

Tunisia

This first periodic report of Tunisia was prepared during its entry into the democratic transition process that began on 14 January 2012. To this end, the new Government has already undertaken a profound restructuring of the Tunisian cultural sector aimed at a true democratization of culture and the promotion of free expression. This restructuring aims to identify the real cultural needs of Tunisian citizens and to promote the diversity of cultural expressions in the country.

Consequently, the actual implementation of the 2005 Convention in Tunisia, notably through the participation of civil society, will take effect after the implementation of a new constitution, which will explicitly include the principles of this Convention. However, since its adherence to the 2005 Convention, Tunisia has taken into account the integration of culture in development through the promotion of cultural industries.

The present report is based primarily on measures/policies already implemented within the framework of the promotion of cultural industries, export promotion and the integration of culture in development plans, including notably through capacity building and the creation of new jobs.

The implementation of the Convention was primarily linked to the promotion of the importance of sovereign right to cultural policies at regional and international levels, and the guarantee that they are not submitted to international trade law. In addition, the 2005 Convention made it easier for the Ministry of Culture to promote projects for the benefit of the cultural industries and sectoral capacity building.

Future perspectives for this Convention are clearly linked to the tools developed for its monitoring and implementation, notably the periodic reports. Indeed, the tree structure and format of the current periodic reports as presented do not provide a clear picture of the cultural policy projects exclusively implemented as a result of adherence to this Convention.

Cultural policies already existed before the 2005 Convention and diversity of cultural expressions was already part of these policies. Consequently, the periodic reports, in this form, will only be a simple description of the activities already undertaken by each party according to its cultural policy.

From this perspective, the Convention could lose its investment in cultural policies, and the reports would become an additional task without more substantive impact for the 2005 Convention. In this framework, it is best to limit reporting on the activities, measures and projects exclusively related to the implementation of the 2005 Convention and according to a specific topic that the Intergovernmental Committee may select from the Operational Guidelines of the Convention (for example: participation of civil society, the implementation of Article 16, etc ...), or else also according to the priorities of each country in this process. This could become an opportunity to focus and carry out well-defined and more effective activities and projects.

For the case of Tunisia, the prospects for the implementation of the 2005 Convention are very promising, particularly as concerns the participation of civil society and the democratization of culture at the local level. The process of democratic transition in Tunisia today will enable the promotion of the 2005 Convention, and its objectives and mechanisms for years to come.