

Brussels, 18th September 2020

UNESCO
Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding
of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
Place de Fontenoy 7
75007 Paris
FRANCE

Subject: Opposition to the classification of Bullfighting as Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding

Dear Director-General of UNESCO, Ms. Audrey Azoulay,

It came to our attention that an application to consider bullfighting as part of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding was submitted by the *International Tauromaquia (Bullfighting) Association* on 7 June 2020. In accordance with the provisions of the 2003 Convention, the application will most likely be discussed by the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee at its meeting in October this year.

We recognize and fully support UNESCO's vital mission of seeking to *build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture*. Nevertheless, just like expressed in UNESCO's mandate, we also agree that *peace must be built upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity*. It is our view that *intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity* necessarily encompasses solidarity towards all living beings.

Bullfighting is an activity that depicts and glorifies abuse, violence and cruelty towards animals for the sake of the entertainment of a limited number of individuals around the globe. In addition to the brutality experienced by the animals involved, bullfighting also has serious mental repercussions on those of young age that are habituated to witness it and, consequently, not educated with the desirable ideals of peace and kindness towards all living beings.

This way, from our perspective, **bullfighting has no place in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.**

When considering the awarding or praising of cultural traditions, it is our understanding that the ethicality of such acts must be taken into account. Elevating bullfighting with the distinction of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding would mean that UNESCO does not condemn violence and cruelty if at stake is an activity that characterizes the cultural habits of certain groups of individuals.

Celebrating cultural expressions of nations plays a vital role in bringing the world together. However, and given that a large and growing worldwide majority is against bullfighting, as proven by its decrease in popularity, we understand that such elevation would not fulfil this role - if anything, it would only contribute to deepen the frustration and sense of injustice felt by those that care for and respect animals. Furthermore, we would also expect that such distinction would undermine the purpose and credibility of UNESCO's very important humanitarian mission.

We hope that UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage agrees with us and objects to classifying the activity of bullfighting as Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

Thank you for considering our opinion.

Yours faithfully,

1. Francisco Guerreiro MEP

Also on behalf of:

2. Alexandra Geese MEP
3. Anja Hazekamp MEP
4. Anna Cavazzini MEP
5. Antoni Comín MEP
6. Bas Eickhout MEP
7. Benoit Biteau MEP
8. Carles Puigdemont MEP
9. Caroline Roose MEP
10. Clara Ponsatí MEP
11. Claude Gruffat MEP
12. Dace Melbārde MEP
13. Damian von Boeselager MEP
14. Damien Careme MEP
15. Daniel Freund MEP
16. David Cormand MEP
17. Diana Riba I Giner MEP
18. Eleonora Evi MEP
19. Ernest Urtasun MEP
20. Fabio Massimo Castaldo
21. Francois Alfonsi MEP
22. Fredrick Federley MEP
23. Grace O'sullivan MEP
24. Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield MEP
25. Ignazio Corrao MEP
26. Isabel Santos MEP
27. Ivan Vilibor Sinčić MEP
28. Jiří Pospíšil MEP
29. Jordi Solé MEP
30. José Gusmão MEP
31. Jutta Paulus MEP
32. Karima Delli MEP
33. Liudas Mažylis MEP
34. Malin Björk MEP
35. Manuela Ripa MEP
36. Marie Toussaint MEP
37. Mario Furore MEP
38. Marisa Matias MEP
39. Markéta Gregorová MEP
40. Martin Buschmann MEP
41. Michael Bloss MEP
42. Michèle Rivasi MEP

43. Mikulas Peksa MEP
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45. Niels Fuglsang MEP
46. Pascal Durand MEP
47. Patrick Breyer MEP
48. Petra De Sutter MEP
49. Philippe Lamberts MEP
50. Salima Yenbou MEP
51. Sara Cerdas MEP
52. Sarah Wiener MEP
53. Ska Keller MEP
54. Sylwia Spurek MEP
55. Terry Reintke MEP
56. Tilly Metz MEP
57. Veronika Vrecionová MEP
58. Ville Niinistö MEP
59. Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel MEP
60. Yannick Jadot MEP
61. Younous Omarjee MEP