



International Amateur Radio Union Region 1

Europe, Middle East, Africa and Northern Asia Founded 1950
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Skopje, February 23rd 2023,

To All IARU Member Societies

Introduction

The International Amateur Radio Union has since 1925 been the worldwide federation of national amateur radio member societies. Currently it has a membership of some 170 countries throughout the world. The Amateur Radio Service is regulated by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) which is a specialized agency of the United Nations Organization.

In the early 20th century, the Maritime and the Amateur Radio Services were the first users of the newly discovered radio waves. From the very beginning, the Amateur Radio Service utilized Morse Code, which had been used for many decades previously for land-line communication. After 1999 the ITU discontinued Morse code telegraphy for any professional or commercial services, but this communication mode continues to be extensively used by radio amateurs on a voluntary basis.

The knowledge and skill to communicate by manually generating Morse code telegraphy, which became an international standard in 1865, is in danger of decreasing. Our member societies wish to continue to utilize Morse code telegraphy in future years, not only because it is a very efficient form of radio communication for low-power transmissions, but also to safeguard this Intangible Cultural Heritage for coming generations.

IARU-R1 General Conference in Sun city 2011

Some of you will recollect that more than ten years ago at Sun City, the General Conference of IARU R1 adopted the recommendation SC11 C3 Rec 16 to safeguard Morse code as an Intangible Heritage. This recommendation was reaffirmed with two other recommendations LA17 C3 Rec 28 and NS20 C3 Rec 06. Few years back, former President of R1 Mr. Don Beattie sent an official letter to UNESCO with the request Morse code to be included in the list of representative Intangible cultural heritages. Unfortunately, no reply was received.

UNESCO

Recently, few member societies within Region 1 (Germany, The Netherlands and Belgium) managed to make a significant breakthrough on this topic by reaching recognition of Morse code at a national level. The teams are working on that. We are still at a national non UNESCO level. It seems that this is the right way to approach this issue.

Therefore, we kindly ask all Member Societies within R1 and CW enthusiasts to join our efforts and move this initiative forward. The best way to do this is to approach your national coordinator of UNESCO. You can find all necessary information on the following link:

<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention/points-of-contact>

When approaching your national branch of UNESCO, several facts can be pointed out to support your request:

- *Morse code telegraphy is a heritage which has been used universally in all countries of the world,*

- although Morse Code carries the name of its inventor in the USA, a German national converted the original complicated alphabet into the form which since 1865 is administered by the ITU,
- this basic system is converted for the use of special characters in various languages (e. g. Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Russian/ Cyrillic ...),
- in some countries, communication via Morse code telegraphy is historically connected to important events (England, Italy, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Tanzania, USA ...),

All this points out that to the fact that the cultural impact of Morse Code cannot be attributed to a specific or single country.

Additionally, Morse Code as an intangible heritage would seem to fully comply with the criteria in Article 2 (2) of the relevant UNESCO Convention.

The worldwide community of radio amateurs, as the last group able to safeguard the cultural heritage of Morse code, follows detailed international and national rules and regulations.

It also follows a very strict code of honour which is in full accordance with the requirement of the Operational Directives (No. 102(c) of the relevant Convention which reads:

“102. All parties are encouraged to take particular care to ensure that awareness raising actions will not:
(c) contribute to justifying any form of political, social, ethnic, religious, linguistic or gender-based discrimination”

Morse code internationally recognized by other organizations

A respectable list of international organization which were able to fulfil their everyday duties and obligations by implementing morse code can also be added as argument to your request:

- International Maritime Organization – IMO
- International Civil Aviation Organization - ICAO
- International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities – IALA
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – IFRC
- International Amateur Radio Union – IARU

Respected colleagues

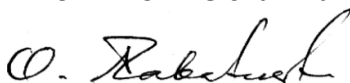
We are aware that this procedure will not be an easy task, but at the same time we are capable to implement this project.

We are looking for your involvement and we support you in this process.

For that, we sincerely thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

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IARU R1 HSTWG chairman



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