



## The impact of Covid 19 on cultural heritage. Crisis and new opportunity

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**Abstract:** Catastrophic events like natural disasters or wars change our life's assumptions and conditions. COVID-19 is a recent example of a crisis that has an ongoing global impact. The pandemic has had a strong economic impact across different sectors, states, and countries. The global pandemic has mainly affected the cultural and creative industries and has highlighted the structural fragility of many producers in this sector. The crisis has presented an opportunity to review the organization and management of these industries as well as to promote innovation, local involvement, and stimulate the interest in culture and arts through different instruments.

**Summary: 1. Economic background – 2. The impact of Covid-19 on cultural and creative sectors – 2. The impact of Covid-19 on cultural and creative sectors and strategies for the recovery – 3. Intangible cultural heritage: effects of Covid-19 and sustainability – 4. Conclusions**

### 1. Economic background

Catastrophic events like natural disasters or wars change all the assumptions and the conditions of our life. COVID-19 is a recent example of a crisis which has an ongoing global impact.

Short-term economic fluctuations tend to be driven by random shocks to preferences, factor inputs, productivity, or policies that directly impact the supply and demand of goods and services.

While often these shocks are caused by natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis, these are typically short-lived and localized. But, when these shocks propagate across sectors, and countries, the aggregate effects are realized.

A global pandemic is also a type of natural disaster, but capable of simultaneously disrupting supply, demand, and productivity channels over a long period with global implications<sup>1</sup>.

Many economists highlighted the dramatic effects on societies around the world. An economic survey conducted by the Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (“INSEE”) indicated, on March 26, 2020, «a substantial decline in the business climate», directly linked to the health crisis<sup>2</sup>. The loss of economic activity was estimated at 35% compared with “normal” activity and household consumption was expected to be 35% lower than “normal”<sup>3</sup>.

The pandemic is not a new phenomenon in history. As pointed out by several commenters, Covid 19 is different, from an economic perspective. Previous post-war pandemics hit nations that were –at the time– far less economically dominant. And those pandemics were far smaller; the number of Covid-19 case, in 2020, was «eight or nine times larger than the number of SARS cases. At least as important is one sobering fact: this time, the hardest-hit nations include the G7 plus China»<sup>4</sup>.

Currently, economic systems are globally connected by cross-border flows of goods, services, knowhow, people, financial capital, foreign direct investment international banking, and exchange rates. As noted by economists, they are also «connected –but not physically– by beliefs»<sup>5</sup>. These factors are also mechanism for the propagation of economic shocks, or economic contagion and they amplify the impact on societies<sup>6</sup>.

The scale of quarantine measures introduced during March 2020, brought large sectors of the global economy to a synchronized standstill. This situation has increased the initial turbulence, in a context of high globalization, and have intensified the effects of the economic downturn, compared with previous pandemics<sup>7</sup>.

After more than one year, the OECD report of September 2021 points out that the global economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic remains strong, yet uneven. The report highlights that this kind of progress «is increasing economic tensions that could undermine the recovery if not well managed by policymakers. Rising commodity and shipping prices and stretched supply chains as economies re-open rapidly are pushing up inflation everywhere but this is expected to be temporary»<sup>8</sup>.

Before the war in Ukraine, the world economy was on the path to recovery, albeit in a non – homogeneous way. The conflict has had a disruptive impact on the supply chain, severely slowing the recovery. In this context, European countries are the most exposed to the war, because of energy imports and refugee flows.

According to OECD predictions, GDP growth should be reduced to around 3%, and remain similar next year<sup>9</sup>. This further shock has intensified the inflationary pressure linked to the supply crisis from Covid-19 and will reduce job opportunities<sup>10</sup>.

## **2. The impact of Covid-19 on cultural and creative sectors and strategies for the recovery**

The risk that an industry faces is reflected in its level of exposure to different types of shocks, as well as the specific vulnerability of the companies and their value chain<sup>11</sup>.

Non-essential industries such as entertainment, restaurants, and hotels, experience both a demand reduction (due to consumers seeking to avoid infection) and a supply reduction (as many workers are unable to perform their activities from home)<sup>12</sup>.

In this context, the cultural and creative industries have been among the most hit by the global pandemic, because of, among others, the lack of funding, limited access to historical, archaeological and other cultural sites, suspension of excavation and live performances.

This sector is composed of micro-firms, non-profit organizations, and creative professionals, often operating on the margins of financial sustainability. The crisis has put their economic viability at risk and has exposed the structural fragility of many producers in this sector<sup>13</sup>.

The lower level of international and domestic tourism, as well as the reduction of investment in the field, have affected the production of goods and services, with a strong impact on the cultural employment.

At the same time, the lockdown and social distancing measures have brought to light the importance of arts and culture for social evolution and well-being.

The American philosopher Allan Bloom wrote: “Education is the movement from darkness to light”<sup>14</sup>.

By shutting down museums, schools, archeological sites, the lockdown measures had removed an important source of sustenance to families and especially children. Not only from a financial perspective. The empty school seemed the expression of the absence of the light of culture and education from the lives of people.

Moreover, psychology researchers have highlighted the incidence of mental health issues during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, depression, occupational stress, excessive fear, that increase the risk for acute complication of pre-existing diseases<sup>15</sup> and impact negatively the quality of life of the sufferer.

Culture and creative sectors have also a great influence on mental well-being. Several studies have shown how exposure to beauty sets the inner world in motion, stirring both submerged positive emotions and distressing and disturbing ones, contributing to the cure and psycho-spiritual evolution of the person<sup>16</sup>.

Consequentially, the downsizing of these sectors produce a negative impact at a territorial level, not only in terms of jobs and revenues, but also relating to citizens' well-being, vitality, and the multiplicity of interests. On the other side, the crisis can be characterized not only as a disruptive period of instability but also as a moment of change. In the psychological field, some reviews identified also positive strategies to face such dramatic events, like self and other preservation, social support, change perspective on life and redefine priorities<sup>17</sup>.

What is more, when the impact of Covid-19 dawned on daily life, the use of digital media has increased enormously, as millions of people converted their work, social and education activities from the physical life to a digital platform<sup>18</sup>.

From this perspective, the pandemic accelerated diffusion of digital technologies, micro-level initiatives, and innovation.

The cultural organizations and institutions, the galleries and the libraries have adapted to this process, by becoming digital and offering their services online. However, the access to cultural heritage resources remotely «could reduce isolation, improve mental health and support the educational and creative needs of diverse audiences»<sup>19</sup>.

Culture and education contribute to innovation, as well as to numerous other channels for positive social impact (including well-being, inclusion and urban regeneration).

Global lockdowns have helped us to appreciate the importance of art and culture for people's well-being and health. This recognition provides new opportunities to capitalize on the role of the arts in the social system. Building on the impact of creative sectors and education, «strategic complementarities can be developed» to introduce measures to stimulate recovery in the medium and long term<sup>20</sup>.

In this context, digitalization can create new forms of cultural experience, dissemination, and new business models with market potential. Many companies have experimented with new technologies, also virtual, to create new form of attraction and involving people in cultural content. In the short term, it was the only option, and it contributed to increase the distribution channels, and investment in cultural content, even if it doesn't replace a live experience or reproduce the emotional engagement. On the medium and long term this shift represents a new approach, an ability to develop innovation, to disseminate cultural and creative content on-line, to stimulate interests and engagement; and it can be assumed as a system to increase the dissemination of cultural heritage<sup>21</sup>.

In a specific sector, the International Council of Museums ("ICOM") and other organizations provided suggestions and guidelines for actions that museums and museum professionals would take to support community resilience after the pandemic shock<sup>22</sup>. In particular, they suggested diversifying the communication tools and channels to reach the audience or reconsidering accessibility standards and procedures. These initiatives have been adopted by many museums and were received by a large audience. Anyway, in some areas, there is a digitalization gap, which avoids access to online content. Consequently, it is relevant to support the distribution of technologies and the ability to use them.

As remarked by OECD, «museum exhibitions and activities often touch on complex themes such as inter-cultural dialogue or the integration of minorities and migrants, which may be more difficult to implement digitally»<sup>23</sup>.

Building on solidarity and cooperation is another fundamental element for recovery after the crisis.

The pandemic has substantially impacted the financial sustainability of all the cultural sectors. This event has put in light the need to provide financial support for the implementation of cultural activities.

Museums, cultural organizations and institutions should create networks and partnerships to support their activities and benefit from new sources, in addition to public support (at local, regional, national and international levels).

Among other suggestions, ICOM recommended to identify the needs of community, keep in touch with communities (through representatives), track data, statistics and current needs and demand and to keep the UN Sustainable development Goals in mind<sup>24</sup>.

Another industry characterized by a strong linkage with the cultural sector is tourism. Developing new local strategies for cultural tourism can be a strategic measure to promote more sustainable practices in the future.

In the recovery, there is an opportunity to develop new growth model, abandoning large scale tourism and promoting sustainable tourism<sup>25</sup>.

Tourism is one of the ten economic sectors identified in the UNEP Green Economy Report<sup>26</sup>, whose greening could increase prosperity, support the local economy, create employment, and reduce poverty<sup>27</sup>. The report highlights that tourists «are driving the greening of the sector, as seen by the 20% annual growth rate enjoyed by ecotourism; about six times the industry wide rate of growth»<sup>28</sup>.

In the long term, a sustainable approach can support growth and, at the same time, ensure a balanced use of resources.

Moreover, in greening the tourism sector, it is fundamental to promote an inclusive approach, and increase the involvement of local communities, especially lower economic classes, in the tourism value chain<sup>29</sup>.

Reflection on the Covid experience can be a challenge to review the priorities, strength and weakness and start a transformation process of organizations and institutions with a sustainable approach.

### **3. Intangible cultural heritage: effects of Covid-19 and sustainability**

The pandemic and the restriction adopted by the governments to limit the spreading of the virus have had a profound impact on intangible cultural heritage (“ICH”). The lockdown and the social distancing measures have limited social community relationships, prevented or postponed festival and cultural events, hitting the heart of intangible heritage, with a significant economic and social impact<sup>30</sup>.

In this respect, a recent UNESCO report<sup>31</sup>, focused on emergencies, including both conflicts and disaster situations, underscored «the dual nature of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, both as being under threat and as a powerful tool for recovery and resilience»<sup>32</sup>.

The emergency showed the fragility of this sector, but also its resilience and capacity to respond to the crisis with creativity and flexibility<sup>33</sup>.

ICH practitioners and bearers adopted different strategies to face the crisis, including the widespread use of virtual spaces and the creation of networks online, online fora with the government<sup>34</sup>, documenting and digitizing ICH, which increases social knowledge about local traditions and practices<sup>35</sup>.

For example, museums organized digital exhibitions and virtual tours, musicians had online concerts, and also some festivities were held online<sup>36</sup>.

This critical period opens new debates on the approach to the continuity of these practices in the long term and on the sustainability of ICH in an ever-changing context. ICH is «adaptive in nature»<sup>37</sup> and it has inside the capacity to reflect society's dynamics. Yet, this process needs to balance the preservation of traditions and the expression of a new cultural dialectic, which implies the involvement of new actors and negotiations, including communities, NGOs, government, and private entities, whose cooperation is essential to face new challenges.

In this context, UNESCO pointed out several priorities to support the sustainability of ICH in the long term after Covid-19. These priorities include: carry out community-based needs assessments and ensure that ICH safeguarding is incorporated in local, national, sub-regional and regional risk reduction; create a favorable environment to ensure the continued practices and the transmission of ICH elements; provide resources and support for ICH bearers and communities to develop and undertake safeguarding plans/measures to enhance the resilience of their living heritage; facilitate information sharing on ICH safeguarding in emergency situations within and between affected States Parties and other relevant players, such as NGOs, charities and humanitarian actors, etc., for engaging ICH in emergency preparedness and response processes; leveraging the opportunity provided by the listing mechanisms under the 2003 Convention for promoting and enhancing the visibility of ICH elements<sup>38</sup>.

Moreover, both 'tangible' and 'intangible' heritage facilitated intercultural communication and dialogue because they permit overcoming cultural boundaries of activity within a community or beyond.

The concept of 'intercultural dialogue' in the European policy approach is based on individual human dignity (embracing our common humanity and common destiny), as proposed in the White paper of 2008 on this topic<sup>39</sup>. Precisely, intercultural dialogue is understood «as a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It requires the freedom and ability to express oneself, as well as the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others. Intercultural dialogue contributes to political, social, cultural and economic integration and the cohesion of culturally diverse societies. It fosters equality, human dignity and a sense of common purpose. It aims to develop a deeper understanding of diverse world views and practices, to increase co-operation and participation (or the freedom to make choices), to allow personal growth and transformation, and to promote tolerance and respect for the other»<sup>40</sup>.

Cultural heritage is a common medium for communication, which contributes to social cohesion, by minimizing disparities and avoiding polarization, shared values, trust among members of society, and it also contributes to integration.

Intangible heritage has a significant role, especially for immigrants and refugees, in the re-creation of homeland through memory and past identity and, at the same time, in facing the difficulties of the host countries. Theatre, music, poetry, dance, gastronomy, arts, and all the activities which can assume a universal value and touch common sensitive perceptions have the potential to involve people in the community and redefine their identity in the new social landscape.

The White paper of the Council of Europe, dealing with the significance of integration, underscores that effective integration policies «are needed to allow immigrants to participate fully in the life of the host country. Immigrants should, as everybody else, abide by the laws and respect the basic values of European societies and their cultural heritage. Strategies for integration must necessarily cover all areas of society, and include social, political and cultural aspects»<sup>41</sup>.

Cultural heritage represents a tool to implement connection and creative involvement through folk traditions, museums, and artifacts, which support people to dialogue and inclusion, to recreate a sense of community.

In emergency situations, such as Covid-19, OECD recommended to «use targeted cultural policy to address social issues such as intercultural dialogue or the integration and valorisation of minorities and migrants»<sup>42</sup>.

The pandemic has had both a negative impact on ICH and a positive one because it has strengthened the interest in ICH and the local involvement in the medium period.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The protection and enhancement of cultural heritage contribute to social and economic vitality. Both tangible and intangible heritage have an essential role in transmitting history, tradition, and shared value.

The Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies (1982) has remarked that «The cultural heritage of a people includes the works of its artists, architects, musicians, writers and scientists and also the work of anonymous artists, expressions of the people's spirituality, and the body of values which give meaning to life. It includes both tangible and intangible works through which the creativity of that people finds expression: languages, rites, beliefs, historic places and monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries» (art. 23)<sup>43</sup>.

The pandemic, such as other catastrophic events, has disrupted the cultural and creative sectors. However, the crisis has presented an opportunity to review the organization and management of these industries as well as to promote innovation, local involvement, and stimulate the interest in culture and arts through different instruments.

This approach has a fundamental role in the perspective of subsumable goals and promotion of pluralism, tolerance, and social cohesion.

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1) S.C. Ludvigson, M. Sai, N. Serena, COVID-19 and the macroeconomic effects of costly disasters, in National Bureau of Economic Research, No. w26987, 2020, p. 1, who observe that «A global pandemic is likewise a natural disaster that functions as an exogenous shock with potentially grave economic consequences. But unlike a conventional natural disaster shock, the Coronavirus (COVID19) shock is a multi-period event that simultaneously disrupts supply, demand, and productivity channels, that is almost perfectly synchronized within and across countries, and that has cataclysmic health, social, and economic implications not just for the foreseeable few weeks after the crisis, but for a long time period».

2) Cfr. Economic outlook, 26 March 2020, in <https://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/4473305?sommaire=4473307>. In particular, the survey underlined that «Among market services, some branches have been very severely affected (transport, accommodation, food services, leisure, etc.) while others are probably affected much less (telecommunications, insurance, etc.)».

3) Ibid., The survey showed that «The largest contribution to this drop is the collapse in the consumption of numerous goods produced by manufacturing industry (-60%), accounting for 18 points of this decline. Some consumption expenditure has been cut back to the bare minimum, falling by between -100% and -90% (transport equipment, textiles, clothing). Other expenditure has remained stable (electricity, water), or has actually increased slightly (pharmaceutical industry, +5%). Consumption of market services has also declined, by about 33%, contributing around 15 points to the total drop in consumption».

4) R. Baldwin, B. Weder di Mauro, 'Introduction', in Economics in the Time of COVID-19, London, CEPR, 2020, p. 2.

5) Ibid., pp. 17-18.

6) Ibid. Analogously, F. Boissay, P. Rungcharoenkitkul, Macroeconomic effects of Covid-19: an early review, in BIS Bulletins, Bank for International Settlements, 7, 2020, p. 3, who observe that «While no two epidemics are exactly alike, the current pandemic differs fundamentally from past episodes. The rapid global spread of Covid-19, aided by closer international integration and the possibility of transmission through carriers without symptoms, has led to much faster transmission than past episodes such as SARS. This has prompted a large-scale containment policy, put in place globally in an almost synchronised way, in turn leading to a global sudden stop in economic activity. Recent studies on the economic impact of Covid-19 face the inevitable challenge of dealing with rapidly changing circumstances».

7) See on this point, F. Boissay, P. Rungcharoenkitkul, Macroeconomic effects of Covid-19: an early review, cit., p. 4, where it is also pointed out that «these features make the Covid-19 pandemic unique, and led to sharp and rapid revisions in economic forecasts. Prominent economists raised the possibility of GDP falling by as much as a half in the short run, as a consequence of the global sudden stop (eg Gourinchas - 2020, Saez and Zucman - 2020). These assumptions led to new estimates that are an order of magnitude larger than

previous ones. At the end of March, the OECD estimated that large-scale shutdowns would result in a GDP loss of about 20-25% for each month that they remain in place, implying that a three-month shutdown would induce a 5–7% drop in annual GDP, all other things equal».

8) OECD, Keeping the Recovery on Track, in Economic Outlook - Interim Report - September 2021, OECD Publishing, Paris, in <https://doi.org/10.1787/490d4832-en>

9) Cfr. OECD, The price of war, Economic Outlook, June 2022, in <https://www.oecd.org/economic-outlook/>

10) Ibid.

11) Cfr. McKinsey&Company, Risk, resilience, and rebalancing in global value chains, Report, August 2020, in <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/risk-resilience-and-rebalancing-in-global-value-chains>

12) R.M. Del Rio-Chanona, P. Farinoso, A. Pichler, F. Lafond, J. Doyne Farmer, Supply and demand shocks in the COVID-19 pandemic: an industry and occupation perspective, in Oxford Review of Economic Policy, Issue Supplement\_1, 36, 2020, p. 110, in <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxrep/graa033>. In particular, the A. underline that «Since the demand shock is bigger than the supply shock, they lie above the identity line. Other non-essential industries, such as Manufacturing, Mining, and Retail, have supply shocks that are larger than their demand shocks and consequently lie below the identity line».

13) Cfr. OECD, Culture shock: COVID-19 and the cultural and creative sectors, 7 September 2020, in <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/culture-shock-covid-19-and-the-cultural-and-creative-sectors-08da9e0e/>

14) A. Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind, Simon&Schuster, NY City, 1987, p. 265.

15) Cfr. C. Stamu-O'Brien, S. Carniciu, E. Halvorsen, M. Jafferany, Psychological aspects of Covid-19, in JCD, Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology, 2020, pp. 2169 and ss, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/jocd.13601>, who point out that «Psychological factors are well-known factors that can influence public health strategies used to manage epidemics and pandemics that can influence virus spread, severity of the disease, economy, social behavior as discrimination, criminality, and so on» and underline that «In the pandemic context, the importance of health anxiety is vital for limiting spreading the infectious disease. The adherence to the prevention recommendations like washing hands, social distancing, even for the low-risk self-included persons is a matter of great importance in the efforts to limit viral spreading», p. 2170; M. Sheraton, N. Deo Taru, D. Salim Surani, D. Hall-Flavin, R. Kashyap, Psychological effects of the COVID 19 pandemic on healthcare workers globally: A systematic review, in Psychiatry Research, 292, 2020, pp. 1 and ss., in <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113360>

16) On this point, M.A. Cabiddu, La bellezza, Doppiovoce, Napoli, 2021, p. 40. Cfr. the Nobel prize, E. Kandel, The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present, Random House, 2012; D. Dutton, The art instinct. Beauty, pleasure, and human evolution, New York, 2008; A. Kilroy; C. Garner, C. Parkinson, C. Kagan, P. Senior, Towards transformation: exploring the impact of culture, creativity and the arts of health and wellbeing, in Arts for Health, Manchester Metropolitan University, 2007, p. 8, who highlight that «The importance of creating a positive atmosphere and environment for health, well being and change has emerged as a strong theme within the findings of this evaluation. It is through this that people are motivated to change their circumstances for themselves, which in turn means raised confidence and self-esteem. Perceived wellbeing therefore is significantly improved through the experience of challenge and creative inspiration within a positive and supportive environment» and that «The Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale measured changes to perceived anxiety and depression within those projects addressing mental health issues. The reported improvement in perceived anxiety and depression as a result of engaging with the arts indicated a highly significant increase across projects included».

17) Cfr. C. Stamu-O'Brien, S. Carniciu, E. Halvorsen, M. Jafferany, Psychological aspects of Covid-19, in JCD,

Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology, 2020, p. 2169; Chew, Wei, Vasoo, Chua, Sim, Narrative synthesis of psychological and coping responses towards emerging infectious disease outbreaks in the general population: practical considerations for the COVID-19 pandemic, Singapore Med J., 2020, p. 352, <https://doi.org/10.11622/smedj.2020046>

18) Cfr. M. Samaroudi, K Rodriguez Echavarria, L. Perry, Heritage in lockdown: digital provision of memory institutions in the UK and US of America during the COVID-19 pandemic, in Museum Management and Curatorship (MMC), 2020, p. 337, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2020.1810483>, who underlines that, in 2020, the «UK reported a 29% increase on the time spent online, and a 20% increase of people using social media».

19) Ibid.

20) OECD, Culture shock: COVID-19 and the cultural and creative sectors, cit., in which it's highlighted that «Going forward, cities and regions may consider cultural and creative sectors as well as cultural participation as a driver of social impact in its own right and throughout the economy. The sector is already an economic driver and source of innovation».

21) Cfr. *ibid.*, In the short term, OECD has included among the policy recommendation for cultural and creative sectors ("CCS"): «ensure that public support for Covid-19 relief does not exclude CCS firms and workers due to their non-traditional business models and employment contracts; consult with CCS network organizations, representatives of self-employed professionals, small cultural and creative businesses, and sectoral employer organizations to raise the efficacy of policy measures; address gaps in self-employment support schemes by simplifying eligibility criteria and making them accessible to hybrid forms of employment [...]; include non-profit institutions (e.g. museums) in support programmes designed to help small businesses retain employees», and other».

22) Cfr. International Council Museum (ICOM), Museums and Covid 19: 8 steps to support community resilience, in <https://icom.museum/en/news/museumHeritas-and-covid-19-8-steps-to-support-community-resilience>. On this point, M. Samaroudi, K. Rodriguez Echavarria, L. Perry, Heritage in lockdown: digital provision of memory institutions in the UK and US of America during the COVID-19 pandemic, cit., par. 2.1.

23) OECD, Culture shock: COVID-19 and the cultural and creative sectors, cit.

24) International Council Museum (ICOM), Museums and Covid 19: 8 steps to support community resilience, cit.

25) Cfr. UNWTO, [EU Guidebook on sustainable tourism for development](#). According to the definition of UN Environment Program, and UN World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism is defined a "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities".

26) UNEP, Towards a green economy. Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, in [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/126GER\\_synthesis\\_en.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/126GER_synthesis_en.pdf). The report precises that «The tourism chapter was developed in partnership with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)», p. 5.

27) *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12. The report highlights that «Travel and tourism are human-resource intensive, employing 230 million people or 8% of the global workforce and it is estimated that one job in the core tourism industry creates about one and a half additional or indirect jobs in the tourism-related economy. The greening of the sector is expected to reinforce the employment potential of the sector with increased local hiring and sourcing».

28) *Ibid.*

29) *Ibid.*, The reports point out that the involvement of local communities «is essential to developing the local economy and reducing poverty».



30) Cfr. X. Roigé, I. Arrieta-Urtizbera, J. Seguí, The Sustainability of Intangible Heritage in the COVID-19 Era-Resilience, Reinvention, and Challenges in Spain, in *Sustainability*, 13, 2021, pp. 5795 and ss., <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13115796>, who analyzed three different case studies, with different characteristics: the Valencia fallas, which was cancelled «a few days before the declaration of lockdown and the state of emergency in Spain, making it the first festival in Spain on the UNESCO list to be suspended»; the Patum festival is held only in the Catalan town of Berga and «was cancelled when public health restrictions were still in place, but full lockdown was no longer in force. As in the previous case, the suspension of the festival had a major impact on the population due to its close links with local and regional identity. The cancellation caused fierce debate and even conflict»; Castells (human towers or “castles”) «are raised throughout the year in many parts of Catalonia. About a hundred organizing associations perform at fiestas in different towns throughout the castells season (between March and November), with different groups from different localities performing at the same event. As the castells require a large number of participants and very close physical contact, they were cancelled from the beginning of lockdown. The rule also applies to any kind of training (generally the groups train once a week), so now activity has almost ceased altogether».

31) UNESCO - Office Venice and Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Italy), 14th Annual Meeting on the Sought-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage, Intangible Cultural Heritage in Emergencies Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Addressing Questions of ICH and Resilience in Times of Crisis, 2020, in <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374652>

32) Ibid., p. 7.

33) Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 6, where UNESCO underscores that «Yet, as intangible cultural heritage is also adaptive in nature, many communities are turning to their intangible cultural heritage to help respond to and cope with the crisis. Intangible cultural heritage has shown to be a source of social cohesion, inspiration and creativity that can give hope and solidarity during such difficult times. Local and traditional knowledge, particularly regarding agriculture and the environment, can furthermore provide a source of resilience for many communities who face social and economic precarity».

34) *Ibid.*, For example, the report notes that «During the period, a meeting of the National Council for Intangible Cultural Heritage –an expert advisory body to the Minister of Culture was held to discuss current problems in the field of safeguarding of this part of cultural heritage. A special meeting of the Minister of Culture with the Union of National Community Centres –the national representative organisation of the country’s community centres -chitalishta -was held to discuss the problems of the community centres in the context of the crisis, given that these local cultural centres are the basis for preserving the vitality of intangible cultural heritage in Bulgaria and are entered in the UNESCO Good Practice Register. A meeting of the National Council on Community Centre Activities –an expert advisory body to the Minister of Culture -was also held to take measures to restore the activity of the community centres in the country.»

35) Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 13; X. Roigé, I. Arrieta-Urtizbera, J. Seguí, The Sustainability of Intangible Heritage in the COVID-19 Era-Resilience, Reinvention, and Challenges in Spain, *cit.*, 5796, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13115796>, pp. 2 and ss., who observes that «Online activity enables communities to share content through virtual networks and museums, and the ability of users to develop, control, and continuously update the content of websites produces synergies with the changing and ephemeral nature of intangible heritage. These theoretical viewpoints allow us to understand the processes that have emerged during the pandemic, during which certain practices have been transferred and even reinvented online».

36) X. Roigé, I. Arrieta-Urtizbera, J. Seguí, The Sustainability of Intangible Heritage in the COVID-19 Era-Resilience, Reinvention, and Challenges in Spain, *cit.*, pp. 5796 and ss., where they highlight that «the pandemic has brought about one approach that was almost unimaginable until now: holding actual festivities online» and are wondering «Are these practices only emergency solutions or will virtual practice have a lasting effect on ICH?»

37) UNESCO, Intangible Cultural Heritage in Emergencies Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Addressing Questions of ICH and Resilience in Times of Crisis, *cit.*, p. 6.

38) *Ibid.*, p. 20.

- 39) Council of Europe, White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living Together As Equals in Dignity”, 2008, in [https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper\\_final\\_revised\\_en.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf)
- 40) Ibid, p. 16. On connections between cultural heritage and intercultural dialogue, among others, D. Spivak, Dialogue and Heritage in the Cultural Strategy of unesco, Culture and Dialogue, 5(2), 2017, pp. 242 and ss; O. Calligaro, From ‘European cultural heritage’ to ‘cultural diversity’?, in Dans Politique européenne, 3, 2014, pp. 60 and ss; Z. Wilk-Woś, The Role of Intercultural Dialogue in the EU Policy, in Journal of Intercultural Management, 1, 2010, pp. 78 and ss., <https://doi.org/10.1163/24683949-12340035>
- 41) Council of Europe, White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living Together As Equals in Dignity”, cit., p. 11.
- 42) OECD, Culture shock: COVID-19 and the cultural and creative sectors, cit.
- 43) The Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies was adopted by UNESCO in 1982, during the Mundiacult World Conference on Cultural Policies. The objective of the conference and the Declaration was to define new lines of cultural cooperation and closer communication among people.