



## Transboundary European Heritage - a Topic for UNESCO Associated Schools

# Teaching Module: UNESCO - Who and what is UNESCO? What is its mission? How does UNESCO implement its mission?

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## Transboundary European Heritage - a Topic for UNESCO Associated Schools

### Teaching Module: UNESCO - Who and what is UNESCO? What is its mission? How does UNESCO implement its mission?

#### 1. Part one: Topical introduction

##### Introduction

Initiated by Great Britain and France, UNESCO was founded on the sixteenth of November 1945 in London as a legally independent branch of the United Nations (UN), with its headquarters in Paris. The UNESCO constitution came into force on November 4, 1946, after it had been ratified by 20 countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, France, Greece, India, Lebanon, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States.

UNESCO stands for *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. In its very name, it thus represents its mission, namely to anchor peace in the world by initiating global educational processes and, in parallel, by promoting science and culture.

Today, the number of 20 founding countries has increased to become 193 Member States and 11 associated Member States. In this respect, the willingness to pursue a sustainable peace policy in the world is impressively demonstrated. The fact that this peace could not always be achieved and is now unfortunately more at risk than ever only shows how important it is to impart its message persistently and for the long term. Creating and maintaining peace was and is the mission of the international community because, since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed (UNESCO Constitution)



Fig. 1: UNESCO Headquarters in Paris

##### Legal status



Fig. 2: Logo United Nations

The status of the legal, organizational and financial independence of UNESCO is defined through the Charter of the United Nations (UN), the umbrella organization of the world community to govern its international commitments. In article 63 of this charter the implementation of the "Economic and Social Council" is defined which includes UNESCO and further 16 specialized agencies of the UN. This council shall "co-ordinate the activities of these specialized agencies through consultation with and recommendations to such agencies and through recommendations to the General Assembly and to the Members of the United Nations." (Charter of the United Nations 1945, article 63)

According to the structure of the whole international system the supreme decision-making and supervisory body of UNESCO is the

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General Conference. The current Director-General is Audrey Azoulay, the former French Minister of Culture, in office since November 2017. Analogous to UNESCO's peace mandate, the principles governing the organization's decisions are to be evaluated. As in the other specialized agencies of the United Nations, the principle of *one state — one vote* applies to the UNESCO General Conference. Analogous to its decision-making and control function, the General Conference decides on the objectives and guidelines of the Organization and establishes its work assignments and guidelines.

### Controlling body

The guidelines are first formulated by the UNESCO Executive Board, delegated to the Secretariat for elaboration and for monitoring the results and feedback. The UNESCO Executive Board can therefore be regarded as the strategic and supervisory body of UNESCO. Its responsibilities include not only the examination of programs and budgets, but also the preparation of agendas for the General Conference and thus the tasks, issues and activities of UNESCO as a whole.

"With regard to the composition of the Executive Council, increasing *nationalization* has been observed over the last 50 years. Until 1954, the members were considered private individuals — elected as *representatives of intellectual life* who were to act on behalf of the General Conference. In accordance with a proposal by the United States and the United Kingdom, the representatives are now no longer considered independent rather as politicians representing the countries from which they come. Since 1976, governments have also been able to remove and replace their representatives before the end of their four-year term of office and independently of their consent. In accordance with Article V, paragraph 2 of the UNESCO Constitution, those persons are selected who have the necessary experience and skills to fulfill the administrative and executive duties of the Council." (<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO#Generalkonferenz>)

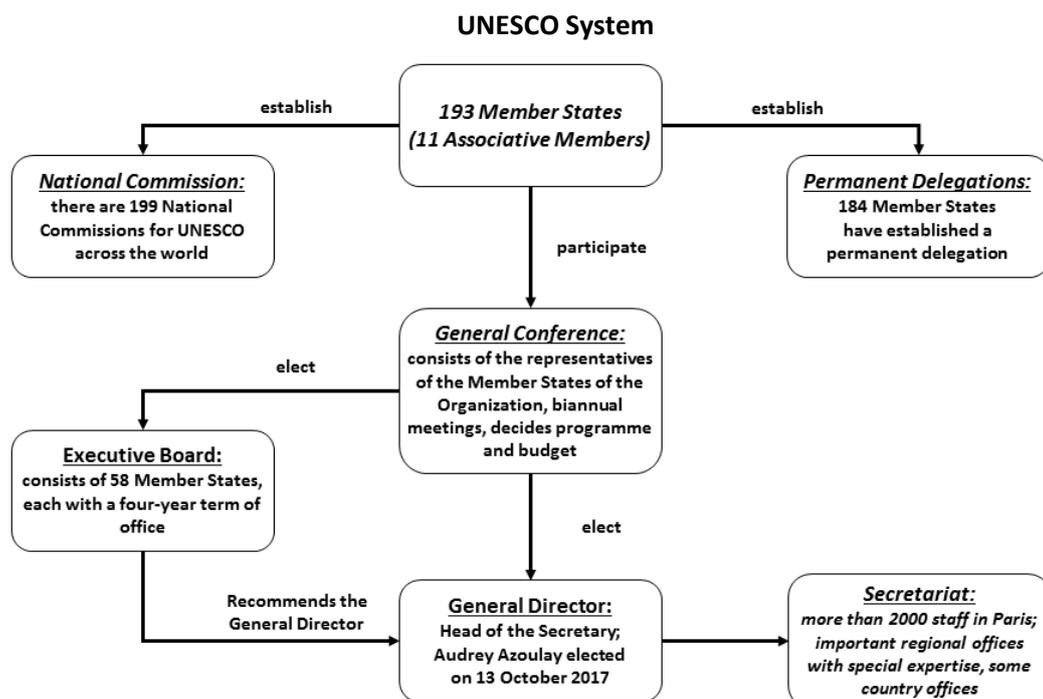


Fig. 3: The UNESCO System, illustration by Institute Heritage Studies

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### Mission

UNESCO's goals to finally achieve world peace are essentially implemented in five thematically oriented departments. These are the education sector, which is currently headed Ms. Stefania Giannini (Italy), the natural sciences sector headed Ms. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle (South-Africa), the social and human sciences sector headed by Ms. Nada Al-Nashif (Jordan), the culture sector managed by Mr Ernesto Renato Ottone Ramirez (Chile), and the communication and information sector managed by Mr Moez Chachouk (Tunisia).

The Culture Sector of UNESCO is responsible for World Heritage. Here, the conventions on both material and immaterial heritage and the convention on cultural diversity are communicated. Although the World Heritage Convention was adopted as early as 1972, the Convention on Intangible Heritage was ratified only in 2003 and the Convention on Cultural Diversity only in 2005. Correspondingly, the orientation of each convention is different. In comparison to the World Heritage Convention, which focuses on the identity-forming character of human heritage, the conventions on intangible heritage and cultural diversity aim to maintain and sustainably valorize the diversity of man-made cultural production. Cultural productions and reproductions should no longer be exclusively commercialized and subjected to the conditions of world trade. Rather, the 2005 Convention in particular serves to record cultural diversity as a standard for human expressions of life and thus to promote intercultural communication and mediation processes. How better to promote peace in the world than by means of these goals?



Fig. 4: UNESCO Logo

### Literature:

**Albert, Marie-Theres, Ringbeck Birgitta** (2015): 40 Years World Heritage Convention, Popularizing the protection of cultural and natural heritage (Heritage Studies, Vol. 3). Berlin: De Gruyters.

**Charter of the United Nations**, Source: <https://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/>

**UNESCO Constitution**, Source: [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=15244&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

**United Nations**, Source: <https://www.un.org/>

**United Nations**, Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations)

### Figures:

Fig. 1: UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Source: Fred Romero [www.flickr.com/photos/129231073@N06/29986221081/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/129231073@N06/29986221081/) (CC BY 2.0).

Fig. 2: Logo United Nations. Source: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Logo\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_Nations.png](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Logo_of_the_United_Nations.png)

Fig. 3: The UNESCO System, illustration by Institute Heritage Studies

Fig. 4: UNESCO Logo. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:UNESCO\\_logo\\_English.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:UNESCO_logo_English.svg)

## Transboundary European Heritage - a Topic for UNESCO Associated Schools

### 2. Part two: Worksheet to the module:

#### UNESCO - Who and what is UNESCO? What is its mission? How does UNESCO implement its mission?

The information that the students need to solve the following tasks can be found in the Teaching Module 1 (content). They are conveyed by the teachers to the students. In addition, teachers and students can use the following websites for more information:

UNESCO website: <https://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco>

Website of the German UNESCO Commission: <https://www.unesco.de/ueber-uns/ueber-die-unesco>

#### **1. Who and what is UNESCO?**

##### **Objective:**

Students will learn to

- see UNESCO as part of the United Nations network and thus to gain an international view of the world,
- understand the goals, tasks and working methods of UNESCO as an international organization
- understand the structure of UNESCO.

##### **Core competencies:**

The students get to know the way an international organization works and work out its structure. They will learn to understand interrelationships and complex systems.

##### **Time frame:**

Both tasks can be covered in 45 minutes.

##### **Methods:**

Apply knowledge  
Create a mindmap

#### **1<sup>st</sup> task: Complete the following sentences:**

UNESCO was founded in 1945 because ...

UNESCO is a ...

UNESCO members are...

UNESCO covers the following areas ...

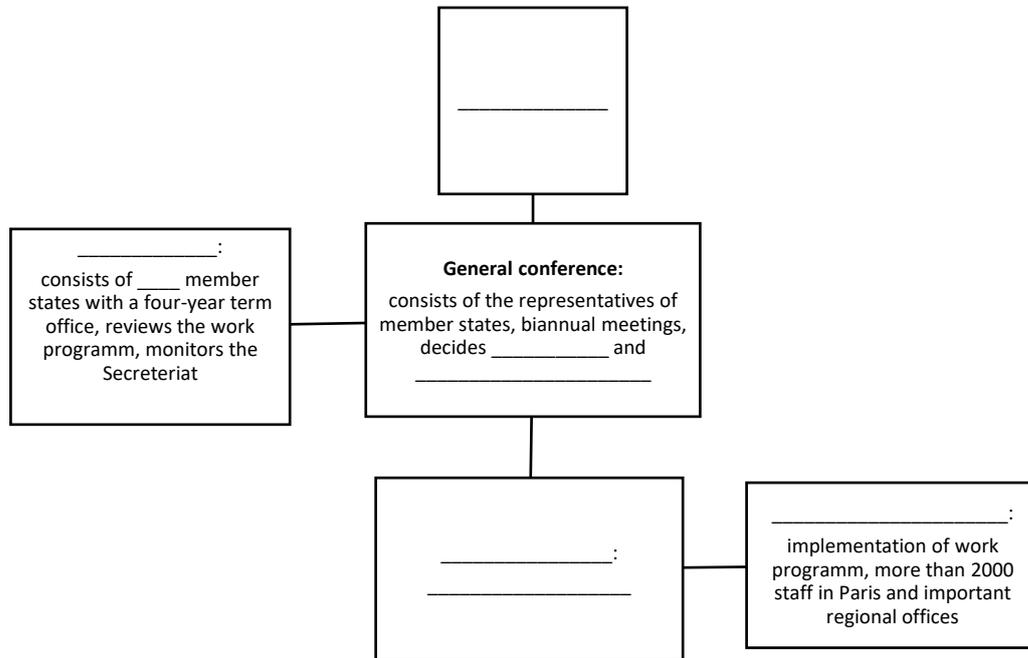
UNESCO is financed by ...

*Help: Use the following words when completing the sentences: Member States, specialized agency, peace, human rights, culture, education, science, communication, membership fees.*

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**2<sup>nd</sup> task: Supplement the following structure with the following terms: Director General, Executive Board, 193, Work Program, Member States, Secretariat, 58, budget, Audrey Azuley. Explain the structure to your classmates.**

*Note to teachers: The complete graphic is in the text of Teaching Module 1. This can be used for correction.*



## 2. UNESCO's mission

**Objective:** Students learn to

- understand UNESCO's mission
- And to reflect on the practical implementation in the work areas.

**Core competencies:**

The students will get to know the working methods of the international organization UNESCO. Through classroom discussion, they will apply what they have learned and take a critical position.

**Time frame:**

One 45-minute lesson

**Methods:**

- In-class discussion
- Oral and visual presentation
- Research on the Internet

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"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." (UNESCO Constitution, Preamble 1946)

**1<sup>st</sup> task:** Discuss this quotation from the UNESCO constitution in class Why was it important to the signatory states to formulate it in the preamble of the constitution? Is it still relevant today?

**2<sup>nd</sup> task:** Take a look at these areas of UNESCO activities: education, science, culture and communication. Conduct research on the Internet to find out what goals are being pursued in each area of work.

**3<sup>rd</sup> task:** Form groups analogous to the four work areas. Write a statement about why and how your work area contributes to "anchoring peace in the minds of people." Each group will give a talk on this.

### 3) How Does the General Conference Work?

**Objective:** Students learn

- to understand how decisions are made in international bodies,
- about the challenges of international cooperation.

**Core competencies:**

The students get to know the General Assembly of UNESCO and understand how it works. They simulate elections themselves and learn how to position themselves and find compromises.

**Time frame:**

45-90 minutes

**Methods:**

Free speech

Simulation of a vote

UNESCO has 193 member states. What does this mean for the way UNESCO works? Every two years, UNESCO's General Assembly brings together all member states to discuss and make decisions on its objectives, work programs and budget, for example. In order to take a decision, in most cases a majority of the member states must vote in favor.

**1<sup>st</sup> task:** At the 40th General Conference in November 2019, young people presented their concerns to UNESCO. If you could deliver a message to UNESCO, what would it be? Write your message individually or in groups, and record videos with your mobile phones where you share your message. Think about what you want to do with the videos. Could they perhaps be published on the school's website?



INTERNATIONALE AKADEMIE BERLIN  
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UNESCO-Projektschulen  
Sachsen



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EIN BEITRAG ZUM  
EUROPÄISCHEN  
KULTURERBEJAHRE 2018  
SHARING  
HERITAGE

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**2<sup>nd</sup> task: How can 193 Member States take decisions together? Simulate with your class a vote at the UNESCO General Assembly. Choose one of the following questions you want to discuss or think of another question:**

- Should boys and girls be equally represented in student representation?
- Should the school adopt a school from a poorer country?
- Should the school get involved with Fridays for Future?

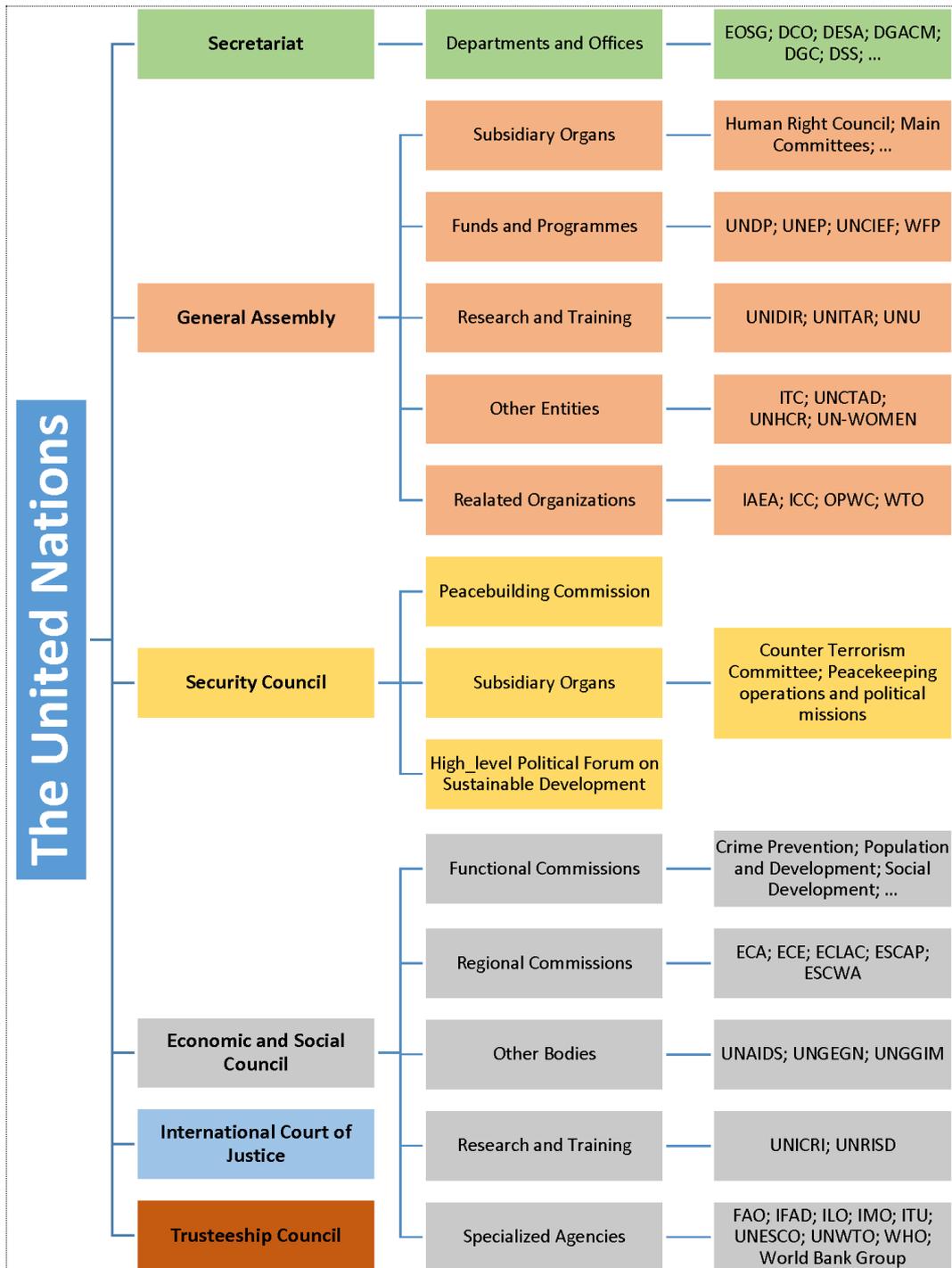
Each student should first think about his or her own position. Choose two students to lead the discussion. Discuss your position and come to a common decision. At the end of the discussion, vote for the position. Reflect together on what it means when 193 member states have to vote on one subject.

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### 3. Part three: United Nations System Chart

Link to the Official United Nation System Chart: **“The United Nations System”**

[https://www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/18-00159e\\_un\\_system\\_chart\\_17x11\\_4c\\_en\\_web.pdf](https://www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/18-00159e_un_system_chart_17x11_4c_en_web.pdf)



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