21. Verbos Easter palms, Vilnius region, Čekoniškės village, in Lithuania
22. Fishing smelts and vendance by rotating bobos, Molėtai region, Mindūnai village, in Lithuania
23. Mushroom picking, Dzūkija National Park, Varėna region, in Lithuania
24. Smelt fishing, Lūšiai laike, Ignalinos region, in Lithuania
25. Ice knocking fishery of smelts, Curonian Spit, in Lithuania
26. Mediterranean Diet in Spain
27. Patios de Córdoba, Córdoba, Andalucía
28. Timber-rafting in Spain
29. Dry stone wall building in Spain

30. Irrigators' tribunals, Mediterranean Coast
31. Esparto grass culture, South of Spain
32. Lime-making in Morón de la Frontera, Sevilla-Andalucía
33. Reindeer Herding in Sweden

These suggestions from the survey responses provide rich pointers for further research in the field of ICH and CC encounters. Hopefully, more in-depth research will emerge and thus continue to contribute to new knowledge.

UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage

With the aim to identify CC and related risks in nominations on UNESCO Lists of ICH and the Register of good safeguarding practices (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists>), a corpus of full texts of the nominations representing EU Member States on UNESCO Lists of ICH and the Register of good safeguarding practices, published on UNESCO official webpage <https://ich.unesco.org> were browsed and searched. Specifically, the search for mentions of the word "climate" and the phrases "climate change", "climatic conditions", "climate risks" was done. Additionally, the interactive tool of UNESCO "Dive into ICH" was used, which demonstrated the thematic interconnectedness between all the elements inscribed and their relation to nature or to threats, including CC.

In total, five ICH elements from the EU Member States were identified whose descriptions presented CC risks. These elements are Truffle hunting and extraction in Italy, traditional knowledge and practice (Italy, inscribed in 2021), Transhumance, the seasonal driving of livestock along migratory routes in the Mediterranean and in the Alps (Austria, Greece, Italy, inscribed in 2019), Art of dry stone walling, knowledge and techniques (Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, inscribed in 2018), Craft of the miller operating windmills and watermills (the Netherlands, inscribed in 2017) and Traditional agricultural practice of cultivating the 'vite ad alberello' (head-trained bush vines) of the community of Pantelleria (Italy, inscribed in 2014). Four elements are related to Italy: in two cases those are individual nominations but in another two – multinational nominations with other European countries, representing the same threats among tradition bearers in several EU countries. Although CC is mentioned in the UNESCO lists, it is not addressed in detail. Traditional skills and practices can be useful in maintaining modern economies, farming and reducing today's undesirable environmental impacts (Craft of the miller operating windmills and watermills; Transhumance, the seasonal driving of livestock along migratory routes in the Mediterranean and in the Alps; Art of dry stone walling, knowledge and techniques).



Fig. 5. Mediterranean diet in Croatia, by Brch, realcroatia.com



Fig. 6. "Odlatzbia Oröwen" in Austria, by Verein Elsbeer Reich, unesco.at



Fig. 7. Mushroom picking, Dzūkija National Park, Varėna region, in Lithuania, by Elina Gailite.



Fig. 8. Cross crafting and its symbolism in Lithuania, by Aliaksei Lepik, unsplash.com

The interactive tool of UNESCO "Dive into ICH" did not identify any EU Member States cases in relation to environmental degradation, including CC as one of the threats of ICH. All such cases, in total six, including Cultural practices and expressions linked to the 'M'Bolon', a traditional musical percussion instrument (Mali, inscribed in 2021), Carolinian wayfinding and canoe making (Micronesia, inscribed in 2021), Traditional knowledge and techniques associated with Pasto Varnish mopa-mopa of Putumayo and Nariño (Colombia, inscribed in 2020), Coaxing ritual for camels (Mongolia, inscribed in 2015), Secret society of the Kôrêdugaw, the rite of wisdom in Mali (Mali, inscribed in 2011), Sanké mon, collective fishing rite of the Sanké (Mali, inscribed in 2009), were identified outside Europe – in Africa, South America, East Asia and Oceania.

National Inventories of Intangible Cultural Heritage

To identify CC and related risks in the national inventories of ICH of the 27 EU Member States, all the national inventories were analysed. Every inscription on national lists published on ICH focal point webpages was searched for mentions of the word "climate" and the combinations



Fig. 9. Hawking Falconry in Ireland, by Ray Harrington, unsplash.com



Fig. 10. Timber-rafting on Gauja River in Latvia—preparation of the raft, by Annija Ence, nematerialakultura.lv

of words "climate change", "climatic conditions", "climate risks". If descriptions of the elements on the list were not available in English, the search was carried out by translating the words and word combinations into the language of the country concerned. Altogether, 11 of the 27 national inventories do not mention climate change in the ICH element descriptions. Climate keywords appear most in the element descriptions of Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Estonia. Climate keywords in the context of climate risks appear most frequently in traditions related to food culture, such as plant growing (Mediterranean Diet in Italy and in Spain), animal husbandry (Transhumant livestock farming in Greece), fishing (Snap net fishing in Ireland; Lamprey fishing and preparation skills in Carnikava in Latvia), where certain conditions are also necessary for the preparation of specific examples of national gastronomy, such as wind for drying fish, meat or cheese (Traditional production of Pag cheese in Croatia). For several traditions, humidity is presented as a risk, both for food crops such as cereals (Knowledge about traditional seed cultivation and seed production in Austria) and wine culture (Wine culture in Germany), and for traditional building practices using local natural materials (Construction of a stone garden in Kihnu island in Estonia; Dry stone construction in Ireland). Climate change risks are also reflected in the descriptions of traditions directly related to snow and ice, including mountaineering (Alpinistic knowledge and skills of the mountain & ski guides in Austria; Mountain carrying in Slovakia), playing in snow (Playing in snow in Finland), ice-skating (Skating on natural ice in Netherlands). Climate is often mentioned in descriptions of traditions where it has a direct link to the practice of the tradition itself, e. g. cold seasons for knitting traditions (Knitting large shawls in Saaremaa in Estonia; Making patterned, double-knit mittens in Mazsalaca in Latvia).

In general, climate risks are more likely to be reflected in ICH practices related to highlands or islands and to farming practices.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

Following the task to identify CC and related risks in the UNESCO periodic reporting of intangible cultural heritage of the 27 EU Member States, the approach was to determine whether the UNESCO periodic reports of the EU Member States mention climate change risks, the reports of the 27 EU Member States were analysed by looking at reports for all available years. All country reports published on the UNESCO website were searched for mentions of "climate", "climate change" and other variations of "climate".

Nine country reports do not mention climate at all. Only the 2012 Spanish report mentions CC as a potential risk in the future to be considered. All other information is from the 2021 reports. It is evident that climate and its impact on ICH are receiving more attention in the northern and southern European countries (Sweden, Finland, Spain, Italy, Greece). Seven reports mention CC in general terms, as one of the aspects to be considered in the future that affect and will affect ICH.

Reports from Finland, Sweden, and Denmark (Sámi cultural space and the Arctic region, environment, and culture) show how regions and their cultures are changing because of CC. Heavy rainfall and flooding are among the threats affecting ICH in the regions, as mentioned in reports from Luxembourg and the Netherlands. However, there is no specific reference to particular ICH practices affected. One of the problems that emerges in the reports is the change in snow and ice thickness and the lack of stability (avalanche risk management, traditional hunting practices, dog sledges for travel and hunting in Austria; landslides, glacial melt, snow, and ice quality



Fig. 11. Public session of the Tribunal of Waters of Valencia's Watered Land, by Luis Pablo Martínez, unesco.org

Fig. 12. Lime-making in Morón de la Frontera, Sevilla-Andalucía, by Instituto Andaluz del Patrimonio Histórico, unesco.org



Fig. 13. Viticulture in Passopisciaro, Sicily, Italy, by Neil Weightman, [wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Passopisciaro_Viticulture.jpg)

affecting the tradition of mountain climbing in Italy). Traditional livestock breeding and farming are on the list of endangered practices (transhumance in Greece and Spain; growing vines in Italy; traditional grassland irrigation in the Netherlands; reindeer husbandry in Sweden).

Traditions linked to food culture are also highlighted (traditional viticulture in Santorini in Greece, the truffle hunting and extraction in Italy; Mediterranean Diet in Italy and Cyprus; Sámi food system in Finland).

The reports also highlight the importance of education to further improve the CC mitigation. Both formal and informal education are important. Much has been done in this field in the context of avalanche risk management in Austria, both by training schoolchildren on what to do if caught in an avalanche and by promoting tree planting at municipal and national level to reduce avalanche risks. In Greenland and Sweden, museums and projects are also focusing on ICH in the face of CC. Seminars, symposia, boot camps are organised to highlight the broad importance of ICH (Greece, Italy, Spain, Ireland, and Sámi culture). The reports also show that ICH has been used to reduce the impacts of CC on nature and the environment, as traditional knowledge and practices offer many opportunities (in the Netherlands, Slovenia, Finland, Spain). There is little in the reports on legislation so far and in the near future, but some country reports provide information on climate policy frameworks that include cultural heritage (Greece, Slovenia, Finland).



Fig. 14. Sámi people with a reindeer, by Jens and Marian, wikimedia.org

Our study covers the situation as it was in the summer of 2023. We would like to see this research to continue, because, unfortunately, the effects of climate change are continuing and even increasing, and it is not only material culture that is being affected, but also intangible cultural heritage. The Green Heritage project is a step towards raising awareness of the climate-related challenges that intangible cultural heritage communities and other stakeholders may increasingly face in the future.