

Međunarodni centar za podvodnu arheologiju u Zadru (MCPA)  
International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar (ICUA)  
Božidara Petranovića 1, Zadar

## MINUTES

of the 19<sup>th</sup> ordinary meeting of the ICUA Governing Council  
held on 21 May 2021, commencing at 11:30 hrs at the premises of the  
International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar, Božidara Petranovića 1

*ICUA Governing Council members present:*

**Ante Uglešić**, University of Zadar, Head of the Department of Archaeology

**Jasen Mesić**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Croatia to the Italian Republic

**Ante Ćurković**, Head of the Administrative Department for EU Funds, City of Zadar

**Lazare Eloundou Assomo**, Deputy Director of the Division for Heritage and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (in attendance online via the Microsoft Teams teleconferencing application)

*Others present at the meeting of the ICUA Governing Council:*

**Mladen Pešić**, ICUA Director

**Marina Mustać**, ICUA

**Chihiro Nishikawa**, UNESCO

**François Langlois**, UNESCO

**Ulrike Guérin**, UNESCO

*Presiding:*

Ante Uglešić, Chairman, ICUA Governing Council

*Recording secretary:*

Marina Mustać

*Meeting commenced:* 11:30 hrs

*Meeting concluded:* 13:30 hrs

Meeting conducted in English.

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic measures caused by SARS-CoV-2, and the related travel/border crossing restrictions, not all ICUA Governing Board members were able to attend the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting in person; the meeting was held at the ICUA library with Governing Board members representing UNESCO in attendance via online teleconferencing aids.

The Governing Board meeting was called and the prepared documentation in Croatian and English submitted to all members via electronic delivery on 3 May 2021.

Mr Uglešić, chairperson of the ICUA Governing Council, opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and tabled the agenda of the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Governing Council as proposed by ICUA Director Mladen Pešić:

1. Proposal to approve the 2020 financial report
2. Proposal to approve the 2020 budget execution report
3. Amendments to the 2021 procurement plan
4. Adoption of regulations on the use of official vehicles and mobile telephones
5. Status report on the renovation of the former Sveti Nikola church and monastery complex in Zadar
6. Biennial self-evaluation of the ICUA contribution to UNESCO activities (June 2018 to December 2020)
7. Brief report on the procedure to renew the agreement designating ICUA Zadar as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO document 40 C/79)
8. Any other business

The submitted documentation and agenda were adopted unanimously.

#### **1. Proposal to approve the 2020 financial report**

Director Pešić briefly outlined the legal requirements relating to the Governing Board adoption of the 2020 financial report.

The submitted financial report includes: the Report on Revenues and Expenses (PR-RAS), the Balance Sheet (BIL), the Report on Changes in the Value and Volume of Assets and Liabilities (P-VRIO), the Report on Expenses Broken Down by Functional Classification (RasF), and the Explanatory Notes that detail the data presented in the financial report. In line with requirements under Croatian law the financial report has already been submitted within the stipulated deadline to the competent institutions: Fina (the Financial Agency), the State Audit Office, and the Ministry of Culture and Media.

Conclusion:

**The ICUA Governing Council unanimously approves the 2020 financial report.**

#### **2. Proposal to approve the 2020 budget execution report**

Although ICUA, as a state budget beneficiary, is not required by law to draw up a report on the execution of its budget, the report has been compiled with the aim of enhancing the quality of funds management and utilisation. Director Pešić noted that the report is presented in two parts:

- a) The report on the execution of the financial plan according to economic classification, which details total revenues and expenses from all sources and activities distributed according to economic classification (the accounts of the budget accounting plan).

The first section in the index presents the indicators of execution of the current year (2020) in relation to the preceding year (2019) and 2020 execution indicators in relation to the 2020 current plan.

- b) The report on the execution of the financial plan according to programme activities, economic classification and source of financing elaborates total revenues and expenses by economic classification according to sources of funding and implemented activities. The index presents the execution of the 2020 budget in relation to the current plan.

Mr Eloundou Assomo inquired as to the impact of COVID-19 measures on the overall ICUA budget. Director Pešić noted that the final 2020 budget saw a reduction of approximately 25 % in relation to the budget as initially adopted, due to the cancellation of programmes that could not be performed in the novel circumstances. Further, the budget was reduced in relation to activities on the renovation of the former Sveti Nikola

(St Nicholas) church and monastery complex because the signing of an agreement on the allocation of grant funds and, consequently, the implementation of the renovation project, was two to three months later than envisaged in the initial plan.

Mr Mesić noted that budget reductions were implemented nationwide and impacted all institutions in the country, adding that the impact on the ICUA budget was relatively soft in relation to all other state budget beneficiaries.

Conclusion:

**The ICUA Governing Council unanimously approves the 2020 budget execution report.**

### **3. Amendments to the 2021 procurement plan**

Director Pešić detailed the three items amended in the 2021 procurement plan:

- The addition of geomechanical survey services required as a result of construction work.
- The amendment of the estimated procurement value of the production of plans and 3D models as part of ICUA's re-conservation of two medieval boats.
- The amendment of the amount of the estimated procurement value and type for design supervision services related to construction work on the renovation of the former Sveti Nikola church and monastery complex.

The procurement of design supervision was annulled in 2020; ICUA has, therefore, instituted a new plan to undertake the same procurement. At the time of the adoption of the 2021 procurement plan ICUA did not have additional secured funding for the cited procurement and the plan fell within the scope of approved and secured funding. It was only upon the completion of all other procurement procedures and achieved savings based on concluded contracts that ICUA requested the reallocation of funds by the Central Finance and Contracting Agency (SAFU). The reallocation secured the necessary funds for design supervision in the amount of HRK 328,237.49 not inclusive of VAT, i.e., HRK 410,296.86 inclusive of VAT, which ICUA incorporated in the 2021 procurement plan under the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment to the 2021 procurement plan.

Mr Eloundou Assomo requested further explanation of the items pertaining to the production of models for the [medieval] boats, which are held as the inventory of the Archaeological Museum of Zadar. Director Pešić explained that these medieval wooden boats are on exhibit at the Museum of Nin Antiquities, a department of the Archaeological Museum of Zadar, and are in a state of significant deterioration stemming from the conservation intervention performed in the 1970s. ICUA has received funding through the Ministry of Culture and Media for the performance of this programme; as valuable examples of Croatia's cultural heritage these artefacts must be preserved against further deterioration, to which end this multiannual re-conservation project is aimed, and which includes the production of 3D models essential to gaining insight into the original forms of these boats.

Conclusion:

**The ICUA Governing Council unanimously approves the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment to the 2021 procurement plan.**

### **4. Adoption of regulations on the use of official vehicles and mobile telephones**

Included in the submitted documentation is the Croatian and [translated] English text of regulations covering the use of official vehicles and mobile telephones. The document

has been submitted to the Ministry of Culture and Media for prior consent; the ministry's legal department advised ICUA that this procedure does not require the formal adoption of a regulation and that it should be produced as an internal directive adopted and signed by the Director, not requiring the approval of either the competent ministry or the ICUA Governing Council. ICUA proceeded as advised by the Ministry of Culture and Media; the Director adopted a Directive on the Use of Official Vehicles and Mobile Telephones harmonised with the Croatian Government's decision on the terms of use of official vehicles, mobile telephones, regular air passenger transport services, charge cards, entertainment funds, and the manner of approving official travel (OG 37/16).

Conclusion:

**The ICUA Governing Council has no objection to the directive as adopted.**

#### **5. Status report on the renovation of the former Sveti Nikola church and monastery complex in Zadar**

Director Pešić presented a brief report on the implementation of the renovation of the former Sveti Nikola church and monastery complex, enumerating the procurements implemented in the frame of this project. Construction works commenced on 15 March 2021, with a 19-month performance schedule.

Mr Eloundou Assomo inquired as to the possibility of increasing the project's visibility via Internet exposure/the ICUA official Internet site, which would allow the public, including people outside the country, to follow the renovation of the complex, and proposed the publication of multiple photographs detailing the development of construction works. Further, Mr Eloundou Assomo proposed that the ICUA director take the floor at the upcoming session of the UNESCO 2001 Convention to offer a brief presentation of the renovation work and other activities performed by ICUA.

Director Pešić noted that ICUA would be revamping its official Internet site as part of the renovation project and that the site would offer more images and information on the former Sveti Nikola church and monastery complex prior to and during the renovation process, also noting that the revamped Internet site would be consistent with legislation concerning the accessibility of Internet sites and public sector software solutions for mobile devices, enhancing its accessibility not only for handicapped people, but for all users in general, offering, for example, multiple options to access content in poor visibility conditions. Although the current Internet site is outdated and the interface is often not suitable for the addition of new content, ICUA will work to identify a manner whereby additional information can be added concerning the course of renovation works through the existing interface prior to the production of the new Internet site. Director Pešić welcomed the proposal to present the work of ICUA at the UNESCO session.

Conclusion:

**The ICUA Governing Council unanimously approves the status report on the renovation of the former Sveti Nikola church and monastery complex in Zadar.**

#### **6. Biennial self-evaluation of the ICUA contribution to UNESCO activities (June 2018 to December 2020)**

The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and UNESCO designating ICUA as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO requires that the Governing Council review the biennial reports on the self-evaluation of the ICUA contribution to UNESCO programme objectives. In line with this requirement the

Director has submitted the self-evaluation report for the period from June 2018 to December 2020. Director Pešić presented a summary of the key achievements detailed in the report.

Director Pešić noted that the support of the Ministry of Culture and Media and of the City of Zadar was critical to the successful achievement of many of the objectives, underlining in particular support for the renovation of the former Sveti Nikola church and monastery complex from the production of the grant application to the present day. Mr Eloundou Assomo expressed his appreciation for the exhaustive report and satisfaction with the numerous activities that saw the engagement of ICUA staff in the reporting period, in particular the many international cooperation activities and participation in archaeological investigation, courses and conferences, which all contribute greatly to ICUA's core objectives and its international presence.

Conclusion:

**The ICUA Governing Council unanimously approves the biennial self-evaluation of the ICUA contribution to UNESCO activities (June 2018 to December 2020).**

**7. Brief report on the procedure to renew the agreement designating ICUA Zadar as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO document 40 C/79)**

The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and UNESCO renewing ICUA's status as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO was concluded for a six-year period and will expire on 23 February 2023. The renewal procedure is to be initiated 24 to 36 months ahead of the expiry date; in December of 2020 the Minister of Culture and Media submitted a letter requesting the initiation of the procedure to renew the agreement. A letter was received in March from UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture Ernesto Ottone Ramirez (Standard Additional Appropriation Letter for Donations) whereupon the Ministry of Culture and Media paid the contribution for the procedure to prepare and submit the results of the assessment of status renewal in the amount of USD 39,128 on 17 March 2021.

Chihiro Nishikawa and François Langlois joined the discussion via the Microsoft Teams teleconferencing application. They informed the Governing Council that the procedure to procure outside experts for the evaluation of the ICUA contribution has been initiated and that the selection will be made soon. If the epidemiological situation permits the evaluators will visit in person and conduct interviews with staff members, members of the Governing Council, representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Media, and others engaged in the work of ICUA, most likely in the course of September 2021. If visits in person are not possible the evaluation will be conducted via electronic communication media. The final report and a draft agreement are envisaged for November of 2021, with the details to be worked out by February of 2022 by UNESCO and the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The Intersectoral Review Committee is to meet in April of 2022 and is to assess the evaluation report and the draft agreement.

Mr Mesić and Director Pešić both noted that the epidemiological situation in Croatia is very favourable, with many having already received an inoculation shot, expressing confidence that travel will be possible by late August 2021.

Conclusion:

**The ICUA Governing Council has no objection to the brief report on the procedure to renew the agreement designating ICUA Zadar as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO document 40 C/79).**

## 8. Any other business

Director Pešić explained that under the public procurement procedure there is a requirement that Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo and Mr Ernesto Ottone Ramirez submit a (no) conflict of interest statement as this is a requirement arising not only from national public procurement legislation, but also from Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union of 26 February 2014

Further Director Pešić noted that ICUA had sought the opinion of the Ministry of Culture and Media and of the Ministry of the Economy and Sustainable Development, which is competent for public procurement policy. The received response is that there are no exceptions to the collection of (no) conflict of interest statements for representatives of clients. In its written opinion the Ministry of the Economy and Sustainable Development notes that, given the specific circumstances, they consider that ICUA has made all possible steps to fulfil the obligation in accordance with national legislation and that there should not be any consequences for ICUA if the formal requirement is not satisfied.

Mr Eloundou Assomo noted that as UNESCO representatives they enjoy diplomatic immunity that precludes providing these statements and that furthermore the UNESCO legal department is also unable to provide the statement in question as an official legal opinion. Mr Eloundou Assomo proposed that he submit a statement in the form of a formal letter in which he, on his own behalf, presents the reasons that preclude him from submitting a (no) conflict of interest statement.


Up to now there has only been electronic mail communication concerning this matter and it would be desirable that ICUA receive formal statements from the members of the Governing Council.

Mr Mesić noted that he has submitted the requested statement in spite of his own diplomatic status, but expressed his full appreciation of the doubts present among the members of the Governing Council with regard to this matter. He noted that his understanding of this statement is that it serves to establish that there is no conflict of interest and to provide safeguards to the disposal of funding provided through the EU. He stressed that the renovation of the former Sveti Nikola church and monastery complex is a priority of Croatia's Government and expressed concern to the effect that this formal and customary procedure should not jeopardise the project. He urged Mr Eloundou Assomo to submit a formal letter and expressed his sincere hope that it would prove sufficient to the requirement.

Mr Eloundou Assomo responded that he had consulted with Mr Ramirez and that they would submit formal letters on their own behalf.

Zadar, May 21<sup>st</sup> 2021

Chairman of the ICUA Zadar Governing Council

  
Prof. Ph. D. Dr.h.c. Ante Uglešić