



Verona declaration

September 20th, 2015

In 2003, UNESCO, through its Convention for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), recognised the central role of “communities, groups and individuals”, in the process of dissemination of the concept and practice of ICH.

For the first time ever, an international legally-binding instrument allowed States to build cultural policies to assert the fundamental right to cultural recognition. UNESCO wrote: “Traditional sports and games are part of our intangible heritage and a symbol of the cultural diversity of our societies”.

In 2006, UNESCO organised an international collective consultation, bringing together the main protagonists involved in the process of safeguarding and valuing traditional sports and games (TSG) to create an international platform for their promotion and development. This helped to create a TSG informal world network, bringing together local communities, experts, NGOs and national and international institutions.

In 2009, at a UNESCO meeting in Tehran, a group of experts and international NGOs decided to create the International Traditional Sports and Games Association (ITSGA), a formal organization representative of this TSG world network.

In parallel, in this synergy movement, many meetings and events have been organized. One of them is the big international festival of traditional games, TOCATI, created in 2003 at Verona, Italy. This annual meeting became, over the years, a major event for numerous local, national or international protagonists, young and old competitors, researchers, teachers, artists, politicians, etc.

In 2015, as part of the large movement for recognition of ICH, and of those who organise traditional games and indigenous sports, the representatives of different national and international NGOs, attending the festival TOCATI, decided to pass to an additional level and to draft this “Verona Declaration” to be promoted worldwide.

This call aims to strongly recommend the introduction of traditional games and indigenous sports, which embody ICH, into school programmes, in order to be “an integral part of national strategies for development” (UNESCO).

This declaration aims at valuing, among others:

- All protagonists dealing in creativity, development of self-confidence, environmental awareness and citizenship,
- Cultural diversity and associated values,
- The creation of structures valuing wellbeing and social health, involving the sharing and interaction between different generations, and the intercultural dialogue in general,
- The knowledge and the local practices, memory of civilizations,
- And more generally, links between transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage and sustainable development.

Signatory organisations: International Traditional Sports & Games Association, International ICH NGOs Forum, International Society of Eastern Sports & Physical Education, Association Européenne des Jeux et sports traditionnels, Asociación Panamericana de Juegos y Deportes Autóctonos y Tradicionales, ETHNOSPORT World Society.