

Analysis of the Participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in the UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme

Lejla Kodric Zaimovic¹ and Hrvoje Stancic²

¹ Department of Comparative Literature and Librarianship, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, Franje Rackog 1, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

² Department of Information and Communication Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Ivana Lucica 3, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

Abstract: The authors analyse the level of participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, countries of the so called Western Balkans, in the respectable UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme. The initial presumption is that they participate in different ways and with different intensity. Processes of nomination and registration of documentary heritage of those countries for the Memory of the World Programme depend not only on the specific social circumstances but also on the activities within local heritage communities. The authors present the level of participation of archival, library and museum materials of the two countries' heritage institutions in the Memory of the World Register. The paper provides an insight in the current activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, based on the results of the web-based survey conducted in the two neighbouring countries checking the awareness of and participation in the UNESCO's Programme. All of the most important archival, library and museum institutions in both countries were surveyed. The idea was to analyse and compare the results on the level of each country, between the two countries, and finally in the international context, using the results of an earlier Survey on global familiarity with the Memory of the World Programme during which Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were not surveyed. However, that was not possible because of the results the survey showed. The authors question the reasons for nonparticipation in the Programme and suggest further actions that are necessary for preservation and presentation of the documentary heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, which include items important for the world heritage.

Keywords: UNESCO, Memory of the World Programme, heritage institutions, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, survey, archive, library, museum

1. Introduction

UNESCO's the Memory of the World Programme celebrates its 20th anniversary with series of projects and events in 2012. This is an opportunity to question its benefits and its potentials for further development as well as its adjustments to the emerging environment changed as a result of ICT application (cf. *International Conference "Memory of the World in the Digital Age: Digitization and Preservation"*, September 2012, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada), but also to discuss some potential limitations of the Programme. This evaluation has already been made within the Programme (cf. *Memory of the World Evaluation Survey, 2012*), but there is also a need to evaluate the Programme from the perspective of (non)participating countries. For countries whose documentary heritage has already been inscribed on the Memory of the World International Register this jubilee is an indicator of a successful engagement on preservation, promotion and ensuring access to documentary heritage of world significance. As it was stated in the Programme: "UNESCO launched the Memory of the World Programme to guard against collective amnesia calling upon the preservation of the valuable archive holdings and library collections all over the world ensuring their wide dissemination." As a counterpart of UNESCO's World Heritage List, but in this particular case in the field of documentary heritage, the Programme is intended to protect documentary heritage and helps networks of experts to exchange information and raise resources for preservation of and access to documentary material.

At the time of writing, a total of 238 collections submitted by 98 different countries, three international organizations and one private foundation are inscribed on the International Register of the Memory of the World Programme. Regional registers have been created for the Memory of the World Committees for Asia/Pacific (MOWCAP) and Latin America/Caribbean (MOWLAC), and an increasing number of countries have now established national registers. The Memory of the World Programme tends to achieve its objectives by encouraging projects and activities not only from a global perspective, but also from regional, national and local ones. Regional and national Memory of the World committees are a crucial parts of the Programme structure. As appropriate, they are encouraged to implement the five key strategies: *identification of documentary heritage, raising awareness, preservation, access and structures, status and relationships*. The success of the Programme relies heavily on the drive, initiative and enthusiasm of regional and national committees. The formation of a national Memory of the World committee in every country, where it is practicable, is encouraged and is a strategic goal. Having in mind these facts, in this jubilee year for the Memory of the World Programme, the authors of this research aimed to provide an insight into the present state of participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in the Programme, including partly the wider Western Balkans region too. Therefore, this paper brings information based on the results of the web-based survey conducted in the two neighbouring countries checking their awareness of probably the most visible result of the whole Programme – the Memory of the World Programme International Register, as well as their participation in it. By analysing the reasons for

(non)participation of the examined countries in this Programme, the authors of the paper indicate wider social preconditions of the current activities of Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Croatian heritage institutions. On the one side, because of their socio-historical turbulences and the complex past, there is an obvious and very urgent need for inscribing national documentary heritage units of a universal, world significance into the Memory of the World Programme International Register. On the other side, this paper reveals complexity of previous (non) participation of the examined countries into the Programme.

The results are analysed and compared on the level of each country, between the two countries, and finally in the international context, using the results of an earlier *Survey on global familiarity with the Memory of the World Programme*, during which Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were not surveyed. After analysing the present state related to investigated problems and after their wider social understanding, the authors of the paper provide recommendations for further, concrete activities that should be taken in the upcoming period, such as: different procedures of informing and sensitizing heritage sector for projects of this kind, as well as establishment of national committees for the Memory of the World Programme, but also establishment of regional committees, in the case that something like this is needed because of the joint past, documentary heritage of the same provenance, language, writing systems etc.

As an additional result of this research, the authors of the paper suggest preliminary initial list of Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Croatian national documentary heritage of potential universal or world significance. In this way, we are finding and suggesting formal channels for more proactive engagement on nominating, inscribing, promoting, protecting and ensuring access to national documentary heritage units which are of potentially universal, world heritage value.

2. Survey on the inclusion of the documentary heritage in the Memory of the World Programme

Dissemination of web-based survey, with the aim to analyse the current and planned activities of the examined countries, was preceded by online informing about the previous activities of the countries participating in the Memory of the World Programme. This online informing also included information on processes of nominating and inscribing valuable documentary heritage items of the wider region of the so called former Yugoslavia countries, especially Serbia and Slovenia. A documentary heritage item submitted by Serbia and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2005 is *Miroslav's Gospel*, a manuscript dating from around 1,180 with miniatures of outstanding beauty, and a representative example of a group of illuminated manuscripts of specific style and iconography resulting from the fusion of elements of the West (Italy) and the East (Byzantium). Another documentary heritage item submitted by Serbia and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2003 is *Nikola Tesla's Archive*, a unique collection of manuscripts, photographs, scientific and patent documentation which is indispensable in studying the history of electrification of the Globe.

Documentary heritage item submitted by Slovenia, Poland and the Russian Federation and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2007 is *Codex Suprasliensis*, the largest among only few surviving manuscripts in Old Church Slavonic and the main source for studying this language, along with common Slavonic writing and culture. It is also one of the earliest testimonials to the reception of Orthodox Christianity among the Slavs.

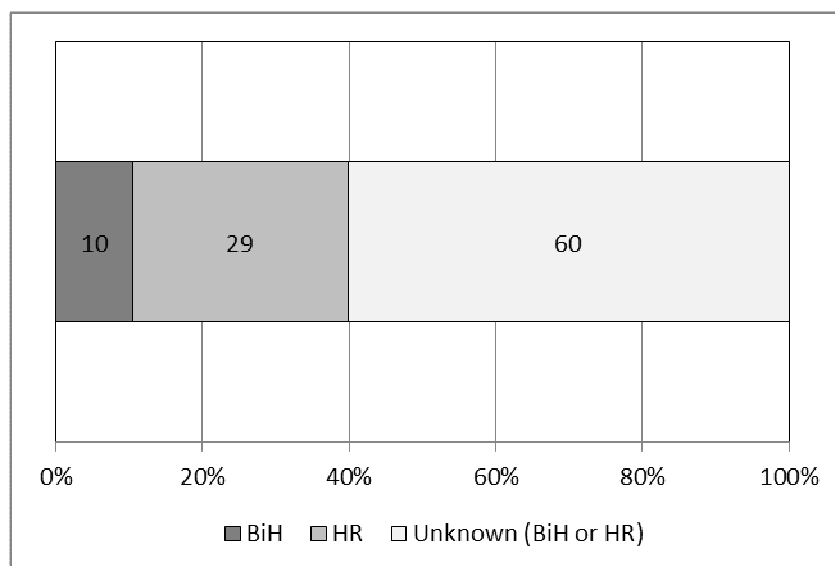
Online survey conducted before dissemination of web-based questionnaire didn't confirm former participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Memory of the World Register. It also confirmed only intermediate participation of Croatia with *Csoma Archive of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, on Alexander Csoma de Kőrös (c. 1784–1842), a Hungarian scholar who was the first to interpret the cultural heritage of the Tibetan people to Europe, with year of inscription 2008. The second important document is *Tabula Hungariae* – documentary heritage item submitted by Hungary and Croatia and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2007. There are few domestic and regional nominations that didn't get approval as a heritage of world significance from the Programme International Advisory Committee (IAC): *Croatian Glagolitic Heritage* in 2003 from Croatia and *Film Collection of Jugoslovenska Kinoteka* from the neighbouring country of Serbia in 2011. Of course, the aim of this paper wasn't to offer complete overview of the Western Balkans or South-Eastern Europe countries concerning their participation in the Memory of the World Register, although there is an obvious need for active regional cooperation in the field of documentary heritage management, especially in the cases of the heritage of the same provenance, language etc. This paper primarily is interested in Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Croatian current and planned activities related to the Memory of the World Programme. Considering the fact that the both neighbouring countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, own valuable documentary heritage of an assumed universal value, the authors of this paper were provoked to analyse their level of participation in the Memory of the World Register. Web-based survey enabled formalized and exacted examination on the valuable documentary collections of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Croatian heritage institutions, with possibility of widening research on the broader region once in the future. With that purpose, but also with a significant modifications, the authors of this paper used the results of an earlier *Survey on global familiarity with the Memory of the World Programme* (2009) during which Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were not surveyed. Besides, the main goal of this research surpassed questioning on familiarity with the Memory of the World Programme.

This research was conceived in a way of collecting broader set of information, including social and professional ones, regarding related heritage institutions. Web-based survey was designed in a way to initiate networking, new ideas and establishment of national and regional committees for the Memory of the World Programme. Special set of questions was developed to investigate diversity of valuable documentary heritage units, potentially functioning as those of a universal, world significance. Doing so, the authors of

this paper tried to initiate forming of preliminary list of documentary heritage that should be nominated and, hopefully, inscribed on the Memory of the World Register. In a more concrete sense, web-based survey was composed of altogether 13 questions, and it was sent to the e-mail addresses of around 3,000 heritage and educational institutions. By analysing answers on these questions, one gets an insight into the current state, but also planned activities related to Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Croatian participation in the respected the Memory of the World Programme.

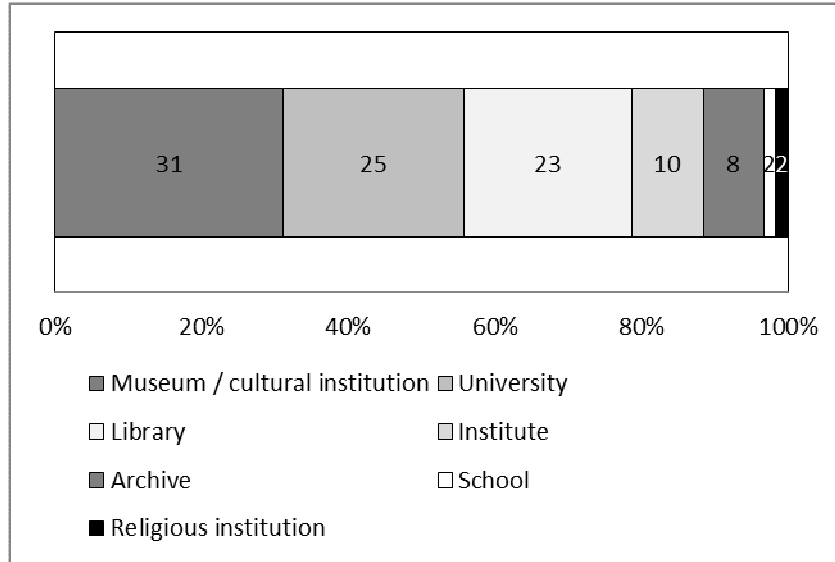
3. Results of the survey in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia

The total of 153 institutions answered the online survey (response rate of around 5%). Distribution among the countries was 10% (16) of them from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), 29% (45) from Croatia (HR) and 60% (92) did not state from which of the two countries they come from (Graph 1).



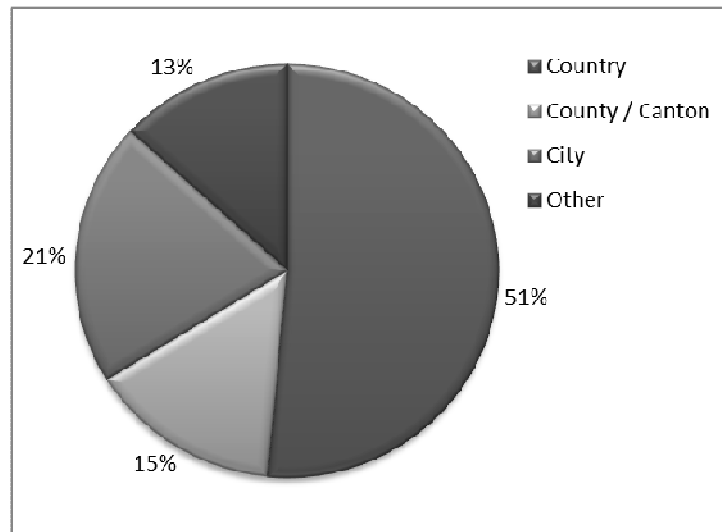
Graph 1. Country of the surveyed institutions

Among the 61 institutions that stated their origin were 19 museums or cultural institutions, 15 universities, 14 libraries, 6 institutes, 5 archives, 1 school and 1 religious institution (Graph 2). For the remaining 92 institutions the information was not provided.



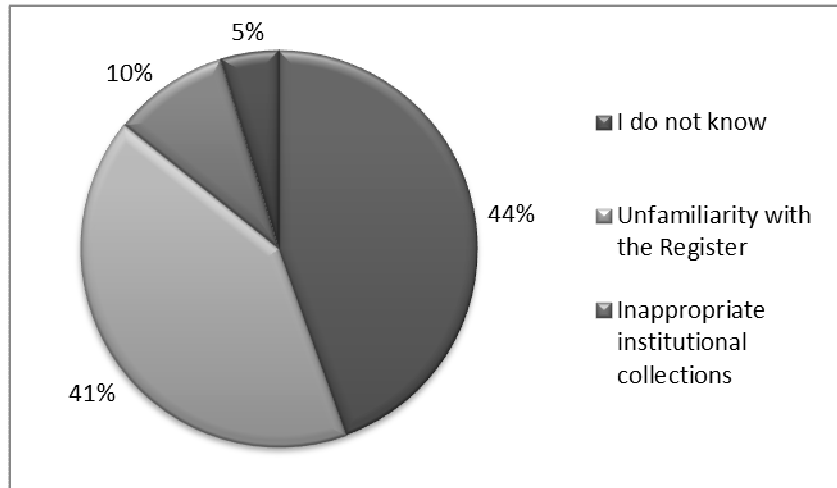
Graph 2: Distribution of the institutions

Graph 3 shows the institutional level of operation. The most institutions (51%) were the institutions at the country level. These results will be important later on since the survey results show that no documentary heritage in either of the two surveyed countries entered the UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. Therefore, more effort will be needed at the state level of both countries in the near future.



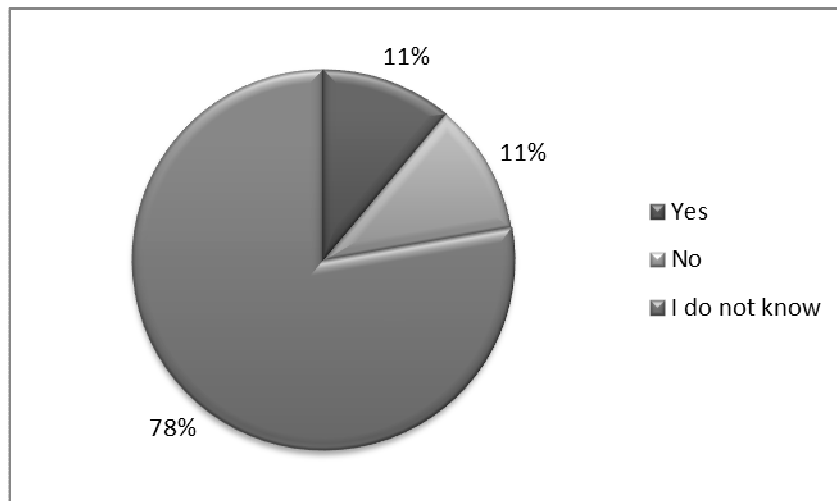
Graph 3: Institutional level of operation

It is interesting that only one institution had nominated documentary heritage for the Memory of the World Register and that it was not accepted. The reasons why institutions did not nominate documentary heritage they are holding are shown in Graph 4.



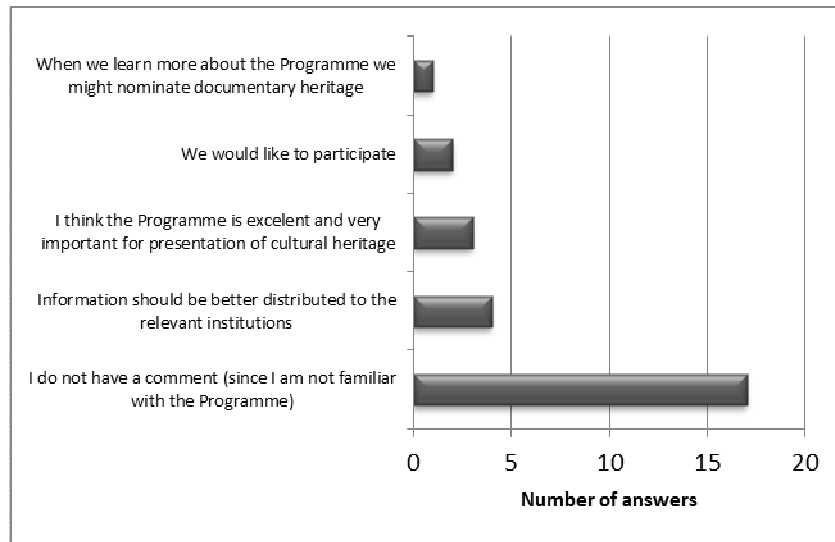
Graph 4: Reasons for not nominating documentary heritage to the Register so far

Upon asking the institutions whether they are planning to nominate their documentary heritage for the UNESCO's Register we received the following results (Graph 5):



Graph 5: Results of the question on the institutional plans for nominating documentary heritage

At the end of the survey we gave the possibility of entering a comment – on the survey, UNESCO’s Memory of the World Programme, the Register itself or on anything else (Graph 6).



Graph 6. Comments

4. Discussion and conclusions

The online survey among the heritage, research and educational institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia on the participation in the UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme showed unexpected results. We have hoped to achieve much better results, to learn that heritage institutions are knowledgeable of the Memory of the World and aware of the importance of the UNESCO's Register. Nevertheless, it was interesting to see that the results showing unfamiliarity with the future plans or nonexistence of them at the institutional level (89%) are in correlation with the reasons for not nominating documentary heritage to the Register so far (85%). Therefore, the UNESCO's offices in both surveyed countries will have to do more on popularising the existence and importance of the Register. Also, the plan was to analyse the types of documentary heritage accepted by Register or to analyse why the applications has failed, but since there was only one application and it failed it was impossible to make any reasonable conclusions at the broader, national level.

Consequently, this paper, among many other things, aimed to help processes of further, concrete activities that should be taken in the upcoming period, such as different procedures of informing and sensitizing heritage sector for projects of this kind, as well as establishment of national and regional committees for the Memory of the World Programme. As an additional result of this research, we suggest formation of preliminary initial list of Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Croatian national documentary heritage of potential universal or world

significance. Thus, we suggest more proactive engagement on nominating, inscribing, promoting, protecting and ensuring access to national documentary heritage units which are of potentially universal, world heritage value. This would not only help preserve those documentary heritage units but also make them visible world-wide thus promoting their importance, their historical value, their countries and their belonging to the world heritage.

References

- Memory of the World Programme*. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/homepage/> [28 March 2012]
- Memory of the World Evaluation Survey (2012)*. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/news-and-in-focus-articles/all-news/news/unesco_launches_memory_of_the_world_evaluation_survey/ [28 March 2012]
- Survey on global familiarity with the Memory of the World Programme (2009)*. <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/mow/Survey%20Results.pdf> [28 March 2012]

Appendix – Survey questionnaire

Note: routings between questions are omitted

1. Please state the name of your institution and its address.
2. To which type of information institution does your institution belong to?
 - a) library
 - b) archive
 - c) museum
 - d) other (please specify)
3. At which level does your institution function?
 - a) state level
 - b) cantonal level
 - c) city level
 - d) other (please specify)
4. Is your institution:
 - a) publically own
 - b) privately own
 - c) other (please specify)
5. How many employees does your institution have?
 - a) 1-9
 - b) 10-19
 - c) 20-39

d) 40+

6. Did your institution ever nominated any unit(s) of documentary heritage to the Memory of the World Register?

- a) yes
- b) no

7. Was any of the nominated unit(s) accepted and included?

- a) yes
- b) no

8. Name all accepted units of documentary heritage in the Memory of the World Register.

9. Name all units of documentary heritage that your institution had nominated and that were not accepted in the Memory of the World Register.

10. Please state the reasons why your institutions did not nominate any unit(s) of documentary heritage to the Memory of the World Register.

- a) unfamiliarity with the programme
- b) institutional collection(s) does not fulfil the Register's requirements
- c) complicated nomination procedure
- d) I do not have information
- e) other (please specify)

11. Is your institution planning to nominate any unit(s) of documentary heritage to the Memory of the World Register?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) I do not have information

12. State the unit(s) of documentary heritage that your institution plan to nominate to the Memory of the World Register. If you do not know the exact unit(s) to be nominated, please enter "I do not have information".

13. Do you have any comments regarding UNESCO's Memory of the World programme?