

Advancing the reporting systems within UNESCO's Cultural Sector: A comprehensive analytical framework approach

Anguel Anastassov, Georgi Bakyov

Abstract. The article presents the results of a study focusing on the key features of reporting mechanisms in the field of human rights and their possible application within UNESCO's Cultural Sector. This work encompasses the authors' ambition to look for a wider and deeper understanding of the initial UNESCO exercise. The suggested approach in the present study has the potential to enhance UNESCO's reporting efforts by illuminating intricately the mechanisms of various human rights instruments, potentially offering mirror insights into their operational efficacy and enabling a comprehensive, cross-cutting understanding of the multifaceted regulatory landscapes in international frames. Furthermore, the comprehensive analytical framework has been aimed at enhancing data-driven regulation in international law, ensuring that regulatory frameworks are informed by evidence-based data.

Keywords: UNESCO, evaluation, periodic reporting, human rights, evidence-based data

Introduction

UNESCO has recently undertaken an evaluation concerning the periodic reporting activities within the conventions and recommendations of the cultural sector. The primary objective of this assessment is to extract findings, derive lessons, and formulate recommendations related to the effectiveness and efficiency of the periodic reporting mechanisms within UNESCO's cultural normative instruments. The quest of the assessment is designated to assist the international organization's Culture Sector, its senior leadership, and the governing bodies of the cultural conventions in fortifying, recalibrating, and extracting quality data from the instruments' periodic reports.

Moreover, the evaluation is intended to serve as an instructive exercise for UNESCO staff, Member States, and stakeholders engaged in the periodic re-

porting processes, to enhance coordination, efficiency, and the measurement of the impact of actions within the culture sector. Given the evaluation's specific and technically nuanced nature, the agency has been seeking external expertise to undertake a comparative benchmarking activity, which will be integrated into the comprehensive evaluation.

The specific expert experience sought revolves around the reporting mechanisms of alternative normative instruments, such as those about human rights. The principal aim of this comparative analysis is to assimilate knowledge from various normative tools and to understand how their respective organizations handle periodic reporting, disseminate findings, and utilize gathered data. This initiative is deemed crucial, particularly in light of the intention to enhance data-driven regulation in international law, ensuring that regulatory frameworks are not only stable but also insightfully informed by accurate and evidence-based data.

The benefit of evaluation in the reporting mechanisms

Establishing a solid benchmark foundation through this inquiry could be of paramount importance as would pave the way for multifaceted, data-driven, and empirically informed regulation in the cultural sphere, ensuring that policies and initiatives are not only theoretically sound but also anchored in and shaped by the real-world dynamics, challenges, and opportunities identified through the reporting mechanisms.

By analysing and adapting lessons learned from other international legal instruments, especially the human rights ones, UNESCO will not only strengthen its reporting structures but also contribute to a body of knowledge that improves the collective understanding and application of normative frameworks across sectors, thereby promoting a globally resonant, contextually relevant, and impact-oriented approach to maintaining and enhancing cultural heritage, diversity, and development. Indeed, the most relevant possible approaches for this initiative, with which UNESCO is probably well aware, relate to the application of the human rights reporting mechanisms, themselves. Therefore, we will present a summary which, if followed, will provide a firm foundation for the completion of this project.

The Member States' reporting mechanisms on UNESCO's cultural instruments are an integral part of modern regulatory practice. It is based on data and evidence, while at the same time has proven as a fundamental tool for the continuous enrichment and optimization of cultural policy and practice globally and at the national level (UNESCO 2019, 11). Reporting is not seen solely as a goal or check for countries, but as a dynamic activity that facilitates the achievement of new knowledge and conclusions in this field. In this context, it stimulates a broader and deeper analysis of cultural processes and dynamics, enriches the repository of data and research results, and ensures that cultural strategies and interventions are based on up-to-date and objective grounds. At the same time, the reporting process helps to activate and deepen the dialogue between UNESCO, its Member States, and other interested parties, thus stimulating collective learning and the creation of new knowledge in the field of culture and its diversity through UNESCO's Global Report series.

Therefore, the tighter, more structured, modernized, and facilitated the reporting process is, the easier it will fit into the dynamics of modern management practices and support the effective and transparent implementation of cultural strategies and policies. This not only optimizes the interaction mechanisms between the various actors in the cultural sector but also ensures that the decisions taken and the approaches applied are based on reliable and up-to-date data. In this way, facilitated well-structured, and modern reporting becomes not just a monitoring tool, but an active mechanism for improvement and innovation in the management of culture at a global level. It helps create a more sustainable and inclusive cultural environment that reflects and supports the diversity and richness of cultural identities around the world. The idea of this structural and overall change in reporting to UNESCO has been around for a long time, but only recently has it been given a very precise formulation (UNESCO 2023).

Accurate, timely, and comprehensive reporting stands as the pivotal pillar of the orchestration of contemporary data-driven regulation in both national and international cultural spectrums. It empowers entities and governing bodies to craft decisions that are not just informed but are inherently resilient and adaptive to the evolving global and local landscapes.

When reporting is executed with precision and thoroughness, it significantly amplifies the efficacy of data-driven regulation, enriching it with a bedrock of reliable data, insightful analyses, and tangible evidence. This, in turn, nurtures an environment where policies and regulatory interventions are not only reflective of the prevailing circumstances but are also prognosticative of future trends and challenges, thereby enabling a regulatory ecosystem that is both responsive and preemptive in safeguarding and enhancing societal, cultural, and economic paradigms. Consequently, enhancing the methodological and analytical rigor of reporting mechanisms can profoundly elevate the caliber and impact of data-driven regulations, thereby substantiating policies with a robust foundation of verifiable and contextual data.

Data-driven regulation in international law

The growing and rapidly spreading volume of global data creates an ocean of information and also tangibly points to the urgent need for dynamic and evidence-based international rule-making. In this flow of information, data and innovative analytical methods are increasingly firmly established as the foundation of modern legal regulation through flexible, adaptable, and efficient legal norms. Reliable and accurate data processing enhances the preparatory phase of rulemaking. It helps to quickly and accurately analyse information, offers more transparency and efficiency, and allows countries to anticipate and adapt to potential problems or changes in the international environment (Dimov 2021, 70).

It is no accident that data-driven regulation is seen as increasingly vital to international law. It has the potential to improve the efficiency and reflexivity of regulatory regimes. The ability to use the growing body of empirical data to make informed policy decisions and precise regulatory actions will become an increasingly strategic asset. Intuitive policymaking in international relations often fails to control the vast expanse of economic activity, especially with the

pressures of economic expansion, technological change, budget constraints, and increasing public expectations for protection against ever-emerging risks.

One famous example from the history of international relations that demonstrates the complexities and challenges associated with politically motivated (intuitive) policymaking at the international scale and its inability to control various aspects of economic activities is the case of the 2008 financial crisis. Before the crisis, numerous countries allowed free, non-objectively justified, and liberalized approaches in the financial markets (Kohl, Eisler 2021, 133). This involved increasingly lax regulations that were based less on analysis of data from previous financial crises or simulations of market volatility than on an economic ideology centered on the belief that markets are self-regulating and optimal. This led to a massive collapse of global trade and a prolonged recession.

In its research, the OECD, for example, has repeatedly demonstrated that technological advances and better data management tools in regulatory sectors offer the potential for better risk-based regulatory practices. The use of a data-driven public sector (DDPS) can improve the effectiveness and transparency of applied policies. Emphasis on the use of data by public authorities, be they national, regional, or international, to rationalize and evaluate policies can increase public trust and increase transparency (OECD 2021). Evidence-based decision-making is also recognized by other international organizations.

Under the vision of *the UN Secretary-General's Data Strategy for action by everyone, everywhere with insight, impact, and integrity*, the UN is on the cusp of building a comprehensive data ecosystem that maximizes the value of collected information and unlocks the full potential of the organization in making better decisions and providing stronger support to people and the planet when it is needed (United Nations 2020-2022). Such data can be used to identify trends, predict potential risks, and assess the impact of regulatory interventions, allowing states and international organizations to make better-informed decisions and deal more effectively with transnational issues (Puig, Pauwelyn, Alschner 2017, 217-231).

UNESCO in the context of regulation in the cultural sector

Promoting the establishment of normative indicators is a key role among UNESCO's five core functions, according to the interpretation of Article I - Purposes and Functions of its Constitution. One of the most important areas of competencies of this organization, as is evident from its very name, is culture. UNESCO supports the implementation of six cultural conventions (1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (and its two Protocols); 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage; 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions), in addition to three recommendations (Recommen-

dation concerning the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society (2015); Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, including a glossary of definitions (2011); Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (1980)) in this specific and diverse area of international regulation. This framework supports strongly the preservation and enhancement of both cultural and natural heritage, together with the promotion of creativity, both nationally and globally creativity, exercising the convening role of UNESCO through its transversal programmes and global networks.

The international community positioned UNESCO as the only organization of the United Nations system charged with a massive cultural area mandate. Thus over the decades agency has carefully crafted a wide range of standard-setting tools in this sphere, including six major cultural conventions, numerous recommendations, and declarations. It would not be an exaggeration to argue that for this purpose considerable time and resources have been devoted to defining standards related to these tools.

Despite some weaknesses in adaptability and resource provision, the organizational capabilities of UNESCO, formulated in the preceding, 20th century, continue to function effectively within the domain of developing contemporary international law in the new millennium (Stern et al. 2010, 28-31). The agency is generically charged with multilateral and universal functionality (Borisov 2015, 262-263). This includes even legal relations with private legal entities through making suitable arrangements for consultation and cooperation with nongovernmental international organizations concerned with matters within its competence, and inviting them when necessary to undertake specific tasks (Constitution of UNESCO 2023, Article XI - Relations with other specialized international organizations and agencies, para. 4).

These powers contribute to the overall international rule-making, especially that, based on data and evidence. With its flexible approach, UNESCO is shaping the direction of development of the world cultural sector. The efforts of the agency deserve a deep appreciation for the aspiration to protect and nurture the cultural (Belova 2018) and natural heritage both nationally and internationally. The organization's activities in the implementation of the six cultural conventions and other instruments constitute a solid normative framework that not only stands as a static legal basis but also projects a solid infrastructure to protect and stimulate the cultural sector. However, the approach to international legal regulation here is multi-layered.

The inherent nature of these instruments requires the alignment of national policies and practices with the principles and objectives articulated in themselves. In other words, everything that is accepted at the international level must be implemented at the national level, according to the set standards (Kovatcheva 2021, 240). Separately, the legal instruments in the field of culture require the profound cooperation of the legally bound Member States.

This means that the systematic mandatory reporting obligations of state parties to five of the six cultural conventions inherently integrate a sort of accountability indicator and, importantly, an evaluation mechanism that helps measure the compliance and subsequent effectiveness of these conventions on a national level. According to the sixth convention, namely, Convention on the

Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, adopted in November 2001, this happens voluntarily. In addition, UNESCO Member States provide reports on the implementation of three cultural recommendations, although they are also non-binding, again out of a sense of responsibility towards the common global cultural goal. These reports are crucial for assessing how the basic principles and ideas of the conventions and recommendations are translated into policies and actions by participating countries. They provide data on the implementation, progress, and advocacy of the instruments' values.

The problematic reporting mechanisms

But not everything is so uncontroversial. On further consideration of the fine mechanics guiding reporting mechanisms under these conventions and recommendations, a noticeable distortion emerges between theory and practice. While each mechanism was developed independently and in different chronological contexts to serve its unique purpose, the lack of a harmonized and complementary vision across these systems highlights a fundamental problem. This not only dilutes potential uniformity in implementation and compliance but also imposes fundamental challenges in data collection and subsequent analysis. This, in turn, makes it more difficult for the data-driven policy approach to rulemaking to unfold unhindered.

Another potentially problematic issue is how the design of periodic reporting systems is structured, respectively the support provided to Member States in their obligations to do so. This activity is undeniably resource-intensive, involving many committed individuals both nationally and from UNESCO's headquarters and field offices. The process also revolves around multiple operational aspects, including capacity building, technical support, and articulating detailed analyses, all of which are derived from the data collected. Regarding the central role of periodic reporting processes, it is clear at the outset, regardless of what field of international law or instrument they are talking about, that they involve significant commitments and, in practice, require significant efforts from states acceding to the conventions.

This complexity is reflected in the challenges countries face in meeting their periodic reporting obligations, illustrated by variable rates of incoming submission cycles and qualitative differences in the data submitted. These reporting processes are so complex that they often integrate multiple supporting documents and initiatives, including training, tools, glossaries, etc. (Training tools and guidance 2018-2024).

Interweaving international legal processes with data-driven methodologies requires a complex, detailed, and methodologically rigorous approach. In this context, the main objective of the present analysis is to encourage the international expert community to generate findings, assimilate lessons learned, and formulate recommendations - primarily regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of periodic reporting mechanisms of UNESCO's normative instruments in the field of culture, but in the view of enhancing smoother empirical production. In this way, such type of initiative could improve the functional efficiency of the existing normative instruments and lay the foundation for better data-driven regulation.

We find this particularly important as there is an imperative to not only accumulate and analyse data, sometimes as an end in itself, but also to refine, recalibrate, and potentially rethink the process by which qualitative conclusions are drawn from the periodic reports of normative instruments that can serve as the best possible basis for international rule-making. Because the more modalities there are, the more potential pitfalls and opportunities to distort information there are. This evaluation endeavour essentially provides a two-way benefit: it not only improves the qualitative dimensions of the data collected but also refines the methodologies used in such data extraction and use, thus adhering to the principles of empirical law-making at the international level.

Yet, there is another aspect. Each evaluation of this activity serves as a pedagogical and reflective activity, especially for UNESCO staff, Member States, and partners involved in periodic reporting processes. It is important to emphasize that this is not a one-way learning endeavour. Instead, it becomes a symbiotic process where evaluation not only extends existing knowledge and practice, but also opens up avenues for improved coordination, efficiency, and, essentially, empirical measurement of the impact generated by the actions of the culture sector. This subsequently transforms evaluation into a mechanism that is both reflexive and projective, allowing subjects not only to look at past actions and their impacts but also to proactively tailor future actions in a way that is substantially informed by empirical data and analysis. This effort is not just an exercise in analysis, but a vital expedition to uncover the depth and breadth of the efficiency and effectiveness of UNESCO's normative instruments in the cultural sphere.

Possible directions

In this sense, we find that the comparative analysis should be leading. Conducting an in-depth study of various international legal instruments in the field of human rights could provide a template, a mirror through which UNESCO can reflect, learn, and adapt its mechanisms, ensuring that they are robust, strategically sound, and impactful. They represent some of the most developed, monitored, and trusted reporting mechanisms in international law, relied on not only in practice but also in doctrine (Venier 2023, 18).

Consequently, it appears most fitting for an external evaluation team to consider, as exemplars, the varied reporting methodologies utilized by several international legal instruments within the domain of human rights. An encompassing overview could well be conducted of the subsequent bodies and their respective conventions:

- Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), operating under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- Human Rights Committee, in adherence to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), bound by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), conforming to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- Committee Against Torture (CAT), enforcing the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), abiding by the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW), adhering to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Sub-Committee on Prevention of Torture (SPT), aligning with the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT);
- Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED), operating under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

This approach will not only bolster the comprehensiveness and efficacy of the reporting mechanisms but also facilitate a nuanced understanding and incorporation of globally recognized and proven strategies, enhancing the robustness and contextual relevance of UNESCO's reporting structures culture sector.

Moreover, the periodic reporting mechanisms of the following human rights-related bodies (see e.g. Shaw 2021, 967-989) are suggested for inclusion in the evaluation assignment, always bearing in mind that other bodies may be considered by UNESCO and incorporated into the scope of the analysis:

- Committee on the Rights of the Child;
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women;
- Committee on Political and Social Rights;
- Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights;
- Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;
- Committee Against Torture.

This fusion of insights from various committees could also facilitate an interdisciplinary approach, potentially offering innovative strategies to address the unique challenges faced by UNESCO's diverse cultural sector instruments and ensuring that they remain adaptable, resilient, and effective in the face of evolving global circumstances and challenges.

To enrich understanding and provide clarity about periodic reporting processes, we also provide a timelines table for initial and periodic reports for some of the human rights-related periodic reporting processes (Table I). This form could serve as a guide for the evaluation team, providing specific time frames and strategic points for analysis of the various reporting processes conducted by the relevant committees and bodies.

Giving detailed information on reporting deadlines would potentially facilitate a better understanding of the integrated and coordinated efforts required

to effectively and efficiently address periodic reporting across international legal instruments. It will also allow an external evaluation team to consider and identify additional factors that may affect the successful and timely implementation of reporting obligations by different Member States and to identify good practices and challenges shared between them.

Table 1. A timelines table for initial and periodic reports for some of the human rights-related periodic reporting processes

International legal instrument	Initial report	Periodic reports
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	Due within two years of entry into force of the CRC for the State concerned	Due every five years following the initial report and such additional reports or information in the intervening period as the Committee may request
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Due within one year of entry into force of the CEDAW for the State concerned	Due every four years following the initial report and further whenever the Committee so requests
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	Due within one year of entry into force of the ICCPR for the States Parties concerned	Whenever the Committee so requests, but usually every four years
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	Due within two years of entry into force of the ICESCR	Due every five years following the initial report
Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Due within one year of entry into force of CAT	Due every four years on any new measures taken and such other reports as the Committee may request
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)	Due within one year of entry into force of the Convention for the State concerned	Due every two years and whenever the Committee so requests

For the undertaking, it is advisable to use an approach that effectively combines quantitative and qualitative analysis. By using Table 2 outlining the composition and rules of procedure for the committees of the human rights-related reporting mechanisms, the Evaluation Team could make a strategic framework to help understand the structure and functioning of the various committees and reporting mechanisms. Including the composition of the committees and their rules of procedure will not only provide insight into the organizational and operational structure of these mechanisms but also enrich the understanding of

how they make decisions and formulate their recommendations and guidelines. This analysis can help the team identify key areas for improvement as well as establish effective strategies to support Member States in the process of reporting and implementing the Committees’ recommendations and guidelines.

Table 2. Composition and rules of procedure for some of the committees of the human rights-related reporting mechanisms

Committee	Number of Members	Eligibility	Quorum required	Voting rules
CRC	18 independent experts	“experts of high moral standing and recognized competence in the field covered by this Convention”	12 members constitute a quorum	Majority of the members of the Committee present
CEDAW	23 elected members	“experts of high moral standing and recognized competence in the field covered by the Convention”	12 members constitute a quorum	Consensus will be sought, otherwise by a simple majority of the members present and voting
ICCPR	18 elected members	Members must be nationals of States parties to the Covenant, and “persons of high moral character and recognized competence in the field of human rights”, with “consideration given to the usefulness of the participation of some persons having a legal experience”	12 members constitute a quorum	Each member has one vote. All reasonable efforts are made to reach a consensus, although only a majority is necessary
ICESCR	18 independent experts	“persons of high moral character and recognized competence in the field of human rights”	12 members constitute a quorum	Each member has one vote. Consensus is preferred, but where it cannot be reached, a majority will suffice

Table 2 (continued)

Committee	Number of Members	Eligibility	Quorum required	Voting rules
CAT	10 elected members	“persons of high moral character and recognized competence in the field of human rights”	Six members constitute a quorum	Each member has one vote. The Committee will endeavour to reach decisions by consensus, provided that the Convention and the rules of procedure are observed and that such efforts do not unduly delay the work of the Committee
ICERD	18 experts	“experts of high moral standing and acknowledged impartiality elected by States Parties from among their nationals, who shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution and to the representation of the different forms of civilization as well as of the principal legal systems”	A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. The presence of two-thirds of the members of the Committee is, however, required for a decision to be taken.	Each member of the Committee has one vote. Except as otherwise provided in the Convention and the Rules of Procedure, decisions of the Committee shall be made by a majority present and voting. For the Rules of Procedure, “members present and voting” means members casting an affirmative vote. Members who abstain from voting are considered as not voting

A suitable and possible breakdown, representing an intriguing example that reinforces our understanding of the complexity and importance of periodic reporting is the “Committee on the Rights of the Child’s Reporting Cycle” (Fig. 1). This cycle reveals the sequence and integration of different stages, from the initial submission of reports, through the constructive dialogue with States, to the development of concluding observations and the subsequent monitoring of progress.

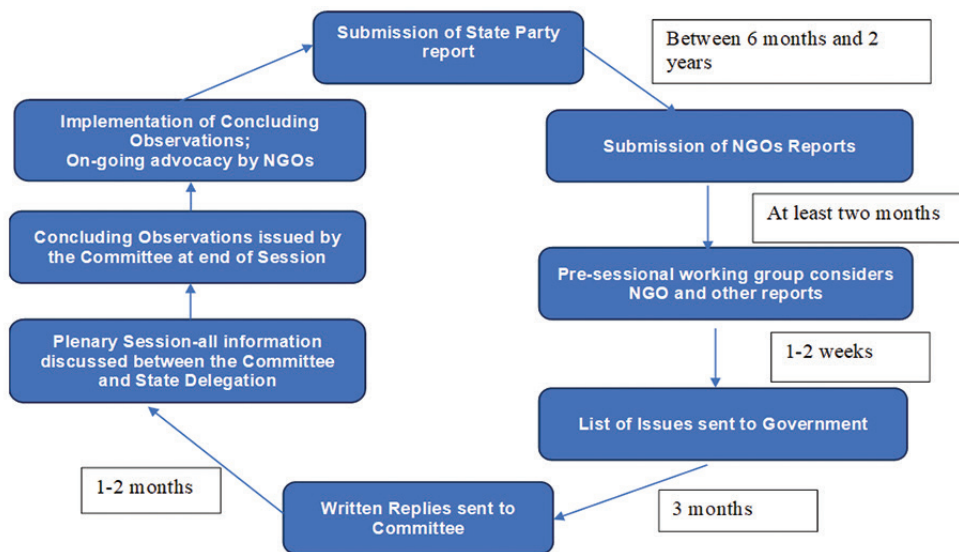


Fig. 1. Committee on the Rights of the Child’s Reporting Cycle

Analysis of Universal Periodic Review

The UNESCO Evaluation Team will have to study the reviews conducted by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group of the United Nations Human Rights Council created on 15 March 2006 (Ilieva 2007, 348-358). One of the key elements of an institution-building package of the Human Rights Council was the new UPR. The goal of UPR is the improvement of the human rights situation in every country. The UPR is designed to prompt, support, and expand the promotion and protection of human rights on the ground. To achieve this, the UPR involves assessing States’ human rights records and addressing human rights violations wherever they occur. The reviews take place during the sessions of the UPR Working Group which meets three times a year. The number of States reviewed at each session is now 14.

The reviews are conducted by the UPR Working Group which consists of the 47 members of the Council. However, any UN Member State can take part in the discussion/dialogue with the reviewed States. Each State review is assisted by groups of three States, known as “troikas”, who serve as rapporteurs (Charlesworth, Larking 2014, 3). The selection of the troikas for each State is done through a drawing of lots following elections for the Council membership in the General Assembly. In case a State is not persistently cooperating with the UPR, the Human Rights Council decides on the measures it would need to take.

NGOs can submit information that could be referred to by any of the States taking part in the interactive discussion during the review at the UPR Working Group meeting. NGOs can attend its sessions and can make statements at the

regular session of the Human Rights Council when the outcome of the State reviews are considered.

The UPR considers the extent to which States respect their human rights obligations set out in the following legal instruments: the UN Charter; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; human rights instruments to which the State is part; voluntary pledges and commitments made by the State; applicable international humanitarian law.

Alignment of working methods and practices of the human rights treaty bodies

The Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies have followed a structured process on the progress made on the alignment of working methods and practices of the treaty bodies. Certain areas of coordination of thematic issues in the reporting procedure are considered essential to ensuring complementary and mutually reinforcing periodic reviews of States Parties. The annual Meeting of Chairpersons of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies provides a forum for members of the ten human rights treaty bodies to discuss their work and consider ways to enhance the effectiveness of the treaty body system as a whole. Issues addressed at these meetings have included, among other things, coordination of lists of issues prior to reporting to ensure that their dialogues with States Parties were comprehensive and did not raise substantively similar questions in the same time period; using of cross-referencing instead of formulating recommendations that are substantively identical to those made by other treaty bodies and mechanisms; development of online tools, such as online portals for petitions, improved web pages and online reporting platforms; comparison of the jurisprudence of the respective committees with the objective of distilling good practices and establishing the full range of remedies that could guide the treaty bodies in their decisions; identifying the relevant authorities responsible for implementing the recommended measures at the domestic level; ensuring the confidentiality of documents and proceedings provided under the treaties and reiterated in the relevant rules of procedure (34th meeting of Chairpersons 2022).

UNESCO-related conventions monitoring mechanisms

Thus, stepping on this solid foundation, an external evaluation team should have to review the current status and proposals of the monitoring mechanisms, including results frameworks, as well as reinforce periodic reports of the *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage*, *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, and *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*.

In addition, the external evaluation team may review the latest UNESCO evaluation reports and the following evaluation reports related to the reporting mechanisms of standard-setting in the six UNESCO Culture Conventions:

- Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard-setting Work of the Culture Sector - Part I - 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;
- Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard-setting Work of the Culture Sector - Part II - 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property;
- Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard-setting Work of the Culture Sector - Part III - 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage;
- Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard-setting Work of the Culture Sector - Part IV - 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
- Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard-setting Work of the Culture Sector - Part V - 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999);
- Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard-setting Work of the Culture Sector - Part VI - 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

This will enable an objective and science-based analysis based on established evaluation methodologies, emphasizing the specific contexts and tools of each of the incriminated standardization mechanisms. This analytical approach will identify practices that are highly effective and transferable, thus helping the foundation of robust and well-supported assessment standards that can serve as a model for subsequent analyses in the field of the culture sector at the international level.

Conclusion

While exploration of various reporting mechanisms could provide vital insights, it is critical to underline that this represents only one among a multitude of potential methods to understand and ameliorate the reporting mechanisms for UNESCO's cultural sector instruments. Only by engaging in a diverse, multi-disciplinary approach can the organization's existing frameworks and methodologies be enriched. UNESCO's instruments, notably in the cultural sector, embody the intricate balance of safeguarding heritage, ensuring cultural diversity, and fostering creativity and creative industries within a global context. The ongoing evaluation and refinement of these mechanisms taking into consideration the need for alignment of working methods of human rights treaty bodies, thereby, are not merely procedural necessities but vital cogs in the machinery that sustains, protects, and propels forward our collective cultural heritage and future endeavours in better data-driven regulation.

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Prof. Anguel Anastassov, Dr. Jur. Sc., PhD

Higher School for Security and Economics

13 Kuklensko shose Blvd.

4004 Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Email: anguelanastassov@hotmail.com

Chief Assist. Prof. Georgi Bakyov, PhD

Institute for the State and the Law

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

4 Serdika Str.

1000 Sofia, Bulgaria

Email: bakyov@gmail.com