Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe:

MACEDONIA
(Former Yugoslav Republic of)

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Preface by the Director-General of UNESCO

When UNESCO convened a high-level conference on strengthening cooperation in South-East Europe in April 2002, the participants unanimously recognized that it presented a unique opportunity to act rather than react, to construct rather than reconstruct, and to build peace in the minds of men rather than talk about it. The conference gave new momentum to the Organization’s drive to work throughout the region in all its fields of competence.

Among the many initiatives arising from the meeting was a series of reports prepared by UNESCO on the cultural heritage in the countries of South-East Europe – just one testimony to our commitment to reinforce cooperation in the region. I am pleased to present Volume 4 of this series, Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Message of Ohrid, released at the close of the South-East European Regional Forum on the Dialogue among Civilizations held in this town on 29 and 30 August 2003, stressed that “the region, after having witnessed wars, destruction and ethnic cleansing”, was now on the doorstep of a new era “where dialogue, understanding and reconciliation are poised to replace the tribulations of history and where unity can be found in and nourished through the rich diversity and humanity of the peoples.”

It is my hope that this volume will provide an opportunity to discover a multi-ethnic cultural heritage of extraordinary value that reminds us of both the rich history of this country and the complexity and diversity of the region. I am convinced that such knowledge will further contribute to the establishment of a culture of dialogue, tolerance and peace, and will advance the prosperity, well-being and mutual cooperation among the peoples and countries of South-East.

Koïchiro Matsuura
Foreword

Without even trying to enter the much debated question of “Who are the Macedonians?”, it is certainly difficult to single out the historical outlines of today’s former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) - an independent Republic since 1991 – from the geography of historical Macedonia which actually includes the whole basin of the river Vardar (Axios in Greek) from its source to the Thermaikos Gulf in Northern Greece.

The complexity and richness of the ethnic and religious mosaic of the Southern region of the Balkans is nevertheless well and typically represented in the FYROM’s cultural heritage and traditions. It is also commonly accepted that the territory comprised within the FYROM’s current borders (Vardar Macedonia) represents only one part of the Macedonian ethnic and linguistic background and heritage, since Aegean Macedonia in Greece, Pirin Macedonia in South-western Bulgaria and other smaller Slavic-speaking communities in Albania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must be included.

Such complexity and richness, instead of being a reason for internal and external recrimination or dispute, is slowly but steadily becoming, in the consciousness and behaviour of Macedonian society, a reason for development, economic growth and cultural improvement, despite political difficulties, local contrasts and a past of tensions and sometime harsh contrapositions.

Not very recent statistics (1994 census) describe the following ethnic composition of the Macedonian population: 66% Macedonians (Makedontsi), 22.7% Albanians, 14% Vlachs, 2.2% Tzigans, 2.1% Serbs, 0.4 % Turks, 0.1% other groups, 0.1 % undefined. According to the same official sources, the composition based on religion should be the following: Orthodox 59%, Muslim 26%, Catholics 4%, others 11%. It can also be said that the distribution of the religious monuments of Macedonia, on an overall number of 5,500 ca., approximately reflects the distribution of the population by creed.

2 Source: (2005) “Center for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe – Southeast Europe (Cedime-Sc)”.
Archaeological sites, either classified as pertaining to the classic or pre-classic period, are not included in these figures. The same holds for non-religious buildings (such as historical markets, caravanserais, palaces, historical residential buildings, rural and vernacular architecture) which represent, by themselves, a consistent and relevant portion of the cultural heritage of Macedonia to be maintained and preserved since they are historically reflective of the way of living and trading of those communities.

Recent studies about “the ethnography of built landscapes” show how: “the physical and social landscape of a region is more than a palimpsest of long-term settlement features; it is an imprint of community action, structure and power on places. The significance of place in the landscape is related to place-value created by individuals and groups through associations with deeds of the past, whether heroic and transient or commonplace and repeated.”

This observation equally applies to the Macedonian sites, places and towns this mission visited. Not only that material palimpsest is still discernible today, but it is the object of strong involvement by the local communities. In their mentality, the built environment is a symbol of the past and hope (or promise) for the future and the search for “true” roots is channelled through interpretation and narration of the palimpsest itself.

It would have been a big mistake for the mission not to take into due consideration this primary human factor as expressed in the local narrative of the monuments while observing, examining and reporting about the sites.

This is how the mission dispatched to FYROM on November 2004 faced the mandate received by UNESCO, which can be summarized as follows:

• to draw a general and updated overview of the current situation of the architectural, archaeological and environmental heritage;
• to identify the main problems of management and protection of the cultural heritage considering a series of sites as reflective of the generality of them;
• to suggest feasible ways for solving specific technical problems of certain important sites;
• to propose medium-long term framing activities which can improve the quality of the interventions and the site management;
• to submit to the attention of the competent national authorities specific recommendations concerning the restoration, protection and management of the cultural heritage and environment;
• to suggest to UNESCO, and the International community, particularly potential donors, either governmental or private, measures and initiatives which can be instrumental to the national authorities for the management of the cultural patrimony.

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Historical Background

1 From Antiquity to Modernity

From the Homeric myth referring to the land of Paeonia and the Paeons as descendants of the god river Axios, the area of Pelagonia (from the name of Pelagon, son of the same river god) and the local tribes (such as Lyncestis around Heraclea, Brigians, Enhelians, settled in south-east Macedonia, Dassaretians around Lychnidos (Ohrid), Dardanians and Illyrians, all mentioned by Thucydides) are probably something more than simple names if the remains of “cyclopic” walls still to be found in fortresses like those of Vajtos, Matka, Mariovo and Demir Kapija should be referred to these tribes.

Leaving on the side of the present narration the problem of the historical connection of contemporary FyROM inhabitants with the Macedonians of Philip II and Alexander the Great and their dynasty of Macedonian kings - which is a matter of dispute of ethno-historical nature having little or none impact on the present Report about protection of cultural heritage – it is sure that the present configuration of the country and its relative isolation from the Aegean and Ionian coasts might have had an impact on the fame of the Macedonians as mountainous people of indomitable character. In fact, the territory was only very gradually subdued by the Romans and Macedonia was finally occupied by them in 146 B.C. Throughout the first century B.C. conflicts raged with varying fortune between the invaders and all the native races living between the Adriatic and the Danube. Only in the early years of our era the Danube became the frontier of the Roman Empire.

The Balkan peninsula enjoyed the benefits of Roman civilization for three centuries, from the 1st to the 4th. Roads and ways of communication throughout Macedonia are among the best accomplishment of the Roman period (see Appendix V, 7). Three were the main roads crossing present-day Macedonia (and many other secondary roads equally relevant for the communication network of this mountainous region throughout the Middle Ages and beyond): the famous Via Egnatia connecting Dyrrachium (Durrës in Albania) with Thessalonika (in Greece), passing through Heraclea Lyncestis and the ancient city of Lynk on the river Crna; the Diagonal Way linking Heraclea Lyncestis with Stybera, Stobi and Bargala and ending in present-day Bulgaria’s Struma valley (Pautalia); the Via Axos following the course of the Vardar River from NW to SE of FYROM and crossing the Diagonal Way at Stobi.

With the division (A.D. 395) of the Roman Empire, Macedonia came under Byzantine rule. Devastated by the Goths and Huns, it was settled (6th century) by the Slavs, who quickly made most of Macedonia a Slavic land. However, it continued under intermittent Byzantine domination until the 9th century, when most of Macedonia was wrested from the Byzantine Empire by Bulgaria. Emperor Basil II recovered it (1014-18) for Byzantium, but after the temporary break-up (1204) of the Byzantine Empire during the Fourth Crusade, Macedonia was bitterly contested among the Latin Empire of
Constantinople, the Bulgars under Ivan II, the despots of Epirus, and the emperors of Nicaea. It again became part of the Byzantine Empire, which was restored in 1261, but in the 14th century Stephen Dušan of Serbia conquered all Macedonia except for present-day Thessalonika. The fall of the Serbian empire in the late 14th century brought Macedonia under the rule of the Ottoman Turks, which lasted for five centuries.

Under Ottoman rule, Macedonia was administratively divided in 5 Districts, or vilayets, two of which were located in present-day FYROM: Skopje (which included also Kosovo and Metohia), and Bitola.

Many mosques, markets, theological colleges, balconied houses were constructed in the cities of Macedonia, with the effect of substantially transforming the city landscapes and the urban settings of Medieval Macedonia. Nevertheless, few mosques resulted from the transformation of churches (but this is the case for the two major churches in Ohrid: St. Pantaleimon and St. Sophia). The majority of them have been built anew and funded with special legacies (vaqfi) by local governors, benefactors or representatives of the Ottoman aristocracy.

Particular attention, within the Ottoman cultural heritage of Macedonia, must be given to the flourishing of the sufi movement of the Bektashi order, originating from Central Anatolia but widely popular in all southern Balkan area since the beginning of the 16th century, and especially in Albania and Macedonia. Among other architectural typologies, they built tekkes, architectural complexes which included prayer and meditation buildings, refectories and other kind of structures for the help of the poor and pilgrims, memorials, etc.

In the 19th century the national revival in the Balkans began; national and religious antagonism flared, and conflict was heightened by the Ottoman policy of playing one group against the other. Meanwhile the Ottoman Empire lost control over the major sections of Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, each of which claimed Macedonia on historical or ethnical grounds. In the Treaty of San Stefano (1878), which terminated the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, Bulgaria was awarded the lion's share of Macedonia. However, the settlement was nullified by the European powers in the same year, and Macedonia was left under direct Ottoman control.

A secret organization (IMRO) working for Macedonian independence sprang up in the late 19th century and soon wielded great power. The komitajis, as the revolutionary groups were called, were generally supported by Bulgaria, which gained a major share of Macedonia in the first of the Balkan Wars (1912-13). Greece and Serbia turned against Bulgaria in the Second Balkan War, and the Treaty of Bucharest (1913) left Bulgaria only a small share of Macedonia, the rest of which was divided roughly along the present lines. Thousands of Macedonians fled to Bulgaria. In World War I the Salonica (present-day Thessalonika) campaigns took place in Macedonia. After the war Macedonia became a hotbed of agitation and terrorism, directed largely from Bulgaria. The population exchange among Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria after 1923 resulted in the replacement by Greek refugees from Asia Minor of most of the Slavic and Turkish elements in Greek Macedonia. Charging that the Greek minority in Bulgarian Macedonia was being mistreated, Greece in 1925 invaded Bulgaria. The League of Nations, however, forced a cession of hostilities and awarded (1926) a decision favorable to Bulgaria. Bulgarian relations with Yugoslavia (before 1929 the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes) remained strained over the Macedonian question. Frontier incidents were frequent, as were Yugoslav charges against Bulgaria for fostering the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO). Macedonian agitation against Serbian rule culminated (1934) in the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia by a Macedonian...
nationalist at Marseilles. In World War II all Macedonia was occupied (1941-44) by Bulgaria, which sided with the Axis against Yugoslavia and Greece. The Bulgarian armistice treaty of 1944 restored the pre-war boundaries, which were confirmed in the peace treaty of 1947. The Yugoslav constitution of 1946 made Yugoslav Macedonia an autonomous unit in a federal state, and the Macedonian people were recognized as a separate nationality. Tension over Macedonia continued in the early post-war years. During the Greek civil war there was much conflict between Greece and Yugoslavia over Macedonia, and the breach between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria after 1948 helped to make the Macedonian question explosive. However, with the settlement of the civil war and with the easing of Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations after 1962, tension over Macedonia was reduced. In 1990, Yugoslav Macedonia elected its first non-Communist government and the following year the Republic of Macedonia was born.

II The Macedonian Orthodox Church

The Macedonian Orthodox Church is an important component of the cultural background of Macedonia. Recognized within Yugoslavia after 1967, the church benefited from a state policy which acknowledged the cultural heritage of Orthodoxy. The property of the church in Macedonia was largely expropriated, but it was also preserved. In the twenty five year period 1945-70, 841 Orthodox churches and forty eight monasteries throughout Yugoslavia were repaired or restored, including the frescoed churches of Macedonia. This could be argued to have been an inscription of an ethnic or religious identity in the Republic, which took place alongside the project of creating other sites, both ceremonial and everyday, where ideals of socialism were promoted. Now that the state’s relationship with religion has changed and the Orthodox church is regaining control of these sites they appear set to play an influential role in the politics of the present. However, the Serbian Church never recognized the Macedonian, and nor did the rest of the world’s Orthodox churches. The complication that this brings in its wake is that the Serbian church lays claim to all church property in the Republic that is dated prior to 1967. In so doing, it reprises the role it played when Serbia controlled the area between 1919 and 1941; a claim to proprietorship of cultural capital thus carries with it, implicitly, a claim to the control of the territory in which it stands. None of these disputes are new. Clashes with Greece over the name of the Republic and its Slavic inhabitants began in the 1940s; the Serbian church mounted opposition to the Macedonian church’s bids for autocephaly throughout the 1960s; and Albanian citizens of Yugoslavia made the claims to the status of nation (narod) that Albanian citizens of Macedonia do today.*

III The Ottomans and Macedonia

The Turkish conquest of the Balkans started very early at the time of Orhan Gazi, since 1352. Stip in 1380, Bitola and Prilep in 1382, and Ohrid in 1385 were already in Ottoman hands. The famous Battle of Kosovo in 1389 resulted in the final victory of the Ottomans. Turkish conquests spread widely in the Balkans under Bayazit I (1389-1402), extending its borders to Macedonia, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia. Skopje was conquered by Pasha Yigit at the time of Bayazit I. Ottomans’ spread in the region was peaceful and quick through religious tolerance provided by istimalet “tolerance” policy, exempting the monasteries and Orthodox Church from tax. Turkmen tribes brought with themselves

their language and culture to Balkans. Most of them established new villages under new names. It is, however, obvious that Ottoman conquests were made to settle there, which were not just temporary adventurous or marauding movements. Such Turkish-Islamic works as the inns, baths and small mosques built in a short time in the places settled were quick to change the appearance of the cities, turning them into Anatolian cities.

Among the non-Muslim elements as from 1529, there is a small number of Jews known as ‘Cemaat-ı Yahudiyan’ and a non-Muslim community known as ‘Cemaat-ı Fırengan’ in 1544. These were the merchants of Ragusa. Doubtless, Jews and merchants of Ragusa had played a great role in the development of the trade life in the city of Skopje. The majority of the non-Turks were the Albanians and Macedonians as well as a small number of Armenians. They were mostly engaged in trade. The Ottoman Empire divided its subjects along confessional lines, and not along their ethnicity or language. There were four administrative units, the *millets*, which regulated the religiously different subjects. The *Umma* dealt with the affairs of the Muslims. The Christian, Armenian and Jewish millets were given a relative autonomy to manage their own affairs. Most of the mosques on the territory of the present-day Republic of Macedonia were erected between the 15th and the 16th centuries. The most prominent of them are the Isa Beg Mosque, the Mustafa Pasha Mosque and the Sultan Murat Mosque in Skopje, and the Aladzha Mosque in Tetovo. Among the most prominent of the Sufi orders religious architectures – tekkes (lodge of a Sufi order, inhabited by the Sheykh or the Baba of the dervishes) and türbes (mausoleums) – are the Helveti Tekke-Mosque in Struga and the Bektashi-Tekke in Tetovo.
Institutional Framework
Macedonian Policy and Organizations for Protection and Valorization of Cultural Heritage

1 The Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage

The UNESCO mission to FYROM took place during a significant period of transition and transformation of the National Organization for Protection of Macedonian Cultural Heritage. A comprehensive Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage was approved by the Macedonian Parliament not long before the arrival of the Mission (March 2004) and its implementation was scheduled to take place starting Jan. 1, 2005.

After in-depth analysis of its text, the common impression of the Mission members has been of a carefully designed and very detailed Law, updated to the most recent (and debated) issues of what is or is not included within the boundaries of cultural heritage various definition(s).

In fact, the Macedonian legislation shows a mature approach to the complexity of the matter, balancing a not passive eye on foreign and most advanced legislation as well as recommendations of International organizations with a parallel, significant attention to the specifics of Macedonian society’s needs, traditions, cultural and religious values in rapid transformation and under the current objective budgetary constraints.

Considering that this Law probably represents the first attempt to create an independent body of regulations concerning the treatment of the cultural heritage of the young Republic of Macedonia as a whole and distinct from the cultural heritage of other southeastern European countries, particularly Serbia and Montenegro, but also Bulgaria and Greece, the degree of self-consciousness and independency of the text as well as the generous effort to enter the European mainstream in the management of cultural heritage appear as its main intellectual assets.

Another element of some relevance for an external viewer is the insistence, in various sections of the Law (particularly under Section 4), on issues related to the damages caused to the cultural heritage by war and/or natural disasters and the measures of prevention to be taken in order to face events of this kind or limit their consequences.

For a country like FYR Macedonia, where the impact of the recent ethnic conflicts on monuments and works of art has been very limited – if compared with other neighboring countries – but natural disasters, like earthquakes of catastrophic dimensions, constitute a tragic component of the collective memory and a permanent threat, this particular approach of the Macedonian Law is to be ranked among the most universal contribution of Macedonia to legislation on cultural heritage.

Illegal export of works of art or smuggling of archaeological findings is another sensitive issue, frequently cited in various occasions (but particularly dealt with under Chapter 4, art. 50 to 54).
For a country of recent independency which, until a few years ago, was – as far as the organization of protection of cultural heritage is concerned – under the Belgrade centralized administration, the problem of defending the rights of state ownership acquire a larger, political dimension which has to do, among other things, even with the original archives of the Registry of national monuments which are still kept in the Yugoslav capital. Actually, the Macedonian claim for return of cultural heritage of national significance includes also the Registry which, under the previous regime, was moved from its original location.

Other important, advanced and relatively original aspects of the Macedonian Law on Cultural Heritage worth mentioning, especially in relation to the reform of the organization which is currently taking place, are the following:

- the International assistance and cooperation for protection of monuments is frequently mentioned and fostered as instrumental to the attainment of the target (General Provisions, art. 6.7, and passim);
- the cultural landscapes, defined as “areas of specific interaction between human and nature,” receive a particular emphasis within the characteristics and properties of the cultural heritage (Section II, art. 14);
- the necessity for a “contact zone” (or “buffer zone”) in the “immediate environment” of the immovable cultural heritage is highlighted under art. 5.5;
- dependency of the preservation of the cultural heritage on its actual use and destination “for active living […] as well as a factor of persistent living” is mentioned under art. 5.8;
- in the new Law on the Cultural Heritage Protection the protection competence is expanded to the non-material cultural heritage, or as the Law introduced the term – intangible heritage. “Under this term three types of non-material goods were included: a) Folklore goods, b) Language and c) Toponyms. In addition to that, the new national protection model of heritage basically corresponds with the Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection. The ratification of the Convention is in procedure expecting to be completed in 2005 […] Within another Law regulation - The Law on the Macedonian Language use (from 1998) the Macedonian language was proclaimed as an intangible heritage of special cultural and historic importance for the Republic of Macedonia;”
- the Integrated Protection is the name given (Section 3) to the protection of cultural heritage as one of goals of the spatial and urban planning. Arts. 69-72 establish detailed criteria for studying the impact of cultural heritage on urban planning and viceversa: the tool for such a study is the Protection and conservation database which is “the documentation base regarding the treatment of the immovable cultural heritage, in the spatial and urban plans” (art. 71). This base will contain graphic and textual documentation of the protected goods and their immediate surroundings. Urban and spatial planning proposals will comply with the approved base. Plans with a high percentage of cultural objects within the area will be given priority;
- the enactment of a National Strategy of protection and use of the cultural heritage long term plan – upon proposal by the National Council of Cultural Heritage – for a period of 15 years, according to the strategies of protection and use of the common cultural heritage in Europe, is emphasized under Section 8, art. 49.
II The Organization: Institutions for Protection of Cultural Heritage

The main administration for protection of cultural heritage in fYR Macedonia is the Cultural Heritage Protection Office (Uprava za zaštita na kulturnoto nasledstvo), an independent governmental organization within the Ministry of Culture which started its activity on May 10, 2004, two months after the promulgation of the new Law on Cultural Heritage. It is structured in three departments:

1. Identification, Protection and Use of Cultural Heritage;
2. Prevention and Supervision;

The newly established organization for protection of Macedonian cultural heritage is founded on the distinction between the two basic typologies of cultural heritage: immovable (monuments and archaeological sites) and movable (the latter includes Museums, Libraries, Film Archives, etc.). In parallel with such a distinction, local Centers of conservation and local Museum, previously unified under the same territorial organization of the former Republic Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments, are currently split into two separate entities, each with its own staff and operational structure.

Art. 146 of the Law on Cultural Heritage establishes the duties and responsibilities of the National Conservation Center (abbreviated, hereinafter as: NCC Nacionalna ustanova – Nacionalen konzervatorski centar, in Macedonian language), the main national institution for protection of immovable cultural heritage. Its main duties include:

– keeping records of the protected immovable goods;
– coordination and control of conservation projects made by local conservations centers;
– acting as central laboratory for physical, chemical and biochemical laboratory;
– training of experts in different fields;
– promoting the activity of the Conservation Centre;
– acting as central information and documentation office for immovable heritage.

It is the responsibility of NCC also to take care of the cultural immovable heritage in areas not covered by the local conservations centers. These areas represent quite a good portion of the whole territory (approx. 25%).

Scientific reports about its activity and original studies on Macedonian cultural heritage are hosted by two periodicals:
– Cultural Historic Heritage of the Republic of Macedonia, published by NCC;
– Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica, published by the Macedonian Archaeological Scientific Association:

Six are the local conservation centers, each with responsibility over a portion, specified by Law, of the territory where the immovable heritage goods are located.

The six conservation centers are located in major cities of fYR Macedonia, themselves rich in history and monuments (see Appendix V, 3):

– Skopje (Zavod za zaštita na spomenicite na kulturata);
– Ohrid (Zavod za zaštita na spomenicite na kulturata i muzej);
– Bitola (Zavod za zaštita na spomenicite na kulturata, galerija i muzej);
– Prilep (Zavod za zaštita na spomenicite na kulturata i muzej);
– Štip (Zavod za zaštita na spomenicite na kulturata i muzej);
– Strumica (Zavod za zaštita na spomenicite na kulturata i muzej);
These local conservation centers are the direct heirs of the former Republic Institutes for Protection of Cultural Monuments (Republiki zavod za zaštitu na spomenicite na kulturata).

In collaboration with, but independent from the Conservation Centers, the old local Museums and the new ones which have been recently created or restored, are responsible for movable goods protection. Of course, the typology of the Museums largely depends on the nature and origin of the local collections. At central level, the Museum of Macedonia in Skopje coordinates the work of local museums and for movable goods protection, in some way, may be considered the equivalent of the NCC.

Finally, the National Cultural Heritage Council, established by art. 158 of the Law on Cultural Heritage, is a governmental “advice and coordination body [...] for following implementation, coordination and promotion of the protection and use of the cultural heritage.” Presided ex-officio by the Minister of Culture, its 14 members are appointed by the Government among well-known personalities in the area of protection of cultural heritage, from MASA (the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts) to the Universities and include representatives of religious communities and associations in the same field. Though its power is limited, its advice touches on important affairs, such as the national strategy for cultural heritage protection and its use, the definition of reserved archaeological zones, governmental reports to International organizations, etc.

III Consistency, variety, distribution and classification of the Macedonian Cultural Heritage

Situated at the very heart of the southern region of the Balkan peninsula, geographically characterized by the mountainous morphology of the terrain, rich in clear waters and rivers crossing the country in all directions, FYR Macedonia shows an important potential for development of cultural tourism, thanks also to its quite efficient and modern road network and bus transportation system throughout and outside the country and, last but not least, its excellent culinary tradition and care for food quality and the improving level of its lodging facilities.

According to the itinerary followed by the Mission and accurately prepared by the experts of NCC, some of the areas where notable monuments of the Macedonian cultural heritage are located could not be visited for security reasons. Certainly, the re-establishment of these areas under the control of central authority is a necessary pre-condition for development of cultural tourism and the positive fruition of the Country’s cultural heritage.

Taken as a whole, the immovable cultural heritage of Macedonia appears quite impressive, well integrated with the natural landscape, offering a variety of attractions for the conscious traveler: a cultural heritage spanning from prehistory to Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman cultural contexts and resources. The same can be said of the richness of the collections of the Macedonian museums, some of them of exceptional importance, especially in the field of Byzantine painting. It must also be said that the building exploitation of urban and suburban areas has not reached yet the degree of no-return of other Balkan countries. Meanwhile, the integration of cultural heritage with the urban and zone planning requires more attention and careful control, particularly where the need for commercial space is growing rapidly and the availability is limited to old urban centers.
The new Law classifies the cultural heritage according to a standard, named National Classification with the purpose of identifying the goods and create a database of reference based on quality evaluation and documentary evidence. The National Classification was in the process of realization at the time of the Mission’s visit. It was scheduled to be completed for the month of January 2005.

Immovable, movable and intangible goods are classified in categories according to their degree of importance for the national history of Macedonia, i.e.:

1. Cultural Heritage of special importance/particular significance, with two subcategories:
   1.a Cultural Heritage of outstanding (exceptional) national importance (significance), and
   1.b Cultural Heritage of great importance (significance)
2. Significant Cultural Heritage

Approximately 5,500 monuments are reported as classified as important immovable goods throughout the Country, but the work of registration and classification seems to be still far from the stage of verified statistics. The above figure cannot be far from reality but it must be taken into consideration also that, even recently, new archaeological sites of notable importance have been discovered, opening the possibility of further increasing the numbers and distribution of the cultural heritage in Macedonia.

IV The Laboratories for restoration of movable objects of the National Conservation Centre

On Nov. 15, 2004 the UNESCO team had the opportunity to visit the laboratories for restoration of movable objects of the National Conservation Center in Skopje, guided by its Director, Mr. Milan Ivanovski. An evaluation of the expertise of the personnel currently employed there, the available laboratory equipment and the general environment is considered here as an objective appreciation of a vital section of the Department.

The Laboratories of the National Conservation Centre function under difficult conditions. The personnel is composed of one chemist, one bio-chemist, one wood specialist and three or four “painters” (restorers specializing in restoration of tempera and oil paintings on canvas).

All of them are self-trained “on-the-field”; with some exceptions, they did not have the opportunity to become specialized in any particular field of their expertise. They work almost exclusively on restoration of icons, more often originating from the environs of Skopje, but occasionally on more difficult and valuable icons from other parts of the Country. The two chemists have yet to begin working on metal and stone – again without the necessary specialization. The laboratory has only one microscope; the locals where these technicians spend most of their working time do not have enough ventilation, which is a health hazard due to the frequent use of chemicals; the X-ray photographs of the works of art are taken on a friendly basis at the police headquarters or at the nearby hospital. The laboratory assistants are young and strongly motivated people.

The Mission was informed that it is in the plans of the Conservation Centre to move its premises to the nearby han (Kuršumli Han) where the laboratories could certainly find a much better and larger accommodation than the present one.
**Mission’s Special Recommendation**

It is strongly recommended to provide the National Conservation Centre with state-of-the-art technical laboratories for restoration of paintings, metals and stone and to organize systematic personnel training in order to specialize them in specific conservation procedures. In consideration of the functionality of these central laboratories to the entire organization, this is an essential and urgent measure.

**Financial estimate**

An initial investment of at least €250,000 is necessary to provide the technical infrastructure for regular and safe management of the restoration laboratories. Additional €120,000 are to be considered for personnel training in different fields of specialization: tempera on wood, oil on canvas, sculpture, bronze and metals, ceramics.
Mission’s Recommendations

I Legislation and Policy
Regulations for the enforcement of the new law should consider the definition of **standard procedures** for protection, research and conservation of the cultural heritage. A specific body of surveillance within the Center for Conservation should be responsible for the implementation of those standards.

In consideration of the sensitive situation of certain important monuments, object of contrast and political tension throughout the country, it is advisable to reach, within a cadre agreement, a **high degree of collaboration both with the Macedonian Orthodox Church and the Islamic community regarding protection of cultural heritage**. This will be helpful for the conservation of the religious historical heritage of every confession with the purpose of sharing the guidelines internationally established for the conservation of monuments and objects.

II Organization, Staff and Training

*Organization’s main positive aspects are:*
- a consolidated administrative system;
- the dedication of the personnel, despite difficulties, changes and economic constraints.

*Suggestions for improvement*
- With reference to the new structure of the Cultural Heritage Protection Office, it is suggested to adopt, in collaboration with International Organizations and UNESCO, the advanced criteria for the “digitization” of the National Information System for Cultural Heritage records. It will include a set of technical data, such as georeferences, seismology of the territory, petrography of the construction material, chemical analysis of mortars, history of restorations, graphics, etc.;
- The unbalanced composition of the staff (many art historians, few archaeologists, surveyors, illustrators and, above all, very few architects experts in conservation) may cause problems in planning and organizing the institutional activities. It is advisable to review the fields of specialization of the personnel, promote their update and encourage personnel mobility;
- It is suggested to expand the National Conservation Centre into a centralized **Advanced Body for Restoration and Conservation**. In addition, certain interdisciplinary specialists should be represented, such as: experts in paleobotanics, paleopathology, photogrammetry, archeometry. This highly specialized Body should act as a centre of reference and operations for the whole system;
– It is recommended to introduce formal (postgraduate) and informal courses on various aspects and disciplines of heritage conservation and management; in collaboration with Universities and Ministry of Education as well as International organizations (such as ICOMOS, ICCROM, UNESCO);
– It is suggested to encourage access of members of different ethnic and religious backgrounds to the world of conservation of cultural heritage, especially of new generations;
– It is also strongly recommended to improve higher education in the fields of survey, conservation and protection of cultural heritage (see also Appendix III: The formation of young specialists in Islamic archaeology and monuments conservation in Macedonia. An addendum to Mission’s Recommendations);

In consideration of the generalized trend to “over-reconstruct” monuments (particularly churches and archeological remains) it is suggested to:

1. update architects conservators and conservation technicians through specific courses on techniques and methodologies of the conservation of both archaeological sites and monuments;
2. always combine the work of the archaeologist with the architect conservator’s;
3. use traditional and compatible materials in restoration.

The repairs and restoration of historic buildings should be carried out using traditional materials and techniques, to match those used originally as closely as possible.

Three main reasons support this statement: first, repair materials matching the originals will provide continuity with the past, keeping intervention to the minimum; second, by closely matching the original materials and techniques, the repair materials will age in a similar way as the original; and finally, modern materials and techniques introduced in past repair work have often proved to be incompatible with the original, causing accelerated deterioration of building fabric.

It is recommended to promote the establishment of standards and guidelines for education and training in the conservation of historic buildings, historic districts and towns, archaeological sites and cultural landscapes. It is crucial to understand the need to develop a holistic approach to heritage issues and deploy the required relevant skills.

It is also highly recommended to focus on the protection of cultural heritages that can contribute to the construction of a multi-ethnic society. The protection of cultural heritage which does not lead to ethno-centrism and ethnic superiority is of special importance. Specifically, the goal should be to build confidence through the preservation of cultural heritage in post-conflict areas, based on such experiences as the reconstruction of the Mostar Bridge in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

III Research and Site Management

Stobi represents an advanced and successful example of site management. In the light of this experience, the Mission suggests to organize courses for archaeologists, architects and in-site management which will include training in methodology of survey and archaeological excavations, priority of excavations, restoration, interpretation and presentation (visitors’ centre – infrastructure – visitors’ paths) and public services, promotion of tourism (see also below the Stobi chapter).
IV Urban Planning, vernacular architecture and ethnographic heritage

In the field of urban planning and conservation/protection of rural and vernacular architecture, it is suggested to:

- Improve collaboration between municipalities and departments of conservation with the aim of defining the historical town centers where the unique combination of monuments, urban landscape and activities must be preserved and managed;
- Protect unregistered heritage such as vernacular architecture, environment, cultural landscape, and urban historical centers;
- Train a new generation of architects and planners with the aim to improve urban environment planning and the quality of contemporary architecture in sites around the country.

In the field of conservation of ethnographic heritage a major effort should be done to improve the quality of the research and study in connection with linguistic and cultural diversity. The local museums should be equipped in such a way as to constitute centers of research and appreciation of local traditions, costumes, arts and crafts.

V Cultural Significance, Public awareness and Cultural Tourism

- Expand the consciousness of the importance of the Cultural Heritage;
- Create educational services within the museums;
- Target the media for the promotion of cultural heritage;
- Introduce cultural heritage in schools curricula.
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