

THE ART OF DRY STONE WALLING JOINS THE UNESCO LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

The thirteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage included on the [UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage](#) the *Art of dry stone walling, knowledge and techniques*.

The proposal was presented jointly by Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland where this ancient building method is already used and rescued.



[The UNESCO web site](#) presents the main characteristics of this art and the reasons for its inclusion in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

“The art of dry stone walling concerns the knowhow related to making stone constructions by stacking stones upon each other, without using any other materials except sometimes dry soil. Dry stone structures are spread across most rural areas – mainly in steep terrains – both inside and outside inhabited spaces, though they are not unknown in urban areas.

The stability of the structures is ensured through the careful selection and placement of the stones, and dry-stone structures have shaped numerous, diverse landscapes, forming various modes of dwelling, farming and husbandry. Such structures testify to the methods and practices used by people from prehistory to today to organize their living and working space by optimizing local natural and human resources.

They play a vital role in preventing landslides, floods and avalanches, and in combating erosion and desertification of the land, enhancing biodiversity and creating adequate microclimatic conditions for agriculture. The bearers and practitioners include the rural communities where the element is deeply rooted, as well as professionals in the construction business.

Dry stone structures are always made in perfect harmony with the environment and the technique exemplifies a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. The practice is passed down primarily through practical application adapted to the particular conditions of each place”.

All the ongoing initiatives in the proposing countries to safeguard these ancient and effective methods of construction can count on this important international recognition in the future.



The recovery of these techniques and the transfer of knowledge connected to the new generations, through specific training activities, can play an important role in reducing the vulnerability of the territories considering the actual climate changes, for the enhancement of traditional production activities and to safeguard the beauty of rural landscapes.

[The thirteenth session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee](#) for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took place from November 26th to December 1st in Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius. The Intergovernmental Committee is composed by twenty-four States Members, elected by the General Assembly, coming from Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Guatemala, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritius, Netherlands, Palestine, Philippines, Poland, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Togo and Zambia.

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[News in UNESCO website](#)

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[List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage](#)

