
Report of the Information and Debate Session on the Application Process for inscription of Torres Vedras Carnival on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

30-11-2024, 10h30-12h30, Auditorium of the City Hall, Torres Vedras.

The Information and Debate Session on the Application Process for inscription of Torres Vedras Carnival on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity was convened by sending invitations to members of carnival associations, masked groups, artists, philharmonic bands and other entities or individuals directly linked to the practice and organisation of the Carnival, or with a relevant role in the cultural, social and economic sphere of the local territory. The session, which was open to the general public, was also publicised via social media and the usual communication channels of Torres Vedras City Council and the Centro de Artes e Criatividade (Centre for Arts and Creativity) (CAC). 37 people attended the session, including at least one representative of the formal organisations formed by the practitioners - the carnival associations.

The session began with explanations about the application process, presented by the Mayor of Torres Vedras, Laura Rodrigues, and the Artistic Director of the Centre for Arts and Creativity, Rui Brás. The participants highlighted the value of Torres Vedras Carnival as an expression of local identity, characterised by satire, irreverence and creativity. The participants also mentioned the need to strengthen the community's sense of belonging, and safeguard carnival traditions and the passing down of knowledge between the generations were mentioned, while emphasising the need to balance the evolution of the Carnival with the safeguarding of its traditional and most characteristic elements.

It was emphasised that the Carnival functions as a platform for artistic innovation, which combines tradition and modernity. This interaction enables the event to be constantly renewed and guarantees its relevance and dynamism without undermining its defining characteristics. Art and creativity were identified as core elements for enriching the public experience and positioning the Carnival on the international scene.

Finally, the participants emphasised the importance of a safeguarding plan that fosters active community participation, a commitment to sustainable practices and the development of responsible tourism.

Recognition by UNESCO is seen not only as a symbol of prestige, but as a fundamental step towards ensuring that Torres Vedras Carnival continues to be a living reflection of the culture of Torres Vedras - celebrating its history while adapting to the challenges of the future.

During the session, there was a presentation of the calendar of upcoming activities aimed at promoting community involvement in the application process - including working groups and a forum. Everyone was encouraged to take part in these initiatives, and a debate was opened on "the opportunities and challenges arising from the possible inscription of Carnival on UNESCO's Representative List".

After individual reflection on the meaning of this inscription, the practitioners and other members of the general public identified the following advantages:

- Strengthening the carnival's prestige and international recognition.
- The honour of representing Portugal and Portuguese culture at an international level.
- Greater visibility for tourists interested in local culture and traditions.
- Strengthening social cohesion, fostering a greater sense of belonging in the community.
- The possibility of new international co-operations and partnerships.
- Drawing up a Safeguarding Plan that ensures:
 - Passing down traditions to younger generations;
 - Sustainability and the management of the risks of massification;
 - Encouraging creativity and cultural dialogue.

They identified the following challenges:

- The risk of massification of the Carnival (due to an excessive number of visitors), which could lead to:
 - Distancing of the local community from a massified Carnival;
 - Risk of undermining its core characteristics;
 - Less appropriate behaviour on the part of visitors;
 - Safety concerns.

In the closing ceremony, the Councillor for Culture, Ana Umbelino, emphasised the importance of integrating new residents into the spirit and tradition of Carnival, thereby fostering a sense of belonging and identity.

In conclusion, it was felt that the application to inscribe Torres Vedras Carnival on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage should proceed. This process is itself an instrument for reflecting on and valorising heritage, essential for ensuring the continuity of traditions, preserving the identity of Torres Vedras Carnival and projecting it internationally, consolidating its role as a vital element of local culture. During the session, the practitioners signed up for three different Working Groups aimed at reinforcing the participatory process and collecting contributions for drafting the Safeguarding Plan of Torres Vedras Carnival.

Community, groups and individuals (present at 1 or more sessions)	
Name	Organisation
1. Jorge Paulo Costa Hilário	Ministros&Matrafonas Carnival Association
2. Fábio Passos	Ministros&Matrafonas Carnival Association
3. Filipa Sousa	SacÁdegas Carnival Association
4. Vanda Dias	SacÁdegas Carnival Association
5. Joaquim Francisco	Real Confraria Carnival Association
6. Luís Manuel Teixeira Vilela	Flauzinas Carnival Association
7. Adelino Domingues	Flauzinas Carnival Association
8. Paula Pires	Marias Cachuchas Carnival Association
9. Ricardo Silva	Lúmbias Carnival Association
10. Rui Santos	Lúmbias Carnival Association
11. Filipe Silva Cardoso	Fulionas Carnival Association
12. Filipe Miranda	Fulionas Carnival Association
13. Rafael Ferreira	Fulionas Carnival Association
14. Fernando Martins	Carnival King
15. Acácio Gomes	Masked Group
16. Cristina Ferreira	Masked Group
17. Ana Isabel Mota Ferreira	A Bolha
18. Manuel Henrique Tomé Bilro	A Bolha
19. Ana Ramos Ladislau	ASSIM
20. Paula Perdigão	ASSIM
21. Rodolfo Jorge Grazina Xavier	Radio Carnaval de Torres Vedras
22. Henrique Sarreira	ACIRO
23. Carlos Antunes	ACIRO
24. Rui Brás	Centre for Arts and Creativity
25. Ana Almeida	Centre for Arts and Creativity
26. Marina Xavier	Centre for Arts and Creativity
27. Laura Rodrigues	Mayor of Torres Vedras
28. Ana Umbelino	Councillor for Culture, Torres Vedras City Council
29. Dulcinea Ramos	Councillor for Tourism, Torres Vedras City Council
30. Sandra Pedro	Promotorres
31. Mário Marias	U. F. de Maxial e Monte Redondo
32. António J. Espírito Santo	U.F. Ramalhal
33. José Sardinha	Researcher
34. Joaquim Severino	Interested in the subject
35. Miguel Brás	Interested in the subject
36. Vasco Forcada	Interested in the subject
37. Fernando Miguel	Badaladas newspaper
External organisation - Memória Imaterial CRL/UNESCO Club MEMORIAMEDIA	
José Barbieri	Memória Imaterial CRL (MI)
Inês Belchior	MI Assistant
Filomena Sousa	Participatory Methods Facilitator PCI