

Safeguarding Experiences in Central and Eastern European Countries and China



# INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE



10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Entry into Force of the 2003 UNESCO Convention  
through the Prism of Sustainable Development

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edited by Hanna Schreiber

10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Entry into Force of the 2003 UNESCO Convention  
through the Prism of Sustainable Development

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# FOREWORDS

# Intangible cultural heritage at the heart of sustainable development

**Timothy Curtis\***



\* Chief of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section, Culture Sector, UNESCO Secretary of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In 2003, the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has shaped a new global understanding of heritage, beyond monuments, beyond artefacts, to include living heritage, recognising this as a force of innovation, social transformation and sustainable development. Within this new normative instrument, a radically new approach to the safeguarding of the living dimension of heritage has been promoted, putting communities and peoples first, as custodians and as bearers of cultural expressions.

A similar spirit has inspired the elaboration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, agreed in 2015 by the United Nations Member States. For the first time at the global level, culture, and in particular cultural heritage and diversity are recognised as drivers and enablers of an inclusive and human-centred approach to development. Heritage, including intangible cultural heritage, is indeed at the centre of the most pressing challenges facing humanity. Leveraging living heritage for sustainable development can help communities build more tolerant and more inclusive societies.

In this context, the 2003 Convention can play an important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as a tool for realising the potential of intangible cultural heritage for environmental sustainability, inclusive social and economic development, as well as peacebuilding. At its sixth session in May-June 2016, the General Assembly of States Parties to the 2003 Convention adopted a new Chapter VI of Operational Directives dedicated to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at national level. These new Operational Directives encourage States and communities to see living heritage as a wellspring of solutions to eradicate poverty and hunger, to create decent and green jobs







Timothy Curtis, 2016, © UNESCO.

in the cultural sector, in arts and crafts, in music and many other fields. By placing emphasis on the importance of traditional knowledge systems for identifying ways of living together and using resources sustainably, they reaffirm UNESCO's firm conviction that living heritage is at the heart of contemporary issues facing our societies. Furthermore, they demonstrate how the international community is increasingly aware of the true potential of intangible cultural heritage for tackling current development challenges and those that can be anticipated in the future.

In this endeavour, international and regional cooperation – one of the key purposes of the 2003 Convention – is of tremendous importance. Driven by a fast economic growth in the past two decades, Central and Eastern European countries, as well as China, face comparable challenges in safeguarding the diversity and ensuring the viability of their living heritage. Globalization and an unprecedented urban growth bring out new challenges for the future of our societies in better living together. Against this backdrop, efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage are increasingly considered as important to support communities not only in safeguarding their practices and values that define their lifestyles but also in promoting respect for other cultural traditions and lifestyles.

However, this enhanced awareness among decision-makers, experts and communities is not yet sufficient. I am therefore very pleased to see the initiative of the Ministry of Culture and the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Board of Poland to convene a wide range of experts from Central and Eastern Europe and China to share good and effective practices in the safeguarding of living traditions. It fully demonstrates how urgent and useful it is to identify and safeguard the many cultural practices and knowledge that we have been elaborating over our history, and that are still relevant to many of our present challenges. It also highlights the commitment of the international community in ensuring that heritage's full potential is mobilised, thereby advancing the well-being of societies and human progress, and it is my hope that it will serve as a source of inspiration for many other stakeholders worldwide.



# Foreword

**Magdalena Gawin\***



\* Under-secretary of State at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego), Warsaw, Poland, professor.

The First China – Central and Eastern European Countries Expert-Level Forum on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is a wonderful continuation of the partnership and cooperation between China and 16 countries of Central and Eastern Europe initiated in Warsaw, Poland, and which has been maintained for more than four years now. I am glad that culture and intangible cultural heritage play such a significant role in many of the obvious areas of the cooperation, such as the economy, diplomacy, or infrastructure investments.

That is because it is precisely this area of the heritage of mankind with all of its otherness and diversity that allows us to draw deep connections between places even as far afield – at first glance – as Asia and Europe or China and the countries of our region. Irrespective of the above-mentioned differences, all of us draw from the traditions, knowledge and skills of the past generations equally. It is culture and the heritage it creates that build our identity and sense of community – the great, human, European, Asian, or national ones, but also the small, regional, local and familial ones. In important and everyday moments, it is precisely intangible heritage that allows us to answer the basic questions of who we are, where we come from, where we are headed and what for, as well as what values are important to us. It is also culture that allows us to recognise the same invaluable process that has created civilisation for centuries and millennia in other human beings – irrespective of their origin and identity. Culture teaches us the respect for our own culture and achievements, but also for the different paths and achievements of our neighbours, often as far afield and seemingly distant as China.





Professor Magdalena Gawin, 2016. Photo by Monika Szalek.

St John Paul II, one of the greatest Poles, and at the same time one of the most brilliant thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, wrote:

What is culture? Culture is the expression of man. It is an affirmation of humanity. It is created by man – and it is through culture that man is created. He creates himself through the inner effort of the spirit: the thought, the will and the heart. And at the same time, man creates culture together with others. Culture is an expression of interpersonal communication, joint thinking and joint action of humans. It is created in service of the common good – and it becomes a basic right of human communities.<sup>1</sup>

Today, these words seem to be the most accurate description of the role which intangible heritage plays in the life of societies. It is the heritage that, by permeating all layers of culture – from traditional, folk culture to popular culture to high, classical or modern culture – consolidates and co-creates it, and helps to appreciate the role of community in all meanings and scopes of this word. Owing to legal instruments such as the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, since 2003 we have had international mechanisms that make it possible to safeguard elements of the heritage for future generations, as well as promote its diversity all over the world.

Over the course of three days, the experts and representatives of seventeen countries who gathered at the First China – Central and Eastern European Countries Forum shared their experiences with regard to safeguarding, supporting, and developing activities that promote and disseminate intangible heritage. This exchange of practices, culminating in this exceptional publication, will enable all of us not only to make greater use of the potential for growth that lies in understanding and making use of the wealth of our common experiences than we did before, but first and foremost sensitise the governments and influential bodies of our countries to the significance of safeguarding and supporting – also financially – the intangible heritage of our nations and local communities for contemporary times.



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<sup>1</sup> Fragment of a speech presented to the youth gathered at Wzgórze Lecha (Lech's Hill) in Gniezno on 3 June 1979.

# Opening speech

**Chen Fafen\***



\* Deputy Director of the Bureau for External Cultural Relations, Ministry of Culture, People's Republic of China.

Distinguished Ministers,  
Experts, scholars,  
Ladies and gentlemen!

The first 'China-Central and Eastern Europe Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Experts Forum', jointly prepared by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland is opening today in the Cultural Capital of Europe – Kraków. First, I would like to extend my warm welcome to officials and experts from China and 16 Central and Eastern European countries on behalf of the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China. Moreover, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the organisers from Poland for all they have done to ensure the success of the forum.

Culture is the spirit and soul of a country and a nationality. The level of cultural development plays a decisive role in the degree of civilisation, comprehensive power, and international competitiveness of countries and nationalities. At the same time, intangible culture plays an essential role and has a significant impact on the cultural life of people. As modernisation and globalisation accelerate, inherent cultural ecology and cultural space are put under huge pressure. Intangible culture has received an unprecedented blow.

According to the consensus reached by state leaders, including the ministers of culture from China and Poland during the third meeting of Central China and Eastern European Countries







Cross-cultural encounter. Mr Chen Fafen and the Chinese delegation meeting the Lajkonik from Kraków, October 2016. Photo by Paweł Kobek, © National Heritage Board of Poland.

in Beijing in February 2015, the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland jointly held the forum obliged to pave the way for stimulating international research and communication in terms of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, boosting international cooperation among institutions and experts from the intangible cultural heritage sector in all countries, setting the concept consensus for China and Central and Eastern European Countries to expand communication and cooperation, and gradually laying the firm foundation for the public opinion consensus. We are hoping that the experts and scholars from culture sectors in China and 16 Central and Eastern European Countries will make full use of the discussions and exchange their views on the issues in the current environment for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding.

China is an ancient civilisation; a country with a long history. The Chinese people have created a wide range of profound and kaleidoscopic cultural heritage over the course of history. It has fully embodied their extraordinary imagination and creativity. As a key part of the rich traditional culture of China, intangible cultural heritage is the intuitive witness of the evolution of the Chinese civilisation, as well as the inexhaustible driving force behind its sustainable development.

The Kunqu opera was selected as the Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2001. The intangible cultural heritage safeguarding guided and driven by the Chinese government has been carried out for 15 years ever since then. Cultural authorities in all levels and areas have been sparing no efforts so that China could make great progress in intangible cultural heritage safeguarding thanks to the concern of the Chinese government. Especially when China's first law – the Law of the People's Republic of China on intangible cultural heritage protection – was enacted in 2011, it has accelerated the progress of China's intangible cultural heritage safeguarding, and strengthened the awareness of its entire society about intangible cultural heritage, and furthermore, significantly improved China's global influence. China's intangible cultural heritage safeguarding has thus been on the track of the exemplary legislative cycle. In August 2004, the Chinese Government joined the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This means that modern China, together with its uninterrupted 5000-year-old tradition will continue to progress and perfect the safeguarding of its intangible cultural heritage, and set the will to protect it as a national goal.

China has been constantly refining its work concept of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage amid its continuous efforts to expand and perfect the practical aspects of the safeguarding process.




We have especially stressed three concepts in recent years: the first concept is safeguarding with improvement; the second is integrating intangible cultural heritage with modern life; the third is the ecological protection concept regarding people, heritage, and life.

Central and Eastern European countries have long histories and splendid cultures. The safeguarding of their intangible cultural heritage is characterised by different features and truly inspires our work in China. The Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China and Chinese experts greatly cherish the opportunity for communication. We hope to discuss with the intangible cultural heritage safeguarding experts from 16 countries the challenges in the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development, and gain substantial results. Finally, I want to thank the organisers again for their dedicated efforts and invite all the Central and European Countries to actively participate and wish the forum a great success.







# The National Heritage Board of Poland in the process of implementing the provisions of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

**Małgorzata Rozbicka\***

\* Director of the National Heritage Board of Poland, Warsaw, Poland, professor, Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology

Heritage – this term is ambiguous and undergoes continuous change, which constantly broadens and enriches its semantic range. In the field of many sciences, disciplines, and social practices, including those in whose context the term ‘heritage’ has not been properly recognised recently, this term often turns from a peripheral to a central one. It occurs wherever attempts are made to safeguard, adapt or use (sometimes practical) tangible and intangible remnants of the past. In this sense, heritage is also emotionally charged as it creates a close link between the entity which is or feels like the owner thereof and the entity which consented to succession (Kowalski 2013, 15).

The term ‘cultural heritage’ has been changing and evolving since the 1960s. Nowadays, heritage is understood as a broad collection of tangible and intangible values; it is a re-source subjected to constant change, adjustment and interpretation by many users. The perception of the past and the relics thereof, and thereby the manner and scope of making use of them, undergo constant change. The spectrum of what is considered worth preserving also broadens and new interpretations emerge under the so-called patrimonialisation processes. Certain aspects of the past are assigned significance, whereas others are deliberately or unintentionally allowed to disappear, be it from the cultural landscape or from the public awareness (Murzyn 2007).

The First China – Central and Eastern European Countries Expert-Level Forum on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is doubtlessly a perfect occasion for international experts to discuss the above-mentioned issues, and in particular to exchange information on the contemporary meaning of intangible heritage for the communities of the countries represented at the Forum, and ways in which they understand, interpret, use, and safeguard it.





Professor Małgorzata Rozbicka, 2013. Photo by Emilia Matuszewicz, © National Heritage Board of Poland.

In Poland, before the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) was ratified (2011), the tasks thereunder were assigned to the National Heritage Board of Poland (Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa, hereinafter referred to as 'NID') by decision of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 15 February 2010. NID is a cultural institution, which has continued the activities of the former National Centre for Research and Documentation of Monuments (Krajowy Ośrodek Badań i Dokumentacji Zabytków) since 2011, and at the same time is a legal successor of the Centre for Preservation of Historic Landscape (Ośrodek Ochrony Zabytkowego Krajobrazu, 2002), which was founded in 1962, and of the Centre for Preservation of Archaeological Heritage (Ośrodek Ochrony Dziedzictwa Archeologicznego, 2007).

NID, under a new name and new by-laws and better adjusted to the current needs of the system for safeguarding cultural heritage, also gained additional competencies, for instance in the scope of monitoring historical monuments, digitalising the collected documentation, and creating databases of monuments, as well as – which is of particular interest to us – in the scope of safeguarding intangible heritage. Therefore, in connection with the implementation of Article 13 of the Convention concerning the establishment of institutions documenting intangible cultural heritage and enabling access thereto, the Team for Preservation of Tradition and Culture (currently: Team for Intangible Heritage, Zespół ds. dziedzictwa niematerialnego) was created in May 2011 at NID, whose main objective was to develop and implement strategic solutions aimed at ensuring adequate safeguarding of the intangible heritage of Poland.

In collaboration with experts – researchers of this issue from academic circles – the Team – which has been responsible for implementing the provisions of the UNESCO 2003 Convention since its establishment – developed the inventory strategy for the intangible cultural heritage in Poland and prepared the required documents, such as the rules and procedures for entering phenomena onto the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Krajowa lista niematerialnego dziedzictwa kulturowego), as well as a relevant application form and guidelines for filling it in.

In 2012, the Team for Intangible Heritage prepared an information package for Local Government Units which apart from discussing the possibility of implementing the 2003 Convention also contained guidelines and forms helpful for the identification and inventory of intangible heritage. Moreover, NID launched a website ([niematerialne.nid.pl](http://niematerialne.nid.pl)), which is dedicated to the Convention and the issues of safeguarding, first and foremost in relation to national intangible heritage. The intended fundamental task of the website was the publication and dissemination of knowledge





of the phenomena entered onto the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the creation of a modern platform for the exchange of experiences between depositaries, non-governmental organisations, and cultural institutions. The website was also supposed to provide relevant information on the events, competitions and workshops organised in our country in connection with intangible cultural heritage.

Also in 2012, the Team within NID, in cooperation with the Department of Polish Culture of the Institute of Culture Studies at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland (Zakład Kultury Polskiej Instytutu Kulturoznawstwa Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej w Lublinie), organised an international scientific conference 'Intangible Cultural Heritage: Sources – Values – Safeguarding' (Niematerialne dziedzictwo kulturowe: źródła – wartości – ochrona).

Submission of applications to the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which is supposed to constitute a list of the manifestations of living intangible heritage in Poland, ultimately opened in January 2013. The List, maintained by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, with the help of NID and the Council for Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (Rada ds. Niematerialnego Dziedzictwa Kulturowego przy Ministrze Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego), is for information purposes only, and at the same time reflects the diversity of the intangible heritage present in our country. Applications to enter such elements onto the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage are reviewed by the Council for Intangible Cultural Heritage. To this day, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage has issued decisions to enter twenty various phenomena from all over Poland<sup>1</sup> onto the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage on the basis of recommendations of the Council.

Also in February 2013, the NID Team organised an international conference under the name 'Best Practices in the Implementation of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage' (Dobre praktyki w realizacji zadań związanych z Konwencją UNESCO w sprawie ochrony dziedzictwa niematerialnego z 2003 roku) together with the Association of Folk Artists (Stowarzyszenie Twórców Ludowych), the aim of which was to present the general assump-

<sup>1</sup> Phenomena entered onto the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (as of 2016): 'Artistic and historical gunsmithing – items made in accordance with the traditional Cieszyn school'; 'The Lajkonik procession'; 'The Kraków szopka tradition'; 'The lightening traditions in Ulanów'; 'The Corpus Christi procession in Łowicz'; 'The Esperanto language as a carrier of the Esperanto culture'; 'The skill of creating and playing the *koza* (Podhale bagpipes)'; 'The Żukowo school of Kashubian embroidery'; 'Falconry – living tradition'; 'The Polish national dances'; 'The indulgence festivities in honour of St Roch with blessing of animals in Mikstat'; 'The traditional casting technique of the Felczyńskis in Taciśzów'; 'The Dyngus *przywołówki* in Szymborze'; 'The Warmia dialect as a carrier of oral traditions'; 'The Żywiec–Sucha Beskidzka toymaking'; 'Honey hunting'; '*Perebory* – the Bug River weaving traditions'; 'The Kraków bobbin lace'; 'The cultural traditions of Biskupizna'; 'The carol singing of the New Year *Dziady* in the Żywiec region'.



tions connected with the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the scope and manners of operation of the safeguarding of the intangible heritage in Poland and other European countries.

In 2014, Regional Coordinators for Intangible Heritage were appointed at all sixteen Regional Offices of NID. Before taking action, they were comprehensively trained. They participated in two training sessions which concerned both the provisions of the 2003 Convention and the practical aspects of the implementation thereof. From filling in applications to measures which NID coordinations can and should take in order to safeguard and inventory intangible heritage as part of the cooperation and contact with the depositaries, local government units and non-governmental organisations, as well as academic circles. At present, coordinators independently help local communities to fill in applications and also inform stakeholders as well as relevant institutions and organisations of the potential benefits, but also dangers associated with entering individual phenomena onto the National List or, in the future, onto UNESCO lists.

In 2014, NID organised a workshop in Sandomierz which was dedicated to the cooperation of non-governmental organisations, cultural institutions and local government units in the area of intangible heritage. Representatives of circles active in the area of safeguarding, promoting and documenting intangible cultural phenomena: representatives of non-governmental organisations, cultural and educational institutions, offices and cultural animators were invited to participate in the two-day workshop the purpose of which was to develop methods of cooperation in safeguarding the intangible cultural phenomena present in our country. The workshop concerned the essence of intangible cultural heritage and forms of safeguarding it compliant with the methodology developed at the UNESCO forum. Practitioners from this field shared their experience and professional tips on how to safeguard intangible cultural heritage effectively, which helped the workshop participants gain new competencies in the area of identification and inventory.

The second nationwide workshop was organised by NID in 2015 in Zakopane. This time it was dedicated to presenting the so-called good practices in safeguarding intangible heritage. The speakers and the hosts of the workshop were professionals who safeguard such heritage on a daily basis. On the first day, they shared their practical experience with a large audience. On the following day, seven workshop groups jointly discussed the matter of how the tools proposed by the Convention can be used to safeguard individual intangible cultural phenomena effectively.

At present, NID employees actively participate in meetings dedicated to safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of our country, co-organised by the Monuments Preservation Department



(Departament Ochrony Zabytków) of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage for representatives of local governments. They also participate in many conferences and meetings of statutory bodies of the UNESCO 2003 Convention. They also try to promote and disseminate the need to safeguard intangible heritage and the principles thereof with the use of the radio and television.

Furthermore, in order to complete the illustration of the activity of NID outlined above, which has been carried out since 2011 in the scope of technical, organisational, and educational support for the implementation of the tasks under the 2003 Convention, it seems necessary to mention the publishing activity of NID as well. With regard to the issue of identifying and safeguarding intangible heritage, as many as six works have been published so far, including both Polish translations of key UNESCO publications<sup>2</sup> and original works by Polish authors,<sup>3</sup> sometimes consisting of several volumes, which concern both theoretical and practical aspects of identifying, documenting and safeguarding the invaluable intangible cultural heritage of our country.<sup>4</sup>

To conclude, I would like to express my hope that the 1<sup>st</sup> China – Central and Eastern European Countries Expert-Level Forum on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage was a perfect occasion for professionals from the seventeen countries not only to freely exchange their views and experience and to establish relations with international experts, but also to present the wealth of their national heritage and the measures taken by their countries in order to safeguard such heritage. It brings immense joy and satisfaction to the National Heritage Board of Poland, which had the honour and pleasure to co-organise the Forum in Kraków, that it met with such great interest and was evaluated by the participants in such a favourable manner.

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<sup>2</sup> A set of eight UNESCO brochures outlining the idea behind the 2003 Convention (UNESCO 2011).


<sup>3</sup> Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa n.d.; Adamowski and Smyk 2013, 2015; Przybyła-Dumin 2016.

<sup>4</sup> A brochure presenting phenomena entered onto the National List in the years 2014–2016 (Sadowska-Mazur and Włodarczyk 2016).



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# Introductory speech made during the opening of the 1<sup>st</sup> China – Central and Eastern European Countries Expert-Level Forum on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

**Leszek Zegzda\***

\* Member of the Government of the Małopolska Province.

Everything starts with the word. It is where all things originate. First, there is a thought, an idea, something of value. The word allows us to express that thought, build an image, form a new reality. And thus, the intangible precedes the tangible, for the latter is formed out of the former. All that takes tangible shape has its roots in the intangible.

Tradition – the living, intangible manifestations of culture that we inherit from our ancestors is what makes up our identity – both the identity of an individual and the identity of our community as a whole. It allows us to define ourselves, to choose our place and to grow roots, forming a strong foundation and helping us build a sense of value. And so, tradition becomes the link between the past, the present, and the future.

Rites, practices, performances and musical traditions bind people together and at the same time play a vital role in maintaining and nurturing our cultural diversity. Intangible heritage facilitates the contacts between different cultures, creating a common space for dialogue and mutual respect.

In these contexts, the Małopolska Province truly stands out in terms of the wealth of its cultural resources. This remarkable diversity has been accumulated over the ages by the several ethnic groups and minorities that lived here. All of them created a vibrant cultural mosaic the individual parts of which may be both of pure colours that represent the most pronounced ethnic characteristics and of mixed shades produced through the cross-pollination of neighbouring cultures. Ruthenians, Jews, Romani People, Slovaks and Hungarians as well as German settlers have all created an outstanding mixture of intangible heritage on this very





Leszek Zegda, 2015, © Marshal Office of the Malopolska Region.

soil. Likewise, the influence of the dozen-odd neighbouring ethnographic regions clustered together in Małopolska – Cracovians, Gorals, members of the Lachy culture and highlander groups – all different in terms of local dialect, outfits, music, rites and customs – has only added more vibrancy to this cultural melting pot.

It is our people who make up this invaluable cultural wealth and whose creativity and involvement are both rooted in regional traditions. Their attachment to the location in which they live and to their traditions and age-old customs have shaped the character of consecutive generations and still does so today. It is here, in the Małopolska region, that all phenomena of the present day are experienced in a very special manner, filtered through the century-old values which influence our perception of the world, thereby shaping our ability to create.

Intangible heritage is fleeting, fragile, and cannot exist on its own. Many phenomena have been lost forever as people passed away and as stories came to an end, for there was nobody to remember, nobody to save them from oblivion. It is for this reason that it is so important for us to continue to pay great attention to the living manifestations of our heritage.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> China and East-Central Europe Expert Forum dedicated to intangible cultural heritage, organised in Kraków at the International Cultural Centre, we have a unique opportunity to reiterate our call for dialogue and creative exchange of experiences and good practices in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, the philosophy and management thereof, as well as the economic and political dimensions of the activities in question; for whenever different cultures meet, these are the values that always matter most. It is no coincidence that Kraków was chosen as the meeting place on this occasion. It is a place where intangible heritage has a meaningful impact on the identity of the local residents, at the same time forming an immense potential for the sustainable development of the city.

The local government of the Małopolska Province pays special attention to the protection, development, and interpretation of the intangible heritage of the region. Among the many cultural institutions of the Małopolska Province, museums and culture centres continue to play a pivotal role, their activities extending to the entire region, allowing for model solutions to be developed. As a result, these institutions continue to serve as important centres of not just cultural protection, but cultural animation as well. Without a doubt, the SOKÓŁ Cultural Centre for the Małopolska Region in Nowy Sącz plays an important role in the entire process, providing care and support to local artists – regional bands and ensembles, folk musicians, instrumentalists, singers, carolers, farmer's wives associations and country theatres. An important event which is regularly held in





the region is the Regional Culture Congress, first organised back in 2015 at the initiative of the Małopolska Province, with the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage – ratified by the Republic of Poland in 2011 – serves as an inspiration. Works are now underway to establish the Heritage Centre for Intangible Culture, formed at the initiative of the SOKÓŁ Cultural Centre. This project would never have been possible without the involvement of the Małopolska Province, which considers the establishment of this Centre to be an important stage in the formation of a regional heritage safeguarding system.

The Małopolska Province continues to acknowledge and reward various activities and projects aimed at the promotion of good examples in the field of protection of all phenomena which comprise the local cultural heritage. It is for this reason that two awards have been established: the Roman Reinfuss Prize for exceptional achievements in the field of safeguarding the local cultural identity in the Małopolska region, and the Władysław Orkan Prize for promoting the idea of regionalism and for extraordinary achievements in the field of artistic and cultural activity of local communities of Małopolska.

The extraordinary wealth and diversity of the activities performed is clearly reflected in statistics: more than 1000 folk artists, 281 regional ensembles (including 153 children's ensembles), about 170 bands, more than 350 groups of carolers, over 200 singing ensembles, 140 folk poets, 240 folk storytellers, 50 country theatres and 450 farmer's wives associations – all of them involved in a plethora of artistic activities.

These impressive figures translate directly into an equally stellar artistic and substantive level attained by most of the artists and groups involved. The ensembles and solo artists from the Małopolska region have repeatedly earned top spots in numerous folklore competitions both in Poland and abroad. The activities of regional artists have made it possible to produce a highly attractive cultural offer, complementing the efforts of our tourism industry and ensuring the continuing popularity of Małopolska as a travel destination.

These are just a few of the countless activities and valuable initiatives pursued by various institutions, private entities and both formal and informal groups of people all across the Małopolska region, aimed at the preservation, safeguarding, and perpetuation of all that matters most to our regional culture.

In one of his homilies, Pope John Paul II once said the following words: 'I beseech you, stay true to your heritage! Make it the foundation of the upbringing of your children! Make it a source of noble pride! Preserve this heritage! Make it thrive! Pass it on to the next generations'.



All the activities which are currently being implemented are intended as an answer to this call – an answer that must involve all those who live in the region, for it is only in close cooperation with them that the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage has any chance of succeeding.

I sincerely hope that the process of cooperation and dialogue, initiated during this Forum by the eminent experts from seventeen countries who have gathered here, shall bear fruit in the near future, becoming a starting point for joint solutions, which – through their territorial extent – will be able to serve as examples of good practices in the field of safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage at the local, regional, national, and international level.



# Kraków and its heritage in the European context<sup>1</sup>

**Jacek Purchla\***



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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on a selection of excerpts from the book by Jacek Purchla, *Kraków in the European Core* (translated by Teresa Bałuk-Ulewiczowa), second edition, International Cultural Centre, Kraków 2016 (courtesy of Wydawnictwo BOSZ).

Kraków is often perceived as 'the heart of Poland' and 'the most Polish of all Polish cities'. Although Poland's boundaries have been shifted to and fro so many times, Kraków has always been Polish. But at the same time it is also the most cosmopolitan place in Poland: not only were numerous foreign influences imported here, but they were also submitted to creative reprocessing. The myth of Poland's ancient capital, a place of symbolic meaning in Polish politics and national life, must be reinterpreted today in the wider context of a uniting Europe. If Central Europe's complex rests in its continual striving to prove its European membership, Kraków has no need of such proofs. It has always made up the Polish chapter of European heritage.

Kraków is one of the so-called 'creative cities', that is cities which have made a creative contribution to the building up of the universal values in our civilisation while at the same time maintaining their local features and pursuing their own, unique, identities. It is also inseparably bound with the specific properties and *genius loci* of Central Europe. Three ideas of Central Europe, the Hanseatic, Jagiellonian, and Habsburg visions, coincided with the peak of Kraków's civilisational prosperity. Two of them came before the end of the Middle Ages. All were to meet at Wawel Hill at the turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Kraków was the only city in which a creative and harmonious blend of all three of these integrative concepts for *Europa Minor* ensued.

If we look at Europe's civilisational development in its two main aspects, cultural and economic, we observe a growing integration of Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries with Carolingian Europe. A factor associated with this process was the economic programme of the Cistercians; but the major determinant was the great sweep eastwards of colonisation, carrying the Western European settlement model into these countries.





Professor Jacek Purchla, 2015. Photo by P. Mazur.

Kraków became a special symbol of the new dimension in urbanisation. The Middle Ages turned it into a European metropolis lodged at the foot of Poland's royal and sacred hill. The factors determining this were not only the city's role as capital, but also its adoption of a new model of settlement. Re-organised in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century on German municipal law and designed as an ambitiously expanding colonial town, Kraków was rapidly becoming one of the largest trading emporia in late mediaeval Europe. Its characteristic and distinctly lucid municipal layout, which goes back to that period, was its first creative contribution to European civilisation.

This is the paradox the incursion of Genghis Khan's hordes brought: by destroying, they only managed to reinforce the civilisational strength of Latinate Europe, as borne out by the mediaeval defensive churches of Transylvania, and by Kraków. Though materially devastated, it survived the cataclysm of 1241, demonstrating its power to continue as a *civitas* not in the sense of physical structure, but as something more, an *ethnos*, a combination of functions, a process, or perhaps above all as the idea of a city. The disaster gave the impulse and opportunity for an extraordinary amount of creativity. The initiative came from its prince, Boleslaus V (the Bashful). The groundwork for his capital's new structure was the municipal charter he granted in 1257, opening up a new age in its history. Up to that time, the chief factor determining Kraków's urbanisation was spontaneous growth in its municipal functions and space. The charter endowed it with the framework of a new design. With its distinctive, hitherto unparalleled scale and symmetry, the new urban layout ranked Kraków uniquely in contemporaneous civilisation. Its Market Square, one of the biggest mediaeval market places, is extraordinary for the regularity and scale of its design, well ahead of its time in town planning, blending harmoniously with what had survived the destruction. Freed by its 1257 charter of the narrow streets typical of mediaeval towns, Kraków was invested with a design which is still the basis of its metropolitan development today.

For Kraków, the Magdeburg municipal law on which its charter was based soon turned into a constitutional matrix, the first implementers of which were newcomers from Silesia. Just as elsewhere in Central Europe at the time, the culture of the German speakers played a vital role in the growth of the new Kraków. The influx of German colonists introduced multi-ethnicity as an important ingredient in the life of the nascent metropolis.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Kraków was one of the biggest towns in Central Europe. Since Vladislaus Jagiełło's victory over the Teutonic Knights at Grunwald in 1410, in 1410 it has been also the capital of a rising European power. Its economic status was growing along with its political power. The vigour of life at Court and the thriving city encouraged the growth of intellectual and artistic



activity. The splendour of the last years of the reign of Casimir the Jagiellonian and the work of Veit Stoss mark the climax of Kraków's age of felicity.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as capital of a vast dominion, Kraków propagated its influence from the south-western corner of the realm into the vast lands of Lithuania and Ruthenia. The monarch convened Sejm parliamentary sessions to Kraków; while Wawel Castle, headquarters of the dynasty, was one of the most important centres of political power in contemporary Europe. The splendour of the last Jagiellon reigns marked the acme of Kraków's significance on the map of *Europa Minor*. The multi-ethnicity of the metropolis meant that large groups of Jews, Germans, Italians, Ruthenians, Hungarians, and Scots lived in the environs of Wawel Castle. At the same time, Kraków was truly the focal point for Polish culture. Sigismundian Kraków not only imported a variety of foreign influences; it also creatively transformed them, assuming the role of a prolific centre with an impact well beyond the borders of the Jagiellonian domain.

In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the Kraków agglomeration counted some 30,000 inhabitants, like Prague, the other major city in Central Europe. Though these two cities could not vie with Rome, Venice, Naples, Constantinople, Lisbon, Paris, London, or Antwerp in magnitude or economic status, they were well ahead of the other cities in Central Europe, such as Gdańsk, Königsberg, Wilno, Riga, Kiev, Lwów, or Wrocław, in the complexity and power of their functions.

Triumph would soon turn into the cause of downfall. The concept of union with Lithuania devised in Kraków in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century eventually created a threat to Kraków's status as capital. This was connected with the constitutional evolution that ensued in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The commonwealth of the nobility into which Poland was transformed during the 15<sup>th</sup> century based its political existence on a parliamentary system for the *szlachta* (Polish nobility and gentry). With a peripheral situation in a state bulging out north-eastwards, for practical reasons Kraków could no longer be the venue for parliamentary conventions. If we consider the headquarters of the supreme authorities the capital of any state, then Kraków was gradually losing this position in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, for a long time, Kraków retained its status as capital, as understood in an age of feudalism. Here the insignia of statehood – the royal treasury and archives – were lodged. Well-nigh until the demise of Poland-Lithuania all the main state occasions, coronations and royal weddings were held here.

Already by the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Kraków's legend had proved the critical factor decisive of its future. The city of Kraków provided the natural setting for the last great



attempt to salvage Poland's sovereignty. On 24 March 1794, the Kościuszko Insurrection broke out. Kraków's capital status unexpectedly assumed a new dimension at the Congress of Vienna. In 1815, the city became the object of keen rivalry between the three Partitioning Powers, since it was still perceived as a symbol of Poland's sovereignty. In the outcome of the compromise arrived at between Austria, Prussia, and Russia, in 1815–1846 Kraków was formally an independent state, a Republic (*der Freistaat Krakau*) under the 'guardianship' of the three Powers.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought changes in the settlement network of Europe. A combination of political and economic causes made Kraków remain a non-industrial city with a fairly slow rate of growth until the end of the century. Locked inside the Austrian defences, it was relatively small and poor. But a way was found to give the city a chance of development thanks to the liberalism that came to Austria in 1860, and the power of the old metropolitan tradition. This was the essence of the Kraków phenomenon of that period: there was no simple relationship between the city's size and its metropolitan function. The power of tradition was an extremely important factor in its progress. Thanks to the power of its past Kraków became the place integrating all the Polish people; Kraków, not the province's capital, Lwów, became the heart of Polish national life.

Kraków's development at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was based on numerous contradictions. The systemic deficiency in the city's economy was compensated for by its extraordinary significance to the people of Poland. Its function as the nation's spiritual capital contrasted blatantly with its function as a frontier fortress and provincial garrison manned by a foreign army. From the vantage-point of the great cosmopolitan metropolis into which Vienna had turned as the centuries changed, Kraków was but a middle-sized peripheral town. From the point of view of Polish *raison d'être*, it was fulfilling the functions of the capital, albeit an impoverished capital, of a non-existent Polish state. These and other antinomies made up the Kraków phenomenon and accounted for the exceptionality of its situation under Austrian rule. The contemporary Kraków was not merely the Polish Athens, but also the Polish Piedmont. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Lwów performed the functions of provincial capital of Galicia, the largest province in Austria, while Kraków was the lynch-pin integrating Polish national affairs, especially after the 1905 Revolution was crushed in the Congress Kingdom (Russian partitional zone). On the eve of the First World War, it was in Kraków that the activities of the major independence groups were concentrated. Kraków was HQ for Józef Piłsudski, who in August 1914 led his Polish Legions out from this city to fight for independence – against Russia, but still as a partner of Austria.





With a population of around 750,000, Kraków is much bigger than the planners of fifty years ago expected and, more importantly, now going through a period of demographic stability. This certainly does not mean a stop to development, but rather a slowing down of the expansion which was responsible for a fall in the standard of living.

By virtue of its hallmark and the attractiveness of its heritage, Kraków has the potential for the metropolitan game. Its heritage is what makes Kraków Poland's second city and not just one of sixteen provincial capitals. Kraków's heritage is the natural asset with which it has entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is its first metropolitan function, still determining its position in Europe today. The potency of heritage in Kraków's metropolitan personality has been defined by its investiture in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as the archetype of the nation's spiritual capital, an archetype supporting Kraków's essential role as the factor integrating the people of Poland, yet at the same time determining the city's high level of recognisability in Europe and throughout the world. There is also a material aspect of cultural heritage: a superbly preserved historic urbanistic fabric and first-rate monuments. The fact that Kraków was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List already in 1978 is a cogent testimonial to the supra-regional value of its heritage resources. Kraków, the only large historic city within Poland's current borders to have survived the tragedy of the Second World War physically unscathed, is a symbol of continuity and endurance. Its second metropolitan function, strictly bound up with the first, is its intellectual and artistic potential. One of the signs of its capacity for the creation of culture is that it is often referred to as Poland's cultural capital. And this is another reason why Kraków has become an international tourist centre.

Kraków is one of those of our Continent's old cities whose contemporary development is determined by their past and tradition. It is the only city of such a large size between Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Bratislava, Vienna, and Budapest which has had its historically shaped metropolitan functions degraded to the rank of a provincial centre.

Today, Kraków's cultural heritage has to be deciphered not only in its national framework but also in the international dimension. It is no coincidence that international tourism has become the chief factor determining the economic development of Kraków and Lesser Poland, especially since Poland's accession to the European Union on 1 May 2004. Today Kraków is 'trendy'. The work which contributed to the changeover involved not only operations to stop the prospect of ecological disaster, but also the swift removal of the consequences, by the conservation of heritage.

Kraków is currently one of the busiest tourist markets on the continent. Over ten million tourists visit it every year. In the plebiscite held by the monthly magazine *Travel & Leisure* in July



2015, it was ranked third in the top ten of Europe's most attractive cities. Only Florence and Rome came ahead of it. The sites entered on the UNESCO World Heritage List in the vicinity of Kraków, especially the Wieliczka Salt Mine and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, are popular destinations for tourists.

One of the paramount factors accounting for the growth of the tourist industry is that Lesser Poland is the birthplace of John Paul II. The Sanctuary of Divine Mercy at Łagiewniki, which the Pope from Poland consecrated on 17 August 2002 during his last pilgrimage to Poland, receives pilgrims from scores of countries all over the world. Research shows that 25% of all the pilgrims are from abroad, chiefly from Europe, but also from the Philippines, Costa Rica, Cuba, Japan, South Korea, the USA, and they also include Ukrainians and Russians... A monumental religious venue, the John Paul II Centre, has been raised in the neighbourhood of the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy, on the site of Kraków's old Solvay soda works, where during the Second World War Karol Wojtyła worked as a blue-collar labourer. The St. John Paul II Sanctuary is at the Centre's very heart. The relics of the Polish Pope were brought here in 2011 and since that time his cult has flourished.

There is no other city in Poland which has accumulated so much myth and legend and preserved its symbolic layer as full of life as the space of Kraków's mediaeval City Centre, teeming with life today. As in past centuries, the medieval melody of the bugle call sounding from St Mary's Tower determines the rhythm of life, and the Royal Sigismund Bell tolls from Wawel Hill to comment on the important moments in the life of the nation and the city. The city continues to order its life by the traditional calendar of religious holy days such as the feast day of St. Stanislaus, patron of Kraków, and Corpus Christi, and the folkloric amusements such as the Rękawka fair, the Lajkonik Hobby-Horse parade, or the Wianki midsummer night's eve festival. The multilayer memory and identity of the city are superbly complemented by the suburban folklore which has been forming since the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Zwierzyniec, Krowodrza, and Ludwinów. The folklore is still thriving, symbolised by the Lajkonik and the Nativity scene (*szopka*) traditions, particularly distinctive for Półwsie Zwierzynieckie and Krowodrza. The Nativity scene (*szopka*) is a traditional craft which is passed down from generation to generation, ensuring its continuity. The Lajkonik parade is a colourful pageant through the city of Kraków. The main character is a rider dressed as a Tatar mounted on a hobby-horse. The event commemorates the Mongol invasions which threatened the city in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Lajkonik parade and the Nativity scene (*szopka*) competition show how robust the local tradition is, and that is precisely why they have been entered on the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.





Cross-cultural encounter. The Nativity Scene (szopka) Tradition in Kraków explained to Hungarian ICH expert, Dr Eszter Csonka-Takács, October 2016. Photo by Paweł Kobek, © National Heritage Board of Poland.

Is a city which has committed itself to such an extent to the reverence of its past still capable of facing the challenges of the present day? There can be no doubt that Kraków is an arena for a fierce confrontation between contemporary civilisation and the heritage of the past. Heritage means memory, choice, and identity. That is why Kraków is today creating a new chapter of Polish heritage for Europe and the world. After the death of John Paul II in 2005 Kraków quite naturally became the guardian of his memory and his legacy.

At the same time, the city is endeavouring to revive its multi-ethnic tradition, lost as a result of the Holocaust. This is expressed both by the Jewish Cultural Festival, which every June since 1988 has summoned a large audience from all over the world; as well as in the phenomenon of Kraków's Kazimierz quarter. Before our very eyes, Kazimierz has become a laboratory for the retrieval of the memory of a world that has gone forever but nevertheless is still an inherent part of the identity of the European Core. Finally, there is the most astonishing experience: the reinterpretation of the heritage of Nowa Huta. Today the Polish Magnitogorsk is not just a symbol of the Sovietisation of Poland, but also the fourth phase of the grand urban development of Kraków, a development reaching far beyond the local bounds. At the same time, it is also the legend of a battle for dignity, the legend of Solidarity.

Diversity, integration, continuity, authenticity, representativity, artistic class in architectural heritage – all of these determine not only the meaning of Kraków's heritage, but also the strategy for its protection, and especially the comprehensiveness of that strategy. The foundation of this endeavour is the continual reinterpretation of heritage.

Thus history has become a factor in the city's development which in turn has created a variety of options for the interpretation of cultural heritage, for meanings of the city – as a process, a function, an idea, form, and mirror of civilisation. The complex story of Kraków, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well, confirms the words of Sophie Lang that cities are never a random occurrence, that they are a concept of a higher order. In Central Europe, cultural identity has never been a feature that has been fixed for all time. It has always called for continual choice. In this sense, too, Kraków is the very essence of the European core, understood also as trauma and ambivalence. The comprehension of the Kraków phenomenon, and a broader historical outlook on the changeability of the functions it has played in the settlement network for this part of Europe and of its changing meanings and subject-matters, holds the key to understanding the nature of *Europa Minor*.

*Europa Minor* has never been out of the European civilisation. But it has preserved a distinctiveness which today is a value.







## INTRODUCTORY PAPERS



# Intangible cultural heritage safeguarding: a global campaign and its practice in China

**An Deming\***



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*Over the recent thirty years or so, China has experienced dramatic changes in the economy, culture, politics, and many other aspects of social life. One of the problematic side-effects that accompany this great development is the fading of traditional culture.*

## Introduction

The campaign of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding has currently been developed into an influential social and cultural movement in China. Its quick prevalence is deeply rooted in the consciousness of national identity, especially when facing the strong influences of industrialisation and globalisation, and considering the impact from UNESCO. Since its introduction to China, this campaign has indeed brought many dynamic results to traditional culture and people's practice, as well as to related academic disciplines such as folklore studies. Thanks to a series of actions related to ICH safeguarding and more active cooperation between the state, communities and scholars, numerous folk culture genres – especially folk beliefs and religious practices used to be labelled as feudal superstition and restrictedly prohibited – have gained an improved status in the whole country by being identified as 'ICH items', together with their bearers and communities having received more space for survival. Meanwhile, folklore studies are also celebrating various new opportunities and challenges to the discipline caused by the movement. However, a number of problems have also risen simultaneously. Among them, the central one is the paradox between the UNESCO ideal theory and the actual practice of ICH safeguarding in specific contexts. It has not only caused competition or conflict between different places in the country, and caused various countries to fight over property rights to traditional events, but has also diminished the authority and confidence of the common people as traditional bearers in expressing themselves through their own culture. To this extent, ICH communities, scholars – including folklorists worldwide – and the state powers still have a long way ahead.

The Project of Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding has currently been developed into a well-known and popular movement in China. It is such a wide and influential movement, that







Part of volumes of the ten collections displayed at the 4<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of Chinese ICH, 2016. Photo by Wang Xuewen.



The 100<sup>th</sup> performance of Mudanting (Peony Pavilion), the most well-known *kunqu* Opera. 11 May 2007. Photo by Wang Feng.

it involves figures and institutions from different levels and regions. A Google search for 'intangible cultural heritage' results in more than one million hits. And the first several pages are mostly about the content in China. Thus we can see how it flourishes.

## **The growing consciousness of national identity and the stimulation from international society: the reason for the quick prevalence of ICH movement in China**

The reason for the quick prevalence of this movement in China is deeply rooted in the strong consciousness of national identity, and the influence from the international community, especially that from UNESCO. Over the recent thirty years or so, China has experienced dramatic changes in the economy, culture, politics, and many other aspects of social life. One of the problematic side-effects that accompany this great development is the fading of traditional culture. Facing the strong challenges of industrialisation and globalisation, and answering the question how to preserve and maintain the identity of Chinese traditional unique culture and value became common concerns for Chinese people, especially the intellectual elites.

In fact, in China, similarly to many other countries, intellectuals are always the first to perceive the crisis of traditional culture and the first to take steps in order to prevent it. And it was thanks to their promotional endeavours that their anxiety towards the status of tradition became a matter of nationwide care. An earlier example of this is the project of collecting folk songs and other folklore genres started by scholars between the late 1910s and early 1920s. Considering the drastic decline of traditional culture, and facing a violent impact of industrialisation and westernisation, a number of faculty members and students from Peking University initiated the project for the sake of rebuilding the 'spirit of the nation'. It eventually developed into a country-wide cultural movement, the so-called folk song studies movement (歌谣学运动), and has been generally recognised as the birth of Chinese folklore study as a new discipline (Zhang 1985, 306–47).

In the early 1980s, the issue of salvaging the Chinese traditional culture against the impact of western cultures and arbitrary misuse or excessive exploitation was raised again. This request was in a way consistent with what had been embodied in the folk song studies movement. Furthermore, since the impact of westernisation and commercialisation accompanying the implementation of the central government's new policy 'reform and open' (改革开放) was



much more severe and prevalent than before, it involved much broader social circles and evoked wider concerns towards the critical situation of tradition and nation. As early as in late 1970s and early 1980s, based on increasingly more urgent requests and proposals from scholars with folklorists at the centre, the Chinese Ministry of Culture (文化部), State Ethnic Affairs Commission (国家民族事务委员会), and China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (中国文学艺术界联合会) jointly launched the compilation of 十部中国民族民间文艺集成志书 (Ten sets of Chinese ethnic folk literature and arts collections, abbreviated as 十套集成 – Ten collections). These collections included folk tales, folk songs and rhymes, proverbs, opera music, ethnic and folk instrument music, opera and dance forms, song styles, arias, and other elements of culture. Each of them was carried out by a specific governmental bureau or government-based society, such as the Chinese Folk Literature and Arts Association (中国民间文艺家协会), each having its agencies on different administrative levels. In the time shortly after the Cultural Revolution (文化大革命) of 1966–1976 that had brought fatal destruction to Chinese traditional culture, the purpose of reconstructing the culture with the resources of folk tradition became obvious in this project. At first, the participants of different collections collected works of specific genres in villages and then compiled them into genre-specific county collections. These county collections were subsequently selected and compiled into volumes for each province, which make the final results of the project.

In this process, many folklore genres that had been declining for a period of time were revived. Various local artistic organisations have been created or enhanced, and many local art talents have emerged. After twenty-five years, with more than 10 million participants working together, by the end of 2004 a total of 298 provincial volumes had been completed. And by the end of 2009, all those volumes containing around 450 million words in Chinese had been published.<sup>1</sup> This huge project was universally praised as a modern ‘Great Wall’ of cultural undertakings and has established a substantial practical and theoretical foundation for the whole society in China. One of its aims has been to embrace the series of actions and movements initiated by UNESCO.

Aiming at the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO has successively adopted a series of conventions, recommendations, and declarations over the recent years, such as the UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore of 1989, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001, the Istanbul Declaration of 2002 adopted by the Third Round Table of Ministers of Culture, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003, and others. Each of them stresses the importance

<sup>1</sup> For detailed information on this project, see An and Yang 2015.



and urgency of safeguarding ICH (or ‘traditional culture’ in earlier expressions) all over the world (An 2008), and they all received active response and support from China, where the idea of protecting traditional culture has been widely spread from the very beginning.<sup>2</sup>

According to the 2003 Convention, the purposes of safeguarding ICH are ‘to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned’, and to raise awareness of ‘ensuring mutual appreciation thereof’ (UNESCO 2003). Nevertheless, in practice, for many countries, the most stimulating UNESCO act was the proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity launched in 2000, which was later incorporated to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity after the 2003 Convention entered into force. In China, since the traditional Chinese opera *kunqu* (昆曲) was listed as one of the first group of 19 Masterpieces in May 2001, and *guqin* (古琴), the seven-string zither was listed as one of the second group of 28 Masterpieces in November 2003, the Chinese people eager to distinguish their ‘unique’ traditional culture in the world have been greatly encouraged. Related agencies of the state and local governments, official or academic institutions, and organisations, various individuals from different backgrounds have all been engaged in this movement (Xiang 2004, 35–37).



## The practice, achievements, and the significance of the campaign in China

As far back as 2003, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Finance (财政部), in collaboration with the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, launched a project of protecting folk and ethnic culture as a form of a response to UNESCO’s action. An administrative system in charge of related affairs has been since set up, which included a leadership panel, an expert committee, and a national centre for the project. Organisational institutions on local levels have been also accordingly established in provinces, regions, and municipalities. The National Center for the Project of Protecting Folk and Ethnic Culture (中国民族民间文化保护工程国家中心) had been working actively until 2006 when it was renamed to the China National Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection (中国非物质文化遗产保护中心) after China ratified

<sup>2</sup> For instance, China joined the 2003 Convention as early as August 2004, which made it one of the first member states to ratify the Convention at that time.



A *guqin* artist playing. 12 June 2014. Photo by Wang Feng.



the 2003 Convention in 2004. It was authorised as the sole official agency in charge of matters related to ICH safeguarding in China, such as providing policy advice for stakeholders, organising general investigations and academic discussions, and advising or guiding the implementation of safeguarding measures in various localities or communities.

Some Chinese scholars, mostly folklorists, by comparing the contents of lists from their respective domains have observed that the concept of intangible cultural heritage, especially as it has been recently introduced into China, is almost identical as that of ‘folk culture’ (民间文化), a term already familiar to Chinese people. The main reason for the prevalence of this new term lies in the intention to keep the pace with the international discourse, which introduces new concepts and movements. Nevertheless, the term ‘folk culture’ is still used interchangeably with the term ‘intangible cultural heritage’ on many occasions.

The comprehensive participation of the governmental departments is very helpful for the further promotion and implementation of the project of ICH safeguarding. The Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with several other related ministries, has formulated an Inter-ministerial Joint Committee as a focal point of the project, to address major issues in a coordinated way; the Ministry of Finance has set aside a special fund, and a number of provinces, regions and cities also collectively appropriated funds to support the project. This has greatly attracted the wider attention of the whole society to the project of ICH safeguarding. Institutions and people from all backgrounds have become involved, and thus shaped a new cultural movement throughout the country.<sup>3</sup>

The movement has already made great achievements in practice. Here are some statistical information about China by the end of 2015: The information about 879 thousand ICH elements has been collected; 38 elements have been inscribed on UNESCO ICH Lists (including 30 elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, 7 elements on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and one element on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices); 1372 elements have been included in the national inventory of ICH; 1986 inheritors have been identified as Representative Inheritors of ICH at National Level; the central government has appropriated more than 4.2 billion Chinese Yuan (around 525 million euro or 600 million US dollars) in total to support the ICH safeguarding programme.

<sup>3</sup> As mentioned by Barbro Klein (2006), since the term ‘cultural heritage’ had been introduced and applied widely in the academic domain in Sweden, not only many museum specialists celebrated it as a self-evident concept to describe what they had been doing all along, but also many university-based ethnologists who recently denied that their field had nothing to do with efforts of preserving and presenting culture or with any activities tainted with the worst aspects of ‘the old folklife research’ started to increasingly use it. Similarly in China, many other academic disciplines that used to look down on folklore studies have also began to ‘jump on the bandwagon’ initiated mainly by folklorists.



It has shown its significance of the survival of folk tradition as well. Many genres of folk tradition such as temple festivals and other activities concerning folk beliefs have been functioning in people's everyday life for a long time. However, in the past, they had been labelled as feudal, superstitious vestiges, and were restrictedly prohibited for several decades. Although these kinds of tradition became revived after the Cultural Revolution, they were still struggling to receive the legitimacy from the governmental discourse. As a most remarkable achievement of the ICH protection movement, in the 中国民族民间文化保护工程普查工作手册 (Guiding manuals for general investigation of Chinese ethnic and folk culture) published by the National Center for the Project of Protecting Folk and Ethnic Culture in 2005, folk belief was listed as one of the genres to be investigated. This is actually an indication that the folk belief or religious practice received considerable legitimacy in the official discourse. In this situation, officials or legislators will have to be cautious when they deal with folk culture such as temple festivals and other traditional religious practice. It therefore provided those kinds of tradition more space for survival and maintenance (Gao 2013).

Along with the confusing translation 'intangible cultural heritage' (非物质文化遗产, literally 'non-material' cultural heritage) which became increasingly popular, growing numbers of communities, tradition bearers, and even entrepreneurs would like to use this unusual coinage to label their cultural items. By doing so, these individuals or groups might not only gain economic benefits for these specific items, but also endow them with more significant and multiple meanings in the global perspective, and hence improve their social status. And this was greatly reinforced by the legislative establishment of the National Cultural Heritage Day (文化遗产日) in 2008, and the promulgating of the national Law on intangible cultural heritage<sup>4</sup> in 2012.

Folklore studies and other related disciplines also celebrate new opportunities. This does not mean the superficial prosperity similar to the one when the so-called folklore experts received through praise and recognition from the governments, local communities and mass media. Instead, this movement enables scholars to think thoroughly and deeply about the relationship between culture and people's lives; it enables them to investigate Chinese folklore more deeply and more comprehensively, with strong support from governmental agencies; it also allows searching for a way to solve the big dilemma embedded in the movement itself. Therefore, it makes it possible to contribute new perspectives and methods based on Chinese experiences, both to the academic domain and to the campaign of ICH.

<sup>4</sup> 中国非物质文化遗产法.



During the 9<sup>th</sup> annual session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 24–28 November 2014, the Committee decided to establish the Evaluation Body (consisting of six NGOs and six independent ICH expert scholars) for the evaluation of nomination for inscription on the UNESCO Lists from 2015. China Folklore Society (中国民俗学会) was successfully elected into the Evaluation Body for a term of three years. This enabled Chinese folklorists to participate in affairs concerning ICH on a more international level as opposed to the domestic one. Through closer communication with related policies and practices of UNESCO and various countries, Chinese folklorists have been ever since trying to build a new bridge for the mutual understanding of ICH between UNESCO and the Chinese government, and between communities and government. In terms of establishment of this rapport, we can mention two of the most notable examples: the modification of strategic principle of ICH safeguarding in China from the earlier ‘safeguarding the ICH according to its original ecology’ to the current ‘safeguarding the integration of ICH’ or ‘safeguarding the ICH along with its living context’, and the focus on tradition bearers that has changed from ‘active bearers’ (those who possess particular traditional knowledge) to all ordinary people, stated in the conception ‘everyone is the culture bearer’.

Since the concept of intangible cultural heritage has been introduced into China, for quite a while the dominant idea about the ICH safeguarding strategy among the involved scholars and governmental agencies was maintaining the authenticity or the original nature of concerned items. As a result of strong concerns and alarms about the severe misuse of traditional culture and the widespread artificiality claimed as tradition based on rapid development of tourism and commercialisation, this idea emphasised the need to keep the tradition pure. Nevertheless, it resulted in a critique from some folklorists who had been focusing on the academic history of the controversial concept of ‘folklore as survival’, and that of the so-called authenticity. It was those scholars’ continuous argumentation and promotion that led to the growing debate among different participants of ICH studies and practice. Most of the stakeholders finally came to a reflective agreement on the impossibility of ‘safeguarding authenticity’, and on the new principle of safeguarding ICH in an integrated way.

Tradition bearers are another main focus of ICH safeguarding. For quite a long time, in accordance with the situation of the academia, the attention of most participants of the ICH programme has been mainly paid to the active bearers, who are usually very dynamic in the transmission of specific cultural items and have special talents in particular cultural genres. However, when the concept of community as integration was introduced to the public, together with more and more scrutiny on the distinction between the ‘active bearers’ and ‘passive bearers’ by some folklorists







*Shehuo*, the traditional folk art performance at the temple festival during the Chinese New Year in Jiezi Villages, an item included in ICH inventory of Gansu Province, China. 24 February 2013. Photo by An Deming.

(Yang et al. 2011, 23–24), it has been gradually accepted that those ordinary people who are not specialists in any cultural items actually shape the main foundations of the viability and vitality of the concerned traditions. Based on increasingly more discussions and adequate communication, the concept of ‘everyone is the bearer of traditional culture’ was subsequently promoted as the theme word on the 4<sup>th</sup> Chengdu International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013. As a new way of understanding the nature of people and their relation to culture, this modification was in fact in accordance with the idea of safeguarding the integration of ICH. Moreover, a new light has been shed on the timely and reasonable adjustment of the safeguarding strategies and measures throughout the country.

## **The paradox between the UNESCO theoretical requirement and actual practice; the negative impact of the programme and the possible solution**

The entire project has also brought many negative impacts, among which there has been some competition and even conflict. Because of the system of inscription on the Representative Lists (or the proclamation of masterpieces at the beginning), or nomination on various administrative UNESCO levels (national or local), a certain amount of discordance has emerged among local people, as well as disputes over the ownership of specific cultural items among communities or localities within the same nation, or even between different nations. This has sometimes led to disturbances in people’s regular relationship within societies or among communities. For many specific culture items or events, there used to be various claims of origin and ownership from different areas or groups. Through long-term arguments and disagreements, the concerned people or communities have reached compromises or agreements, and this has also formed a vital foundation to maintain the vitality of related cultural items. However, the proclamation of representative items can reinforce those existing tensions and upset this balance, especially as it is associated with economic and other visible or imagined benefits. In China, the most remarkable event concerning this affair was the debate about the ‘property rights’ to the Duanwu Festival between the Chinese and Korean internet users.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In 2005, the Gangneung Danoje Festival (Dano Festival) in Korea was proclaimed by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Although this festival is different in content and ceremony form from the Chinese Duanwu Festival (or Dragon Boat Festival), since the two festivals take place on the same day (the 5 May according to the lunar calendar)



Folklore, or intangible cultural heritage, is highly affected by transformation and transmission. Its time and space constantly change, adjusting and adapting to new contexts. In this process, many customs absorb influences from other cultures and hence retain their vitality. In the time when the world is closely tied together, emphasising the distinctiveness of each culture in a hierarchical way might to some extent create sources of new conflicts; the legislative proclamation of the bearers and practitioners who have special responsibilities in the practice and transmission of a traditional cultural item, which is simply understood by people as 'ownership' of the element concerned, in fact, restricts or even hurts the viability and vitality of the cultural item itself.

The project of ICH safeguarding was founded on principles of equality and diversity of human culture, but unfortunately, it, in fact, produced a new hierarchy among cultures, and within a unique culture. The experts and UNESCO have the privilege to determine what item is suitable to be inscribed on the Representative List, which in the public mind means a certificate to the more valuable; whereas the actual bearers of a particular cultural item cannot have their voice on it. This is another significant problem embedded in the project itself. Although community participation is always emphasised by UNESCO, community members actually are only objects in the schemed framework of ICH. To some extent, they might be treated according to the desire of those who are higher in hierarchy. This leads to a paradoxical situation where it is the government agency that decides which culture or whose culture constitutes culture (or cultural heritage), and folklorists who are supposed to be made by folklore will decide what is folklore. In this process, ordinary people are actually losing their last remaining power to express themselves through their own tradition, becoming divided into two separate groups through being recognised as 'having the identified cultural heritage' or 'not having the identified heritage'.

All these issues are deeply rooted in the inevitable paradox between the ideal UNESCO theory and the actual practice in various situations. There exists a fundamental contradiction between UNESCO's initial purpose of shaping equal understanding and mutual appreciation among different traditions, and the pursuit of the benefits related to the intellectual property of various ICH items in the practice of different countries. The latter is, in fact, the initial motivation for many countries to start or participate in this campaign at the beginning, which derives from the perception or realisation of the people in developing countries about the economic potential embedded in the industrial-

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and share the same Chinese concept of 'Duanwu' in the name, many Chinese people thought the Dano Festival came from China, and the UNESCO proclamation would disable Chinese ownership and intellectual property of the Duanwu Festival in the global context. This caused bitter hostility and fierce quarrel between internet users from the two countries, which lasted for several months and damaged the relationship, and costed a lot of time and effort of the two countries to restore.



ised culture, and the possibility of accelerating the development of the economy with this potential.<sup>6</sup> It is hard to say that such kind of motivation or pursuit is wrong; instead, considering the contradiction mentioned above, either UNESCO or academia need to accept the fact that the ICH programme was originated and facilitated by diverse forces with different appeals. It is therefore crucial to stress the principles expressed in concepts such as 'cultural diversity', 'ICH of humanity' and 'mutual respect' in the ICH safeguarding campaign, and it is also necessary to pay close attention and genuine respect to the appeal to intellectual property embodied in various intangible cultural heritage items from many states parties of the 2003 Convention; especially nowadays, when the cultural industrialisation is becoming increasingly more widespread and international. Only by doing so, UNESCO and various states parties can make a feasible step forward to solve this problem.

Another serious example of the paradox between theory and practice centres on the concept of 'community', which came from my observation when I participated in the UNESCO ICH evaluation work as a member of the Evaluation Body team as representative of the Chinese Folklore Society. According to UNESCO's requirement of the nomination for different lists (Representative List of ICH of Humanity, List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices), the community's participation, consent, and leading role in the whole process of safeguarding the ICH item should be adequately demonstrated in the nomination, and the lack of any of these counterparts will result in a 'request for additional information'. The emphasis on the community is actually an emphasis on the tradition bearers, which is in agreement with the final aim of safeguarding the rights of ordinary people through culture protection. However, because of the heterogeneity and diversity even within a single community, and due to cultural, political, and economic differences between various countries, it leads to the dominance of the government in the ICH safeguarding practice. In some situations, communities concerned with a specific ICH item might actually prefer to rely on the dominance of the government in the safeguarding of an item, which can be a better way in dealing with particular issues in this special context. Such a fact is however not an excuse for any government from the UNESCO state party to reject the central role of community, and states should aim to limit their ambition to interfere and exert their power in the process; however, a long time is necessary to solve this paradox.

<sup>6</sup> For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion of the Republic of Bolivia submitted a *Proposal for International Instrument for the Protection of Folklore* to the Director-General of UNESCO in 1973, which was later regarded as one of the first signs of the ICH project in the UNESCO framework. The main argument in that proposal was to propose a legislative protection of the folklore or cultural forms of expression that were 'undergoing the most intensive clandestine commercialization and export' as a result of commercially oriented transculturation destructive of traditional culture, and thus to protect the proprietary rights of a nation or people in that nation to their traditional cultural heritage (Intergovernmental Copyright Committee 1973, Annex A).



Nevertheless, by closer and deeper investigations of the movement and by continuous reflection on the theory and practice, the ICH communities, scholars including folklorists worldwide, and the state powers will negotiate a better way to maintain the healthy development of the campaign. In this regard, the concept of 'cultural conversation' (Baron and Spitzer 2008, 77–103) developed by American folklorists might be helpful. As outsiders who cooperate with the community, the state power, as well as scholars should treat each other as cultural brokers instead of owners, in order to come to a cultural representation based on mutual collaboration. This might be one of the ways to reduce the difference between the insider and outsider, and thus to lead to a better practice of ICH safeguarding.

## Conclusion



As a result of the stronger consciousness of national identity and closer contact with the international society of contemporary China, the intangible cultural heritage safeguarding has been developed into a quite prevalent and influential movement in the country. In accordance with the principles and actions of UNESCO, China has acted very positively and has made various achievements in the practice and academic studies of ICH safeguarding. The widespread prevalence of the movement has also shed a bright light on the ways of life of the Chinese society. However, by scrutinising different practices of the projects inside and outside China, we may also find that it causes a great deal of negative impact. For instance, it does only stimulate competition, but also conflict between different places, inside a country, or among various countries when claiming property of traditional events. It also facilitates a new cultural bureaucracy and hegemony that might diminish the authority and confidence of the common people as traditional bearers to express themselves through their own culture. All those problems are deeply rooted in the paradox between UNESCO's theoretical proposal and diverse practices of different countries. And since the campaign of ICH safeguarding has already developed into an arena for different forces to display and present their views – which is far beyond UNESCO's initial purpose of launching the programme: to ensure the respect and protection of cultural diversity according to the 2003 Convention – the space between theory and practice is much broader.

Moreover, the project has provided a framework for various participants from different backgrounds to communicate, understand, negotiate, and make compromises. It is necessary for

scholars to raise alarm in response to any ambiguous aspects both in theory and practice of the programme, in order to nurture it and ensure its healthy development.

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# Implementation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage – the Polish experience

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*Intangible cultural heritage must attain an appropriate legal status, either under a separate act or by incorporating these issues to existing acts, the latter method being probably easier to implement.*

The ratification of the UNESCO 2003 Convention in Poland took place relatively late – only in 2011, eight years after the adoption of the said Convention in Paris, with our country becoming the 136<sup>th</sup> state to implement this document. This fact was confirmed and proclaimed by the publication of the Convention in the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland*.<sup>1</sup> From that moment onwards, efforts have been underway to incorporate the provisions of the Convention into our legal system.

However, even before the ratification, various groups had already been working on the foreseen implementation of the Convention provisions. Efforts in this regard had been made both by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego), including the Monuments Preservation Department (Departament Ochrony Zabytków), and by the special Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee (Zespół ds. Niematerialnego Dziedzictwa Kulturowego) – a distinctive body appointed by the Ministry, predeceasing the establishment of the Council for ICH after the ratification of the Convention.<sup>2</sup>

One needs to emphasise that Poland has many long-standing traditions and achievements in the field of intangible heritage protection. Examples include documentation efforts such as *Lud. Jego zwyczaje, sposób życia, mowa, podania, przysłowia, obrzędy, gusła, zabawy, pieśni*,

<sup>1</sup> *Konwencja UNESCO w sprawie ochrony niematerialnego dziedzictwa kulturowego, sporządzona w Paryżu dnia 17 października 2003 r.* [UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted in Paris on 17 October 2003], Dziennik Ustaw no. 172 item 1018, 8 February 2011.

<sup>2</sup> The ICH Committee was established by the Regulation no. 12, issued on 30 April 2010 by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (*Zarządzenie Ministra Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego nr 12 z dnia 30 kwietnia 2010 r. w sprawie Zespołu do spraw niematerialnego dziedzictwa kulturowego w Ministerstwie Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego*, Dziennik Urzędowy MKiDN [Official Gazette of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage] no. 2 item 17, 20 May 2010).





*muzyka i tańce* (The people, their customs, way of life, speech, legends, sayings, rituals, beliefs, festivities, songs, music and dance) by Oskar Kolberg – a work which has since attained recognition in nearly all Slavic countries. This 19<sup>th</sup>-century initiative, the first volume of which was published back in 1857, has continued into the modern times, with 84 volumes published. A series of publications known as *Polska pieśń i muzyka ludowa. Źródła i materiały* (The Polish folk songs and music. Sources and materials), created in 1974 at the initiative of Professor Ludwik Bielawski and published under his supervision as a scholarly editor, can be considered a tribute to the ideas of Kolberg. This series – much like the works of Kolberg – presents the examples of Polish folk music documented in the modern times, arranged by region. So far, four volumes of this series have been released (some of them consisting of several parts) for the following cultural regions: 'Kujawy', 'Kashubia', 'Warmia and Masuria', 'the Lublin Region' and 'the Podlachia Region' (in two parts).<sup>3</sup>

The implementation of the Convention itself encompasses various activities which take place in a multitude of dimensions. These are mostly conducted by the following entities: the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (including through the Monuments Preservation Department), the National Heritage Board of Poland (Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa) – an institutionalised body acting under the supervision of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage – as well as the Council for Intangible Cultural Heritage (Rada ds. Niematerialnego Dziedzictwa Kulturowego) appointed by the Minister and composed of 20 specialists and experts in different ICH domains.<sup>4</sup> The Council – in cooperation with the National Heritage Board of Poland – was the first to develop the necessary procedures of action related to applications for the national as well as UNESCO ICH lists.

The first issue to be resolved was that of developing an appropriate application form so that applications for inscription into the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Krajowa lista niematerialnego dziedzictwa kulturowego) could be made. It was also for this purpose that the conceptual range of the term 'intangible cultural heritage' was updated and elaborated in order to match the conditions prevailing in Poland. The importance of the latter stems from the fact that, in our tradition, the term 'heritage' tends to be associated mostly with material heritage.

<sup>3</sup> In 2016, the second, extended edition was published, which contains the third part of *Pieśni Powszechne* [common songs] – editorial note.

<sup>4</sup> The Council was established by the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage issued on 18 September 2013 (*Zarządzenie Ministra Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego z dnia 18 września 2013 r. w sprawie Rady do spraw niematerialnego dziedzictwa kulturowego*, Dziennik Urzędowy MKiDN, item 35, 19 September 2013) – editorial note.



This is confirmed by the entries in various dictionaries, in which words such as '*scheda*' (inheritance) or '*spadek*' (legacy) are stated as synonymous with the term 'heritage' (Adamowski i Smyk 2013, 9). The Convention, by contrast, clearly provides that 'intangible heritage' is a distinct entity which comprises 'the practices, conceptions, expressions, knowledge and skills as well as the associated instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural space which communities, groups and – in some cases – individuals consider to be a part of their cultural heritage'.<sup>5</sup>

Section 2 of article 2 of the Convention includes a concise list of the five basic domains of intangible heritage. In order for these general domains to be more easily identified, the Council – following a discussion among the experts in the field – has proposed the addition of further examples, updated to accommodate various national traditions. In this version, the Polish definition of intangible cultural heritage encompasses the following items:

1. 'Oral traditions and expressions', which manifest themselves, inter alia, in folk tales, proverbs, songs, orations, stories, speeches, funerary lamentations, shepherds' or merchants' calls or shouts as well as in language as such, since language remains a vessel for intangible cultural heritage. The term 'orature' may be used to collectively refer to all of the above.
2. 'Performing arts' – including vocal and instrument traditions, dance traditions, religious, carnivals or annual performances, etc.;
3. Socio-cultural practices, which manifest themselves in annual, family, or occasional rituals, customs and practices such as christenings, weddings, funerals, customs related to parish indulgence fairs and pilgrimages, games and festivities, children's folklore, festive customs, as well as practices designed to facilitate contacts with other people such as traditional greetings, etc.;
4. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, including traditional views of the universe, folk meteorology, traditional methods of attending to household duties, providing care to the sick, verbal spells intended to bring about good health or romance, etc.;
5. Knowledge and skills related to traditional crafts, including both the manner in which specific objects are manufactured and their subsequent use (both in practical and artistic terms, e.g. the ability to make an instrument and play it in a variety of circumstances) (after Adamowski i Smyk 2013, 11).

At this stage, the proposed update of the conceptual range of the term 'intangible cultural

<sup>5</sup> *Konwencja UNESCO...*, art. 2.





The Folk Band from Lubzina (the Kuraś family band), Podkarpackie Province, 2017. Photo by Jan Adamowski.



The 'Sielanki' vocal band from Sielec, Lubelskie Province, 2017. Photo by Jan Adamowski.

heritage' is merely a proposal, which allows for other phenomena to be included, provided that they correspond to the basic criteria set out in the Convention. Furthermore,

Intangible cultural heritage should:

- remain a living heritage which reflects both the traditional and contemporary practices in which the identity of various cultural groups manifests itself;
- be inclusive in nature;
- be representative (as opposed to evaluative) in nature;
- remain firmly anchored in local communities, which means that it may be considered as a part of the identity and tradition of specific communities only by such communities and with their consent (Zalaszińska 2013, 45).

The office workers and experts of the National Heritage Board of Poland together with the members of the Council (specialists in different ICH domains), take a direct part in regional meetings intended to promote the idea of the Convention, appearing both as lecturers and participants in the discussions. Furthermore, research conferences which discuss and analyse the issues of intangible cultural heritage in Poland are organised, resulting in the publication of a series entitled *Niematerialne dziedzictwo kulturowe w Polsce i jego ochrona* (Intangible cultural heritage in Poland and its protection), the publication of which began back in 2013.<sup>6</sup> All these efforts have sparked an interest among various local associations and pro bono societies which strive towards the identification of those manifestations of intangible cultural heritage, which are of particular importance for individual regions and ensure its organised protection. In this regard, the Council engages in relatively close cooperation with the Polish National Commission for UNESCO (Polski Komitet ds. UNESCO). Furthermore, seeking to extend both its organisational and substantive scope, the Council appointed appropriate specialist working groups (the group for legal affairs and development strategy for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, as well as the group for music and dance), with the results of their work presented and discussed by the Council. Some research institutions have also created special departments that specialise in this field, with intangible cultural heritage now incorporated into the curricula of cultural studies.

The efforts of the Council related to intangible heritage itself, on the other hand, have resulted in the positive assessment of 18 applications (it needs to be said that a number of appli-

<sup>6</sup> However, the first publications about the Convention appeared in Poland earlier, soon after its adoption (see Jodełka 2005) and the first working translation of the Convention, two years before its ratification by Poland (Jodełka-Schreiber 2009).



cations have been rejected following discussions and the preparation of the relevant expertise) and the inscription of the following elements on the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage:

1. 'Artistic and historical gunsmithing' – these traditions, related to the manufacture of hunting rifles in the Cieszyn Silesia region, known as the *ptaszniczanka* (a rifle designed for shooting game birds) or the *cieszynka* (a name derived from its place of origin) trace back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and are notable due to the considerable rarity of the skills involved.
2. 'The Nativity scene (*szopka*) tradition in Kraków' – the tradition of building elaborate, static nativity scenes during the Christmas period traces back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century; the characteristic feature of these nativity scenes is that the urban landmarks of Kraków serve as backdrops to the scenes themselves.
3. 'Lajkonik procession' – another name of this custom is *konik zwierzyniecki*; it is a local street parade which takes place in Kraków on the Thursday after Corpus Christi, with the presence of the Lajkonik – a man in Mongolian attire, riding a hobbyhorse.
4. 'Rafting traditions of Ulanów' – an annual reenactment presenting the legacy of the San river raftsmen of Ulanów, who had once transported timber and other goods to the Gdańsk seaport; today, these reenactments serve purely recreational and touristic functions;
5. 'Corpus Christi celebrations in Łowicz' – a long-standing Catholic tradition; this street procession takes place each year on Corpus Christi and features the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – a symbol of Jesus Christ. According to the local folk traditions, this procession is also intended to ensure good crops and protect the town against natural disasters; the Łowicz procession is notable due to the presence of lavish visual elements which are a nod towards the local folk culture;
6. 'Esperanto as a carrier of the Esperanto culture' – the artificial auxiliary language created by Ludwik Zamenhof (which, since its creation, has become known all around the world), along with the elaborate accompanying cultural tradition;
7. 'The art of making and playing bagpipes (the bagpipes of the Podhale region)' – the bagpipe is a polyphonic instrument which has been known in the Podhale region since the 16<sup>th</sup> century; the practice of making and playing these instruments has survived into the modern times;
8. 'Falconry – a living tradition' – the tradition of hunting in the company of specially trained birds which continues to be practised today and traces back to the medieval times, when it was practised, among others, by the members of the Polish royal court;



9. 'Polish national dances' – this scope of protection applies to various dances such as the *polonez*, the *krakowiak*, the *mazur*, the *kujawiak* and the *oberek*. All of them stem from rural traditions and are known in various social circles;
10. 'Żukowo school of the Kashubian embroidery' – a regional type of embroidery used to decorate tops, tablecloths, aprons, duvet covers, ties, etc. It is distinguishable due to the use of distinctive colours (shades of blue, green, yellow, red and black) as well as regional motifs such as tulips, clovers, hearts and rosettes);
11. 'Traditional bronze work technique used by the Felczyński family for producing bells in Taciszów' – a traditional technique based on knowledge passed from generation to generation within a single family, involving the use of natural materials such as clay, sand and water for the purposes of making bells of various kinds;
12. 'Celebrations in honour of St Roch with the blessing of animals in Mikstat' – St Roch is, among others, the patron saint of herdsmen and domestic animals; In connection with this saint figure, a para-liturgical custom came into being in a number of parishes which involves the blessing of livestock; according to folk traditions, this custom has its origins in the votive function of the blessing, and at the same time it is also intended to grant protection to cattle and other animals against diseases;
13. 'Easter rhymes in Szymborze' – a regional custom from the Kujawy region according to which, during Easter, the local bachelors climb a pedestal erected specifically for the purpose and recite short, humorous poems about the local maidens, designed to serve matrimonial purposes;
14. 'Warmia dialect as a carrier of oral traditions' – the local language used on the Polish-German border, which had once been commonly used in the Prussian territory; today, this tradition is experiencing a gradual comeback;
15. 'Toy making traditions in Żywiec and Sucha Beskidzka' – a type of craft with long traditions in the Żywiec and Sucha Beskidzka areas, often practised by entire families; the most typical types of these wooden toys include the horse-drawn britzka (known locally as the *karetka*) with horses, rattles, cribs and, most importantly, little birds that had once been used as Christmas tree decorations;
16. 'Honey hunting' – a traditional manner of obtaining honey, achieved through the preparation of special wild beehives in the trunks of living trees; a profession typical for areas located amidst primeval forests (the Kurpiowska Forest, the Białowieża Forest, the Augustów Forest etc.);







Lace making traditions in Koniaków, 2015, © National Heritage Board of Poland.



Polish national dances presented to the guests of the Forum in Wieliczka Salt Mine, October 2016.  
Photo by Paweł Kobek, © National Heritage Board of Poland.

17. 'Perebory – weaving traditions in the Bug river region' – the art of making characteristically striped and ornamented patterns on linen textiles using looms (weaving devices), used mostly to decorate shirts and women's skirts, with the most popular motifs being rhombuses, squares, star polygons etc. This tradition is a typical feature of the culture of the eastern border areas;
18. 'The Kraków bobbin lace' – a variety of lace, hand-made using bobbins (commonly referred to as *klocki* – blocks); the threads wound on bobbins are braided and twisted, allowing for a myriad of openwork forms to emerge.<sup>7</sup>

In its further activities, the Council proposes placing a particular emphasis on the Polish experiences in the field of the so-called best practices related to the safeguarding of intangible heritage. A good example which illustrates activities of this kind is the annual Ogólnopolski Festiwal Kapel i Śpiewaków Ludowych (Nationwide Festival of Folk Bands and Singers), which takes place in Kazimierz Dolny at the end of June each year.

Throughout the Festival's 50-year history, a hierarchical model of regional preliminaries has been developed, ensuring that only the very best performers appear on the stage in Kazimierz Dolny, presenting a repertoire of both songs and instrumental compositions. It is extremely valuable in cultural terms and remains consistent with the regional convention. In addition, the performers appear in regional outfits, creating a lavish and remarkably diverse visual experience. The Festival takes the form of a competition, with the prizes and awards serving not only to distinguish individual folk artists but also to confirm the value of their work in the social and cultural spheres.

At present, the competition is divided into five categories, with the so-called 'Tower' – a commemorative medal – serving as the main prize. During the 2016 edition of the Festival, the top prizes went to:

1. The Folk Band from Lubzina (the Kuraś family band) – Podkarpackie Province;
2. The 'Sielanki' vocal band from Sielec – Lubelskie Province;
3. Adam Tarnawski – a solo violinist from Janiszew, Mazowieckie Province;
4. Stanisław Madanowski – a solo singer from Boczki Chełmońskie, Łódzkie Province;

<sup>7</sup> The latest inscriptions on the National List of ICH, evaluated by the Council for ICH from December 2016 until August 2017 include also: 'Cultural traditions of Biskupizna', 'New-year caroling in the Żywieckie region', 'Lace making traditions in Koniaków', 'The "Turki" guards procession in Grodzisk' and three others are recommended for inscription, awaiting final decision of the Minister of Culture: 'Wedding traditions in the Szamotuły area', 'Bagpipe traditions in the Wielkopolska region', '"Kablęcok" basket making traditions in Lucima, Radomskie region' – editorial note.





5. The family band of Jacek Bursa from Guzów, Mazowieckie Province (in the 'folklore continued' category).

The Festival performs a variety of social and cultural functions in both direct and indirect ways. In addition to the function outlined above, which may be described as related to identity and which is implemented at both the regional and nationwide level, the Festival also plays an important role by creating a certain model for the contemporary transmission of traditions. This function is performed primarily by a special type of concert, where masters present their apprentices. These efforts, implemented over the years, have already borne fruit. For many years now the former apprentices have been appearing during the main competition concert, with some of them having already presented apprentices of their own. One may therefore say that it is at least the third generation of folk performers that participate in the Festival. The Festival, therefore, serves as a good example of an active approach to stimulating the transmission of culture, which also ensures its safeguarding.

In addition, the well-established structure of the Festival also allows it to exert a certain influence on the transmission of musical traditions. The aforementioned regional preliminaries encourage large numbers of local performers to become involved. For example, in 2016, more than 200 performers took part in twelve regional festivals in the Lubelskie Province alone. In most cases, these events also served as festivals of a more general nature for individual local communities and their members of different generations. One can, therefore, say that the Festival remains conducive towards cultural expression, both on the vertical and horizontal levels.

Furthermore, the Festival in Kazimierz Dolny performs other important functions. I shall refer now to its two further functions – cognitive and ludic ones. The Festival performs the cognitive function in a twofold manner. On the one hand, the Festival aims at ensuring that the audience becomes acquainted with the Polish folk music tradition and allows other interested individuals to become acquainted with it in a broader sense, using both media coverage and various publications documenting the issue in question (see for example the publication known as *Kazimierskie nuty*, containing music sheets of songs and instrumental pieces, etc.). On the other hand, the cognitive function also refers to the perception of the performers themselves, who come to the festival from various locations all across Poland and have an opportunity to become acquainted with the culture of other regions, which in turn allows them to strive more actively towards the incorporation of their own culture into the greater body of national culture.



The ludic function manifests itself directly in the town of Kazimierz Dolny in the form of accompanying events such as Saturday folk festivities, traditional dance workshops, social gatherings etc. Furthermore, the Festival remains an annual celebration of folk culture – at least in the prevalent view of the artists who come there to perform. The participants often prepare for the whole year for this event, which manifests itself in both their traditional clothing and the atmosphere surrounding the Festival reminiscing that of a parish indulgence fair where various souvenirs are available for purchase; the oldest performers also consider this to be a good opportunity to rest after long, hard work in the field.

There are many more examples of similar well-established schemes aimed at ensuring the protection of intangible cultural heritage in Poland, which have been in place for many years. These examples include the following:

- Annual meetings of rural theatres known as the Ogólnopolski Sejmik Teatrów Wsi Polskiej (Nationwide Assembly of Polish Country Theatres). During the final meeting in Tarnogród (which took place for the 41<sup>st</sup> time in 2016) there are usually about 15 theatrical troupes (about 300 performers in total), selected in the course of 5 regional meetings (Piła-Kaczory – Pomorskie Province, Stoczek Łukowski – Lubelskie Province, Bukowina Tatrzańska – Małopolskie Province and Tarnogród – Lubelskie Province). The most typical repertoire of the said troupes is theatrical reenactment (which thus also includes education and safeguarding) of the local rituals, customs and beliefs such as various forms of carol singing, weddings, christenings, the sobótki fires lit during various holidays, *Shrovetide* as well as general reenactments of the old country life.
- The nationwide meetings of blacksmiths held in Wojciechów near Lublin. These meetings take two distinct forms. The first one is the typically educational event known as the Ogólnopolskie Warsztaty Kowalskie (Nationwide Blacksmiths' Workshops), which is held for the 22<sup>nd</sup> time this year – commonly referred to as the 'school of blacksmithery'. It is aimed primarily at young people interested in this craft, who under the supervision of its masters are able to learn new abilities as well as enhance the skills and techniques that they already possess. The second one is known as the Ogólnopolskie Spotkania Kowali (Nationwide Blacksmiths' Meetings) and is a more general forum that also includes elements of historical and cultural reflection.
- The Sabałowe Bajania (Sabała's tales) competition – a Polish highlander competition for storytellers, musicians, singers, best men and masters of ceremony held in Bukowina Tatrzańska. In 2016, the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of this event took place. This competition is aimed primarily at inhab-





Bagpipe traditions in the Wielkopolska region, 2017, © National Heritage Board of Poland.



Traditional sleigh (*kumoterki*) races. Photo by Maciej Baraniak, © National Heritage Board of Poland.

itants of the Polish mountains and the Małopolskie Province, even though representatives of other regions of Poland also tend to participate; in 2016, the residents of the following provinces have taken part in the competition: Łódzkie, Lubelskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Podkarpackie, Świętokrzyskie, Wielkopolskie, Śląskie (together with guests from Slovakia). Due to the large number of young performers taking part in these meetings, one may easily see that the festival performs the role of systematic and direct transmission of intangible cultural heritage, making it an exemplary event in this regard.

Of course, activities of this kind are much more numerous. All of them tend to involve large groups of people and are not just ad-hoc citations from the cultural memory of the given groups; they perform a practical role in the propagation of traditions. As such, they should have much greater recognition and institutional support based on the guidelines presented by the Minister to the Council members. To conclude, one may briefly reiterate some of the most urgent tasks:

1. Intangible cultural heritage must attain an appropriate legal status, either under a separate act or by incorporating these issues to existing acts, the latter method being probably easier to implement.
2. The central and local government institutions must secure at least a minimum of funds for the protection of intangible heritage.
3. Intangible heritage must not be treated as a type of 'historical monument', primarily due to its unique character and the 'inherent nature' of its features. For this reason, all actions related to the identification, safeguarding and dissemination thereof require employing appropriate specialist personnel.
4. One must make all the organisational and substantive arrangements necessary, proposing the first nominations of the Polish values forming part of our intangible heritage to be inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as well as Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.
5. The safeguarding and dissemination of the values linked with intangible heritage must also be incorporated into the systemically understood didactic curriculum. In this regard, cooperation between a number of ministries such as the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education must be ensured.
6. In order to ensure the promotion of the idea of intangible heritage itself as well as to facilitate discussions on different issues between various groups within the society – including expert discussions – one must establish dedicated publishing institutions that must operate



on a systemic basis and receive support from the decision-making centres; these efforts may include, among others, an independent magazine as well as the continuation of the publishing series which had so far been released based on ad-hoc resources.

7. All the works linked with popularising the National Lists must be continued.
8. It is also necessary to integrate and systematise the cooperation with various associations and cultural institutions, particularly including regional institutions, as well as research centres and other entities operating in the cultural field in order to improve the efficiency of joint operations.
9. A greater visibility of the work performed by individuals implementing the intangible cultural heritage safeguarding programme must also be ensured. In the first place, more specialist personnel must be hired (including both on the central level – for example, at the National Heritage Board of Poland itself – as well as on the Province level).
10. It is necessary to create more favourable conditions for the identification and documentation, analytical recognition, as well as dissemination and the sharing of phenomena and values that form our intangible cultural heritage.

The proposals specified above do not encompass the entire range of needs, and one must also emphasise that Poland has only just begun implementing the ideas inherent in the Convention. Yet, even this fact may also have certain advantages. It may serve as a starting point for the development of a carefully thought-out overall plan of action, designed for a period of many years that would facilitate the implementation of a long-term strategy, ensuring efficient solutions to be developed in the future.

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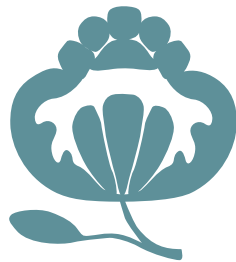


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PART 1.  
ICH AND GOOD PRACTICES  
OF ITS SAFEGUARDING



Croatia's intangible cultural  
heritage safeguarding  
policies and practice.



The implementation of the  
UNESCO 2003 Convention  
for the Safeguarding of the  
Intangible Cultural Heritage  
in Croatia

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*The inscription of the elements, both in the National Registry and on the UNESCO lists, has largely contributed to raising awareness of the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the country and beyond, inside as well as outside the discussed communities. This is why the number of activities related to intangible cultural heritage safeguarding has been increasing...*

As a part of the South-European, Central-European, as well as Mediterranean cultural circles and traditions, Croatia is very rich in valuable cultural and historical heritage. Through the actions of its Ministry of Culture (Ministarstvo kulture), it has actively followed UNESCO's efforts in creating an international instrument for the safeguarding of traditional culture already since the 1970s (Bouchenaki 2004), and intensified them especially in the 1990s. This enabled the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage as a special category in the 1999 Act on the protection and safeguarding of cultural goods.<sup>1</sup> The preparation of the nomination files for two editions of the UNESCO Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity programme in 2003 and 2005 resulted in the formation of a special expert Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage (Povjerenstvo za nematerijalnu kulturnu baštinu) in Croatia in 2002,<sup>2</sup> and a special Department for ICH in the Ministry of Culture (Odjel za nematerijalnu kulturnu baštinu) in 2004 that prepared the first inscriptions into the national Registry of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia (Registar kulturnih dobara Republike Hrvatske),<sup>3</sup> a publicly available book published by the Ministry of Culture. Soon



<sup>1</sup> *Zakon o zaštiti i očuvanju kulturnih dobara*, Narodne Novine [National Newspaper] 69/1999, 5 July 1999.

<sup>2</sup> The Committee is comprised of seven experts and scientists dealing with specific types of intangible heritage in scientific and expert institutions (faculties, museums, institutes). The Committee's role is to encourage legal and practical protection of ICH in Croatia, and the preservation and promotion of ICH on both the national and international levels. Its members have been active not only on national inscriptions and meetings with the local communities in Croatia, but also on the international level at various meetings and conferences (ICTM), and have worked in UNESCO bodies on ICH (Intergovernmental Committee from 2008 until 2012, Evaluation Body for examination of nomination files).

<sup>3</sup> The national Registry of Cultural Goods is available online at: [www.min-kulture.hr/default.aspx?id=6212](http://www.min-kulture.hr/default.aspx?id=6212) (for intangible cultural heritage choose 'Vrsta' and 'nematerijalno kulturno dobro' in the search engine).

after these activities, Croatia ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention on ICH in 2005, and confirmed the Ministry of Culture as the central national body responsible for its implementation. Such efficient legislative and administrative background, as well as the coordinated work of communities, NGOs, individuals, experts, and state institutions, had enabled the inscription of more than 150 ICH elements in the Registry of Cultural Goods until 2016. Out of those 150 elements, 14 are inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. Several more are in preparation, out of which one for the inscription on UNESCO's Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. The Ministry's Department for UNESCO (Odjel za UNESCO) has contributed significantly to the implementation of the 2003 Convention in Croatia and has supported the Department for ICH in its work.

In the last decade, the Department for ICH has been intensifying and systematising the cooperation with the Expert Committee for ICH and different institutions (research institutes and academics, among others) on documenting, listing, and safeguarding ICH elements in Croatia. The first inscriptions into the National Registry and onto the UNESCO Lists were prepared very quickly and the communication with the bearers was done mostly via the experts who have been researching these elements for years (Hrovatin 2011). In recent years, the full participation of the bearers in the inscriptions has been ensured by a special procedure and the communication on future planning and projects is better than before.

The procedure of the inscription of ICH elements into the National Registry comprises of several phases (Šimunković 2009 and 2015). First, the proposals for the inscription are submitted to 19 Conservation Departments (konzervatorski odjeli) of the Ministry of Culture,<sup>4</sup> depending on the geographical location of an ICH element. Proposals can be submitted by the local communities, bearers, NGOs, but also by experts, local and regional museums, and various expert and scientific institutions. This is done via the special Ministry's Application Form, which consists of basic information about the element (description, historical background, future safeguarding measures and other, see Appendix 1). The evaluation process includes networking and cooperation of the experts from the Ministry with the experts from the Advisory Committee for ICH and other associates from expert institutions. The long scientific and expert research conducted over the years has provided a good basis not only for writing the texts on intangible elements that have been inscribed, but

<sup>4</sup> List of Conservation Departments of the Ministry of Culture: [www.min-kulture.hr/default.aspx?id=1721](http://www.min-kulture.hr/default.aspx?id=1721). 19 departments are under the Ministry of Culture; 1 department is under the capital city of Zagreb and is a part of the city's Institute for Preservation of Cultural and Natural Monuments (Gradski zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture i prirode).



also for achieving better communication with the communities during the implementation of the 2003 Convention. The institutions involved in this research include: the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku), the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Zagreb (Odsjek za etnologiju i kulturnu antropologiju),<sup>5</sup> Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics (Institut za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje), ethnographic museums (in Zagreb, Pazin, Split, and Dubrovnik and other cities), as well as many other expert organisations: Croatian Cultural Association (Hrvatski sabor kulture), Centre for Intangible Culture of Istria (Centar za nematerijalnu kulturu Istre), Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts (Hrvatska obrtnička komora), National Folk Dance Ensemble of Croatia LADO (Ansaml narodnih plesova i pjesama Hrvatske), and others. The fast inscriptions were also possible thanks to the safeguarding and documenting efforts of the local communities.

The applicant(s) for the establishment of protection of intangible cultural property can be all natural and legal persons in the Republic of Croatia (individuals, communities, institutions, including local heritage and city museums, NGOs, local and regional administrations, institutions, Conservation Departments of the Ministry of Culture, among others).

Proposals for the inscription in the Registry are submitted in the Conservation Departments of the Ministry on a specially drafted application form of the Ministry of Culture, in which applicants give basic information about the element.


The criteria for inscription of the proposed element into the Registry are not rigid, but rather form a type of a 'checklist' of conditions which should be met before proceeding further. The basis for making the criteria is formed by the UNESCO documents on ICH safeguarding and the 2003 Convention:

- The element belongs to one or more categories of intangible heritage, according to Article 9 of the Act on the Protection and Safeguarding of Cultural Goods (the intangible cultural goods may be of various forms and expressions of spiritual origin transmitted orally or otherwise, especially: 1. Language, dialects, speeches, toponyms, oral expressions and oral literature of all kinds; 2. Folk creativity in the areas of music, dance, play, customs, ceremonies, rituals, as well as other traditional and folk values; 3. Traditional artistry and craftsmanship).
- The element is in accordance with international human rights instruments, requires mutual respect between communities, and is in harmony with sustainable development.

<sup>5</sup> For more information about the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Zagreb, see [www.ffzg.unizg.hr/etno](http://www.ffzg.unizg.hr/etno).



- The community has identified the element as part of its cultural heritage.
- The element gives the community and individuals a sense of identity and continuity.
- The element is part of the community and is transmitted and constantly recreated.
- The element contributes to the diversity of the ICH in the Registry, testifying to cultural diversity and human creativity.
- The element is submitted with the free, prior and informed consent of the community concerned following the participation of the community at all stages of identification, definition, documentation, and nomination.
- The above-mentioned consent of the community concerned is accompanied by the appropriate documentation and feasible safeguarding measures according to the official Application Form for Proposal to Establish the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage.



The whole evaluation process of inscribing an ICH element includes networking and cooperation of the experts from the Ministry of Culture with the experts from the Advisory Committee for ICH and, when needed, other associates from various museums, institutes, universities, and other institutions. Prior to the inscription, the text of the official Resolution document (a legal document by which the element is inscribed into the Registry) is sent back to the bearers to confirm its content and once again confirm their agreement with the inscription. The final step is the confirmation of the inscription in the Registry by the Expert Committee for the Establishment of the Properties of Cultural Goods (Stručno povjerenstvo za utvrđivanje svojstva kulturnog dobra), which is a special expert body in the Ministry of Culture that inscribes all the cultural elements into the National Registry of Cultural Goods, including movable and immovable tangible heritage, as well as intangible heritage. The same final procedure prior to the inscription of any cultural element has contributed greatly to raising awareness about the value of intangible heritage alongside the tangible heritage, that has been for a long time considered more important in the expert circles. Moreover, this Committee relies almost exclusively on the decision of the Committee for ICH, thus a special approach is secured for deciding on the inscription of an ICH element. After the Expert Committee's final decision, the Resolution (Rješenje) is sent officially to the bearers and local administration, thus ensuring that they become more active in the safeguarding activities. The system of monitoring inscribed ICH elements involves the experts from the Ministry of Culture as well as experts from the Conservation Department of the Ministry of Culture in charge of the exact geographical area. The monitoring is aimed at particular communities in specific areas and their specific safeguarding activities. Also, for periodic reports, the Ministry's experts use various

information about the inscribed ICH elements that is continually collected by other institutions via their regular research activities.

The inscription of the elements both in the National Registry and on the UNESCO's Lists has largely contributed to raising awareness on the importance of ICH safeguarding in the country, as well as in the neighbouring countries. This is why the number of activities on ICH safeguarding has been increasing. Since 2008, the Ministry has also made possible for ICH safeguarding programmes to apply for financial support via the annual open call for the public needs in culture. Annually, the Ministry supports around 70 programmes aimed at ICH safeguarding, with around 300 different projects supported from 2008 until 2016 (see Chart 1). The activities of the programmes include transmission, enhancement, presentation, research, documentation through formal and informal education, workshops, courses, classes, exhibitions, festivals, and the production of audio-visual recordings and any related materials (Hrovatin 2016). Such support helps to start, continue, and develop various ICH safeguarding programmes further, including the promotion via the ICH elements such as games, culinary practices and rituals that are demonstrated to the public. Beside expert and scientific institutions, the Ministry together with its ICH Department and 19 Conservation Departments contribute to the cooperation with the bearers but also with the local authorities, which have been supporting increasingly more various cultural events and festivals, at the same time showing the achievements of safeguarding and encouraging the youth to participate and learn.

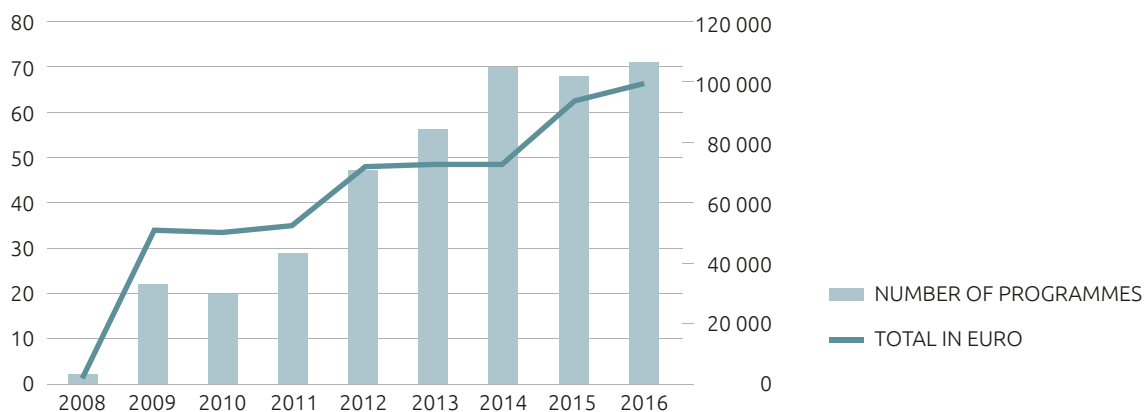


Chart 1: Increase in the number of ICH safeguarding programmes and state funds from 2008 until 2016 in Croatia.



Since the intensification of the programmes, the local and state authorities have been providing more technical and financial support for ICH safeguarding, including support to NGOs and research and educational institutions, as well as the inclusion of ICH in various local and national educational, scientific, and development programmes and projects. A special attention and support is given also to programmes developed by the minorities in Croatia.

Various awareness-raising programmes take place during exhibitions, festivals, talks, workshops, open days and other activities for the general public, and schoolchildren in particular. To promote traditional craftsmanship, arts programmes are implemented by different governmental bodies, cultural artistic societies, experts, and bearers in community centres and other regional centres spread across the country, for example in Kumrovec, the 'Old Village' Museum (Museum "Staro selo") it is making wooden toys and gingerbread. Various workshops are also organised as a part of protection programmes in Lepoglava and Pag (lace-making), Islam Grčki (ojkanje singing) and other. These events are in most cases open for the general public to participate.

The mass media, such as newspapers and magazines, broadcasting stations, television stations, and websites have also played an important role in awareness-raising. Through the broadcast of many documentaries and reports about traditional culture prepared by a special Department for Folk and Oral Culture Broadcasts (Odsjek emisija pučke i predajne kulture), the national Croatian television plays an important role in educating and raising awareness of the importance and value of intangible cultural heritage in Croatia.

The mobile exhibition *Croatian Intangible Heritage on UNESCO's Lists* has been travelling since 2011 all over Croatia and abroad, presenting 14 elements from Croatia inscribed on UNESCO lists. It has been prepared as an initiative of the Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the experts from the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb (Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu). The exhibition displays films, articles, photographs, maps, and other items linked to individual cultural goods on the UNESCO Lists. The exhibition aims at supporting intercultural dialogue, making this heritage more visible to people worldwide; it also raises awareness of the importance and the need for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in general.

Some of the effects of the inscriptions of ICH elements from Croatia onto UNESCO Lists are visible also in the projects of several organisations. For example, the Croatian National Tourist Board (Hrvatska turistička zajednica) has initiated and designed the project of ethnic posters displaying motifs of the most attractive traditional customs and folk costumes of Croatia. Apart from their visual content, the posters also carry brief information on the richness of Croatian tradi-



tional heritage, particularly of the variety inscribed on the UNESCO Lists. In 2012, the Croatian Post (Hrvatska pošta) released four new commemorative postage stamps with a common theme: 'Croatian intangible cultural heritage inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List'.<sup>6</sup>

Since the intensification of the ICH listing in Croatia, ICH has been incorporated into the annual programme of the European Heritage Days, coordinated by the Ministry of Culture. In 2008, the Ministry of Culture organised the European Heritage Days in cooperation with the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb under the topic 'Treasure of Knowledge and Skills'. The ICH elements inscribed in the National Registry were presented through an exhibition and an interactive CD along with the system for protecting intangible cultural heritage in Croatia. The efforts of UNESCO aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage were also presented. In 2016, intangible cultural heritage was the main topic again, with the emphasis on the communities, as a recommendation of the Council of Europe. Another exhibition: *Lokalne zajednice kao čuvari baštine* (Local communities as heritage keepers), was prepared with the aim to present different communities, NGOs, and individuals that implement various safeguarding measures (documenting, transmission, promotion). On both occasions, various events and activities on ICH safeguarding in Croatia were advertised in a special booklet prepared for marking the European Heritage Days in Croatia.<sup>7</sup>

The policy of promoting different forms of music and performance was best shown at the 44<sup>th</sup> International Folklore Festival (Međunarodna smotra folklora), dedicated to worldwide activities on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, conducted in UNESCO member states. All festival participants were the representatives of the ICH elements listed in their national inventories and some also on the UNESCO Representative List. The festival theme was chosen partially because it took place during the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022).

The programme of the 2013 annual concert of the National Folk Dance Ensemble of Croatia LADO, a professional national ensemble, was made on the basis of the inscribed intangible cultural heritage, both in the National Registry and the UNESCO lists. In its programme, LADO has incorporated the songs, dances, and customs of Croatia that are inscribed on those lists, and has adapted them for stage performance. Even though these elements exist within their communities, such performance brought a unique opportunity for wider audiences to see, hear, and feel the listed items.

<sup>6</sup> For more information about the project on postage stamps, see [www.posta.hr/print.aspx?id=4685](http://www.posta.hr/print.aspx?id=4685).

<sup>7</sup> For more information about European Heritage Days and the booklets, see [www.min-kulture.hr/default.aspx?id=7216](http://www.min-kulture.hr/default.aspx?id=7216).







Pula: Fair of traditional meals and ecologically grown home products, 2014. Photo by Andreas Kancelar, © Ethnographic Museum of Istria/Museo Etnografico dell'Istria.

In addition, there are many educational and awareness-raising programmes throughout the country (Šimunković 2014). Intangible cultural heritage is included on the basis of general information in the primary school curriculum. In 2011, the UNESCO Handbook for Schools *World Heritage in Young Hands* was presented to the public. The Handbook contains the first list that has ever been published in Croatia of all cultural and natural tangible as well as intangible heritage elements listed by UNESCO. The Handbook is intended as a contemporary teaching aid, to help teachers prepare regular and extra-curricular lesson plans, and raise awareness of the need to safeguard these elements among young people.

Depending on the skills and interests of teachers, the activities on awareness raising and learning the traditional know-how are implemented in the schools in Croatia. The skill of producing children's toys has been included in the curriculum of the Woodwork Department of the Secondary School in Oroslavje in the northern part of Croatia. For the people who are interested but do not possess the necessary skills, special courses and trainings are provided in various public institutions beside schools. Starting with the basics, the attendees of these courses develop their skills and talents. For example, the Open University in Ivanec has launched a training course for lace-makers, and the qualification that the participants obtain can be entered in their official employment record.

Through various projects, Croatia has also achieved a very good international cooperation on ICH that includes bearers. Some of the programmes that are supported by EU funds also include intangible cultural heritage, as an important vehicle for regional development and nurturing inter-border cooperation. On expert and scientific level, Croatia has participated in many conferences and has been active at international UNESCO's meetings, as well as in the work of UNESCO's inter-governmental and expert bodies (Hrovatin 2016a). Moreover, Croatia is also a regular member of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of ICH in South-Eastern Europe (UNESCO Category 2 Centre) in Sofia (Bulgaria) since its establishment in 2011. A special department for UNESCO at the Ministry of Culture and the Croatian Commission for UNESCO (Hrvatsko povjerenstvo za UNESCO) are also actively working to raise awareness of the value of ICH, and promote it in Croatia and abroad. Furthermore, international cooperation includes the preparation of multinational nominations of ICH elements and implementation of the safeguarding projects that are supported by national and international funding.

The two chosen examples: 'Rovinj maritime traditions' and 'Traditional drystone building' present two good practices of ICH safeguarding in local communities that comprise of various





Kornati: Building and renewal of dry-stone walls, 2015. Photo by Vilma Stopfer, © Association 4 grada Dragodid.

activities and involve the effective cooperation of the bearers and experts with local and state authorities. In Rovinj, the bearers have been included in planning the Batana Ecomuseum Project<sup>8</sup> from the beginning, as it was themselves who had initiated it, basing on their own concern about the imminent disappearance of their traditional heritage (songs, socialising, knowledge, and the skills of building traditional wooden *batana* boats). It was also a good idea of the local community to include an expert that knew how to use her previous knowledge on cultural management, which helped to ensure long-term sustainable development of the safeguarding projects, as well as the active participation of the local community. The bearers' and expert's ideas were also supported by the local authorities, and the project started to be implemented. Many activities have been conducted and various results have been achieved, all contributing to the preservation of the local ICH and its inclusion into current ways of life. The second example is the building technique based on using stone without mortar. It is an initiative started by an NGO comprised of a multi-disciplinary team of experts. The safeguarding activities have been aimed at local communities along the Adriatic coast, the preservation of the know-how that is rapidly disintegrating, and the use of the technique in new context. Today, with the first years of the initiative slowly advancing, the NGO Dragodid receives technical and financial support both from the local authorities as well as from the state.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, it connects different bearers, local communities, and various other stakeholders in the safeguarding of this ICH element.

Both examples show that such multi-level approach to safeguarding ICH elements results in securing the viability of the element, their inclusion in the current way of living, contribution to sustainable development and preservation of nature, as well as to social cohesion, controlled presentation in tourism, and local development.

In conclusion, the Ministry of Culture provides an overall as well as financial support for individuals and institutions for researching, presenting, and nurturing intangible heritage. Within the strategy of the Ministry of Culture, the significance of intangible cultural heritage and the obligation to safeguard and promote it holds an important place. The continuous work of experts, both in the Ministry and other institutions, has to a large extent contributed to better, more organised activities aimed at protecting and safeguarding intangible heritage in Croatia.

The inscription of the elements, both in the National Registry and on the UNESCO lists, has largely contributed to raising awareness of the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural

<sup>8</sup> For more information about the project, see [www.batana.org](http://www.batana.org).

<sup>9</sup> For more information about the project, see [www.dragodid.org](http://www.dragodid.org).



heritage in the country and beyond, inside as well as outside the discussed communities. This is why the number of activities related to intangible cultural heritage safeguarding has been increasing, and many institutions support the implementation of projects that originate from local communities and other stakeholders.

We can also observe an increasing recognition among the public of the exceptional value of intangible cultural heritage, as well as the conviction that the commitment and responsibility for its safeguarding and transmission to future generations should rest on the bearers, local communities and relevant institutions; local, national, or minority identities. Not so long ago, intangible cultural heritage, in terms of architectural, archaeological, and movable monuments was not sufficiently recognised, valued and protected; however, due to many activities on the safeguarding and listing of ICH, this attitude has been changing in Croatia over the recent years. Although some issues still remain to be resolved, such as intellectual rights, the market placement of products, lack of networks and mass tourism, the enhancement of the administrative procedure, supporting and motivating new projects, taking care of sustainability of programmes and the viability of ICH and its inclusion in educational programmes have helped to systematise and improve its safeguarding in Croatia. On the local and regional level, apart from the 19 mentioned Conservation Departments and special sectors for culture within the local administrative bodies, numerous regional and local history and ethnographic museums, nongovernmental organisations and amateur cultural-artistic societies are also engaged in the safeguarding of intangible heritage; tourist boards are becoming increasingly active in this respect as well. Using the bottom-up principle of popularisation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage, the bearers themselves raise awareness of the value of traditional heritage as a unique treasure, which ensures cultural diversity and democracy both on the national and local level. What is more, global threats to intangible cultural heritage, such as the negative aspects of globalisation, migration, industrialisation, and pollution compel us all to raise awareness of its value of and importance not only on the local and national level, but also as a part of world heritage.





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# Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Latvia: insights into the contribution of NGOs

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*Traditional Latvian folklore dates back well over a thousand years; more than 30 thousand melodies of folk songs and 1.2 million texts have been identified and documented. These are significant roots of the intangible cultural heritage in Latvia, which remains a part of a much larger and diverse heritage.*

Latvia, one of the three Baltic states, is a country in the Baltic region of Northern Europe. It has about 2 million inhabitants, and its people are historically Latvians and Livs, together with diverse ethnic minority groups. The official language, Latvian, is an Indo-European language; in fact, Latvian and Lithuanian languages are the only two surviving Baltic languages. Despite foreign (German, Swedish, Russian) rule from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the people of the present territory of Latvia maintained their culture throughout generations via language and traditions. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the initial formation of a distinct Latvian national identity. Several crucial cultural and social developments took place and played a key role in that regard – such as the first Latvian Song and Dance Celebration (Vispārējie Latviešu Dziesmu un Deju Svētki) that took place in 1873, initiating a tradition which continues to this day. Also, the publication of a vast collection of Latvian folk songs (Latvju Dainas, 1894–1915), catalogued in the Cabinet of Folksongs, which was inscribed in 2001 on the UNESCO International Memory of the World Register. Traditional Latvian folklore dates back well over a thousand years; more than 30 thousand melodies of folk songs and 1.2 million texts have been identified and documented. These are significant roots of the intangible cultural heritage in Latvia, which remains a part of a much larger and diverse heritage.





## State support system for the intangible cultural heritage

Policies related to cultural heritage have existed for almost a century in Latvia's history. After achieving independence in 1918, concerns about the identification and consolidation of cultural heritage soon became integral to the policy development in culture, education, scholarship, and the non-governmental organisations in the capital and other areas of the country. The continuation of these policies only became possible in 1991, when Latvian independence was re-established.

The Republic of Latvia joined the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) on 14 January 2005. At present, Latvia has two elements inscribed on the ICH lists of UNESCO: 'Baltic song and dance celebration' – Representative List of the ICH of Humanity, 2008; and 'Suiti cultural space' – List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, 2009. Since Latvia's adherence to the Convention, the main institution responsible for its implementation has been the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia (Latvijas Republikas Kultūras ministrija). The Ministry develops the legal framework for ICH safeguarding and determines relevant national policies and strategies in the field. Latvian National Centre for Culture (Latvijas Nacionālais kultūras centrs) implements national cultural policies and programmes in the field of ICH, coordinates the execution of state policies, provides consultations for municipalities and communities, carries out relevant documentation, information, popularisation, awareness-raising projects, and is the state body responsible for organising the main nationwide celebrations and festivals (including the Latvian Song and Dance Celebration).

### Policy and legal framework

After the continuous work of many experts from different fields, the Latvian parliament (Saeima) adopted the Intangible Cultural Heritage Law on 29 September 2016<sup>1</sup>, which determines responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in the safeguarding of ICH. The legal framework, which is created by the Latvian State for the sustainable development of ICH, includes also the Song and Dance Celebration Law<sup>2</sup> adopted earlier, on 16 June 2005. It aims to preserve, develop, and pass on the tradition of the Song and Dance Celebration to future generations. The policy framework is determined by the Concept on the Safeguarding of the ICH of Latvia (2008), and the Plan for the Safeguarding and Development of the Song and Dance Celebration Tradition (the latter adopted in 2016).

<sup>1</sup> *Nemateriālā kultūras mantojuma likums*, Latvijas Vēstnesis [Latvian Herald], 204 (5776), 20 October 2016; English translation is published on the official portal of Latvian national legislation ([www.likumi.lv](http://www.likumi.lv)).

<sup>2</sup> *Dziesmu un deju svētku likums*, Latvijas Vēstnesis, 99 (3257), 28 June 2005; English translation is published on the official portal of Latvian national legislation ([www.likumi.lv](http://www.likumi.lv)).



## Financial framework

The main national funding resource for the safeguarding of ICH in Latvia is the State Culture Capital Foundation (Valsts Kultūrkapitāla fonds), which has a support programme for traditional culture. The state non-profit, joint-stock company began its work in 1998. The resources of the Foundation are comprised by: state budget resources from the annual general revenue in the amount stipulated by a law on state budget; contributions and donations by physical persons, including foreign persons; and other financial assistance and income from the economic activities of the Foundation.<sup>3</sup> European structural and investment funds are available also for regional development, including ICH. Structural funds can be used for infrastructure development, while regional cooperation programmes – for promotional activities, events, and communication. Rural development programmes can be useful for different local initiatives, equipment, etc.

## Stakeholders

There are several stakeholders involved in the sustainable development of ICH in Latvia. Those are municipalities, NGOs, as well as research and education institutions (Archives of Latvian Folklore within the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia – Latvijas Universitātes Literatūras, folkloras un mākslas institūta Latviešu folkloras krātuve; Institute of Latvian History of the University of Latvia – Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas vēstures institūts; Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music – Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija; and Latvian Academy of Culture – Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, where the UNESCO Chair on Intangible Cultural Heritage Policy and Law is established in 2017). Among active stakeholders, there are also memory institutions such as museums (Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia – Latvijas Etnogrāfiskais brīvdabas muzejs; National History Museum of Latvia – Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures muzejs, among others), libraries (National Library of Latvia – Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, among others), and archives (National Archives of Latvia – Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs, among others).



## Contribution of non-governmental organisations

After Latvia's independence was re-established in 1991, many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were founded in the capital and other regions in Latvia. Some of them put safeguarding of

<sup>3</sup> *Valsts Kultūrkapitāla fonda likums*, Latvijas Vēstnesis, 161 (2926), 14 November 2003; English translation is published on the official portal of Latvian national legislation ([www.likumi.lv](http://www.likumi.lv)).



Vodka-making expedition, 2008. Photo by Uģis Pucens.



The *Folk Pharmacy* exhibition during the Contemporary Culture Forum 'Baltā Nakts' (Nuit Blanche), 2010. Photo by Signe Pucena.

ICH and developing their own activities as their goal. The following two organisations can be highlighted: the Interdisciplinary Art Group SERDE (Starpnozaru mākslu grupa SERDE), which works at the borderline between heritage safeguarding and artistic creativity, and the Society for Traditional Culture APRIKA (Tradicionālās kultūras biedrība APRIKA) that aims to foster heritage transmission and pass it to younger generations.

**The Interdisciplinary Art Group SERDE** is the first NGO in Latvia that has applied to become accredited to the UNESCO 2003 Convention, and was accepted by the General Assembly of States Parties in 2016. The organisation is situated in the Kurzeme region in Western Latvia, in a small town named Aizpute. The name *serde* in Latvian means ‘core’ or ‘pith’, and at the core of this NGO, there are only a few people: Signe Pucena, ICH expert and producer of culture events; Uģis Pucens, artist and restorer; Ieva Vītola, researcher; Māris Grosbahs, artist; and some others. Since the establishment of the organisation in 2002, it has become an inspiring example of interconnectedness explored between scholarly research in traditional culture and artistic activities. The organisation studies living memory and life histories and has significant experience in fieldwork; it also runs artistic residences and workshops, with an overall objective to encourage dialogue between the artists, scholars, and educators, often in international networking frameworks. SERDE collaborates with ICH experts, artists, students, and scholars. In preparation for fieldwork, the ICH experts design lists of questions, and they interview informants; the artists document the process, the milieu, and the participants. The fieldwork, which culminates in presentations and workshops for the communities, raises awareness at the local, national, and international level about the importance of intangible cultural heritage.

SERDE, through regular fieldwork in rural areas, also collects life histories and personal stories about recent historical events, and about the traditional skills inherited from earlier generations, which were crucial during the Soviet period because of very limited access to consumer goods. The collected stories demonstrate how particular skills were carried forward from the period preceding World War II, and subsequently maintained during the Soviet period, when many items had to be made at home. One of the most successful and attractive projects of SERDE has been the Post-Soviet Summer Camp, an art event with the themes ‘Artists against technological standards’ and ‘Myths of technology’, where one of the explored topics was the distillation of alcohol. The Camp at the SERDE residence gathered artists from former Soviet republics who interpret myths about Soviet life through their art. The event included several presentations and discussions about life in the post-Soviet space and its cultural context. After the thorough fieldwork on the respective theme in Central Kurzeme region was completed, the results – which included audio







The XI Latvian School Youth Song and Dance celebration at the Freedom Monument, 10 July 2015. Photo by Ilmārs Znotiņš.



The 'Pulkā Eimu Pulkā Teku' National Event, 4 May 2012. Photo by Guntis Pakalns.



The 'Pulkā Eimu Pulkā Teku' National Event, 2013. Photo by Dzintars Leja.

recordings, photos, and the purchase of a distillation apparatus – went on display as an exhibition and performance that toured to many places in Latvia and abroad.

Another very successful project was the international expedition in the framework of Herbologies/Foraging Networks events. This program was launched in Helsinki and in the Kurzeme region of Latvia, and later expanded. The examination of traditional knowledge about herbs, wild edibles and medicinal plants was carried out in a series of fieldwork excursions with more than 30 participants from Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Southern Sweden, Poland, Spain, and Belgium. This Herbologies/Foraging Networks expedition continued the research into indoor plants and their medical uses conducted by SERDE researchers themselves. This research resulted in the *Folk Pharmacy* exhibition: an exposition where visitors were invited to write down their own favourite recipes or remedies. Garden Allotment Culture was another publicly observable project initiated by SERDE, and focused on growing vegetables, fruits, herbs, and medicinal plants in home gardens. The results of this research were presented as a summer exposition *The Freedom Garden* (Brīvības dārzs) in a venue on Brīvības Street in the Vidzeme market, as part of the Riga 2014 festivities, to mark Riga's turn as the European Capital of Culture.

SERDE has also collaborated with the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO (UNESCO Latvijas Nacionālā komisija), and provided folklore study opportunities for UNESCO Associated School Project teachers and youth from Alsunga and Riebiņi counties. This project was implemented with students and teachers invited from the corresponding counties to participate in the fieldwork under the guidance of ICH experts. Local elders were interviewed about local history, the Soviet period, seafaring and fishing, beer brewing, beekeeping, traditional food, and many other subjects. All the research results provided by SERDE are published in the attractively designed series of fourteen tradition-themed notebooks named *Notebooks of Traditions* (Tradīciju burtnīcas). Some of them achieved enormous success and are out of print at the moment. Almost all of these publications have been presented to the local communities and individuals in the events that closed the project. As the leader of the society, SERDE Signe Pucena (2015, 37) acknowledges:

In our opinion, such expeditions and subsequent presentations promote and support the capacity building ability of local populations to carry out research and emphasise the importance of documenting the process. The most important element of all of SERDE's expeditions has been a closing event which brings together everyone involved in the fieldwork. SERDE's experience in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is based on close collaboration with communities and individuals who are willing to share their stories and skills.





The XI Latvian School Youth Song and Dance celebration at the Freedom Monument, 10 July 2015.  
Photo by Ilmārs Znotiņš.



**The Society for Traditional Culture APRIKA** has chosen the inheritance of cultural traditions as its main arena of focus, concentrating particularly on children and youth (aprika in Latvian means a round hunk of bread, cut off from a large loaf of bread). The Society's long history of training folklore teachers represents valuable experience in non-formal education. The Society for Traditional Culture APRIKA was founded in 2009 as a non-governmental, non-profit organisation that is comprised of folklore teachers, leaders of children's folk groups, as well as others enthusiasts of teaching and promoting traditional culture. APRIKA is the successor of the University of Latvia's Ethnic Culture Centre (Latvijas Universitātes Etniskās kultūras centrs), which was closed during the 2008 financial crisis.

One of the major activities of the Society is the organisation of children's and youth folk festival, as well as a variety of other celebrations, including folklore competitions for children and youth, which have become a format for encouraging the development and learning of skills connected to ICH. These activities are a part of Latvian children's and youth folklore movement Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku (We come together, we sing together), or PEPT in short. This movement has become a crucial framework for fostering transmission of cultural traditions, and these initiatives are often a part of the extra-curricular activities that take place in community centres of numerous municipalities. The extensive and diverse educational programme 'Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku' started already in 1984 with a concert featuring several folklore groups. Since then, PEPT has grown into a comprehensive movement, encompassing five folklore based competitions for children and youth. These include contests for storytelling and anecdotes, traditional singing, folk dancing, and folk music. A wide range of different activities have been carefully planned and are carried out within the framework of the school year. As the leader of the society APRIKA Māra Mellēna (2015, 81) puts it:


It is apparent that the contemporary forms of competition adopted by PEPT have been successful in bringing traditional forms of communication and practice to life. Children learn traditional culture and folklore (traditional singing, dance, and music) in folklore groups at school, in extra-curricular settings or community centres (a hold-over from Soviet times). This learning often takes place in post-functional contexts where the transmission of traditional culture has been interrupted or altered. It is clear that preparing for regular folklore competitions galvanises developing skills and advances learning in each field of practice. The skills possessed by group leaders are uneven since they arrive with varying levels of musical education and skill, knowledge of traditional singing, and uneven general understandings of tradition and its local variability. Teachers and group leaders also vary in their pedagogical training and understanding of teaching methodologies for traditional arts. However, the involvement of professionals and scholars in the jury and the teachers' professional development process has contributed significantly to broadening their understanding of traditional culture and honing their teaching skills.





The society APRIKA is also involved in the implementation of lifelong learning and in-service training programmes for folklore teachers. It also organises seminars and conferences dedicated to issues of ICH inheritance, including training in storytelling, singing, dancing, and playing traditional music instruments. APRIKA also offers practical training sessions for the acquisition of traditional skills, organises annual summer schools for folklore teachers and folk group leaders, develops training material for folklore teacher training programmes, and regularly takes part in the creation and implementation of folklore programmes for the Latvian Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration and for the Latvian Youth Song and Dance Celebration (*Latvijas skolu jaunatnes dziesmu un deju svētki*).

## Practice of cooperation of the State and NGOs



In addition to a set of activities ran by NGOs, there is an initiative undertaken by a government institution, and further developed through involvement of NGOs and individual masters. The project 'Meet Your Master!' (*Satiec savu meistarū*), organised by the Latvian National Centre for Culture in cooperation with municipalities and NGOs, started in 2009 with a goal to ensure visibility of ICH values. The gist of the project is to inform the wider public about safeguarding and inheritance of ICH, as well as about masters, their knowledge, and skills. Within the framework of the event, the organisers of 'Meet your master!' promote cooperation in identification and popularisation of the ICH and its masters among local communities, NGOs, state and municipal institutions, as well as private bodies.

In 2016, the event 'Meet your Master!' was held throughout Latvia for the eighth time. Masters of applied arts, storytellers, narrators and musicians invited apprentices to visit them in more than 150 places. The event was attended by more than 5 thousand people. During the event, the organisers prepared 7 different exhibitions and 11 seminars on various topics related to art and crafts. In 22 venues, the visitors had an opportunity to learn new things about traditional music, and had a chance to sing, dance, and take part in games. A unique venue was chosen by the organisers in Sigulda – the event took place in a railway station, and everybody who visited Sigulda had a chance to briefly meet weavers and handicraft masters; they could also sing and dance along with the folk group. In most of the venues, masters offered practical classes and also invited visitors to try out their skills, and participate in, for example, weaving or wood-working. Almost all of the masters

also invited the visitors to call at their own workshops, as only a few had other premises to demonstrate their craft skills. As there are 114 folk applied art studios and hobby groups in Latvia, they are frequently the most active participants of the event. The folk applied art studios are mostly based in the community and municipal centres; therefore, the local governments also invest in this event. Altogether, 72 community centres, 26 craft centres, 25 master workshops, and 3 schools became involved in the event. In recent years, 18 thousand people representing different generations have visited 'their masters' in workshops, studios, museums, schools, cultural centres, and libraries, and 'Meet your Master!' has become an event to be looked forward to every spring.

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# Intangible cultural heritage in Lithuania

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*... children are getting increasingly more involved in the activities concerning ICH. In Lithuania, a growing number of families want their children to grow up according to the traditional upbringing, following the subtle and creative means that appeal to their spiritual world. Increasingly more often people choose the values of traditional culture: they organise family clubs and family folklore groups.*

## **The overview of ICH status: state protection and modern approaches**

The processes related to the protection, studies, dissemination and the awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Lithuania are prolific and varied. They all sprang from the folklore movement in the '60s, formed as a bottom-up approach initiated by aspiring individuals and communities. Their efforts manifested through organised folklore expeditions, first public folklore concerts, the revival of calendar holidays, and through the appearance of folklore groups in villages and cities. Moreover, the movement of the old Baltic culture Romuva was founded, ongoing folklore festivals Skamba skamba kankliai in Vilnius and Atataria lamzdžiai in Kaunas were initiated, significant ethnology-oriented studies were conducted, and collections of ICH were published. The historical context, however, was unforgiving – the Soviet government would prosecute any kind of national cultural heritage manifestations. Therefore, the movement, opposed to the rule, has nurtured the national identity awareness and contributed to the restoration of Lithuanian independence since the time of its particular expansion in the '80s. The participants of the mentioned movement – the people of various occupations, including famous ICH researchers and advocates – influenced state cultural policy formation concerning ICH even after the '80s, when the independence had been restored.

Nowadays Lithuania has an ICH safeguarding legal system: it has adopted a law on the principles of the state protection of ethnic culture<sup>1</sup> (a revised version will be soon issued), ratified UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,<sup>2</sup> and adopted the law on the

<sup>1</sup> *Etninės kultūros valstybinės globos pagrindų įstatymas*, Valstybės Žinios [State Gazette] no. 82-2414, 1 October 1999.

<sup>2</sup> *Nematerialaus kultūros paveldo apsaugos konvencija*, Valstybės Žinios no. 115-5734, 7 November 2003.



song celebrations of the Republic of Lithuania,<sup>3</sup> which regulates the protection and development of the elements on the Representative List of UNESCO, and the law on national heritage products,<sup>4</sup> which regulates the certification of the traditional folk art and craft products.

Since 2003, the Ministry of Culture (Kultūros ministerija) has approved the periodically updated State Programme on the Development of Ethnic Culture, and the municipalities prepare similar programmes based on it. The programme includes measures in terms of recording ICH objects and researching them, their long-term protection, the preservation of historic and cultural identities of the ethnographic regions, the development of traditions, raising awareness, and other guidelines.

The Ministry of Agriculture (Žemės ūkio ministerija) prepares the Traditional Crafts Development Programme 2012–2020. Both the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Science (Švietimo ir mokslo ministerija) prepare the Song and Dance Celebrations Tradition Continuity Programme.

In terms of the institutional system, there is the Council for the Protection of Ethnic Culture under the Lithuanian Parliament (Etninės kultūros globos taryba) with 5 regional branches. The Ministry of Culture governs its Department for Regional Culture (Regionų kultūros skyrius), the Commission of Experts of Ethnic Culture (Etninės kultūros ekspertų komisija), and the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO (Lietuvos nacionalinė UNESCO komisija).

One of the institutions that have the most impact on the implementation of ICH policies is the Lithuanian Folk Culture Centre, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2016 renamed to Lithuanian National Culture Centre (Lietuvos nacionalinis kultūros centras). It cooperates with community centres, museums, libraries, and other institutions. Since 1990, specialised ICH centres have been founded in the cities and municipalities. They aim at reviving ICH and integrating it into the modern culture, which is implemented by specialists in ICH matters. In our opinion, this is Lithuania's unique trait.

A prominent role in safeguarding ICH and popularising it among the society is played by the Lithuanian National Museum (Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus), Lithuanian Art Museum (Lietuvos dailės muziejus) and the municipality museums.

Other ministries are also involved. The Ministry of Education and Science supervises the main institutions related to ICH matters: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore (Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas), established in 1907, updates the ICH archive; Institute of the Lith-

<sup>3</sup> *Lietuvos Respublikos dainų švenčių įstatymas*, Valstybės Žinios no. 128-5212, 7 December 2007.

<sup>4</sup> *Tautinio paveldo produktų įstatymas*, Valstybės Žinios no. 77-3043, 12 July 2007.



Lithuanian Language (Lietuvių kalbos institutas) conducts research on dialects; Lithuanian Institute of History (Lietuvių istorijos institutas) has an Ethnology Department (Etnologijos skyrius); and the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute (Lietuvos kultūros tyrimų institutas). The Ministry of Environment (Aplinkos ministerija) protects the ICH which is manifested in national and regional parks. The Ministry of Agriculture, in turn, coordinates the protection of national heritage products, certifies craftsmen, and provides financial support, and also establishes and supervises crafts centres. The Ministry also oversees the work of the Council of National Heritage Products (Tautinio paveldo produktų taryba).

The higher education institutions – Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (Lietuvos muzikos ir teatro akademija), Vytautas Magnus University (Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas), Klaipėda University (Klaipėdos universitetas), as well as others – contribute significantly to ICH-related research. Other schools and universities also provide programmes on ICH as an extracurricular or a separate subject. However, the negative tendencies are still observable – the number of students and programmes is declining.

Non-governmental organisations also contribute, for example: Lithuanian Folk Artists Union (Lietuvos tautodailininkų sąjunga), Community of Lithuanian Ethnographers (Lietuvos kraštotyros draugija), Lithuanian Ethnic Culture Society (Lietuvių etninės kultūros draugija), Lithuanian Choreographers Union (Lietuvos choreografų sąjunga), and in terms of Song Celebrations – the Lithuanian Choral Union (Lietuvos chorų sąjunga).

The aforementioned institutions are state-funded; the Lithuanian Council for Culture (Lietuvos kultūros taryba) distributes funds for projects (ICH activities have a separate programme open for both individual and communal initiatives), municipality councils and various funds also provide financial aid. Target funds are only allocated for Song and Dance Celebrations Tradition Continuity Programme; they are administered by the Lithuanian National Culture Centre.

There are several awards for achievements in the field of ICH in Lithuania: National Jonas Basanavičius Prize (Nacionalinė Jono Basanavičiaus premija); 3 annual prizes; 4–6 scholarships from the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Agriculture awarded to the best craftsmen and crafts centres; the 'Aukso paukštė' award for the most prominent amateur art groups; and 'Aukso vainikas' award for the best traditional craftsmen.

One of the state policies that disseminate ICH is dedicating every year to a specific object. The Parliament, encouraged by the society and communities, has announced the years of Dialects (2013), Ethnographic Regions (2015), Communities (2016), and National Costume and Mounds





Laureate Lukas Malašauskas' wooden sculpture of St. Luke for the Lithuanian youth craft contest 'Sidabro vainikėlis', 2016. Photo by Jonas Tumasonis-Adominis.

(2017). The method functions really well as a reminder and promoter of ICH phenomena, and it encourages society to learn about them. It also invites the media to pay attention to them. Unfortunately, the Lithuanian media maintain a rather negative opinion about traditions – we consider this one of our problems.

Nowadays, the traditional Lithuanian culture and the culture of other residents of various nationalities exist in their natural environment, both in inherited and modern forms. In Lithuania, there is a huge community of active folklore groups and craftsmen: more than 500 folklore groups and 4000 folklore artists and craftsmen are active in cities, towns, and villages.

Also, various calendar events, such as Rasos (St. John's Day), Užgavėnės (similar to Mardi Gras), or the Easter Sunday are revived and celebrated. A network of folklore festivals (including international ones) has been formed, which organises contests and educational events. Moreover, new events that involve society and celebrate the values of ICH appear, some of them organised in cooperation with the national media, e.g. the project on national dances Visa Lietuva šoka (Lithuania dance), or Tautinio kostiumo konkursas „Išauta tapatybė“ (National costume contest 'Woven identity'), as well as others.

What is more, the scientific and cultural institutions, as well as non-governmental organisations frequently organise academic conferences; various other institutions are involved in hosting seminars, courses, trainings, and camps for ICH preservers. The implementers of the activities, together with the entire society also add to improving the specialist qualifications needed for these tasks.

In terms of ethnology, various inter-institutional programmes concerning musical folklore and dialects are conducted, and ICH development field studies are resumed. The results are shared with the society via publications and other electronic information systems. A compelling example is the independently initialised foundation of the Institute of Inherent Culture (Prigimtinės kultūros institutas) by the community of scientists. The results of their phenomenological ICH research are presented in seminars, and the material is published online and in the media.

The local communities also feel the need to identify and preserve their traditions, to create a positive agricultural environment, to re-establish their customs and skills, as well as to pass it on to the society through activities, programmes and tourist routes (bread, linen, beer routes, crafts camps, etc.). Therefore, we noticed two ICH continuity tendencies in Lithuania: a historical-cultural and a modern one.

Lithuanian youth have been supporting the idea of modernised ICH forms, for example, in the field of music; new groups appear and popular festivals are organised, for example, Mėnuo







A symbolic ceremony held during the Folklore Day of Lithuanian Song Celebration: the map of Lithuania is created with ground from all over the country, 2009. Photo by Martynas Vidzbelis.



The best examples of cross-crafting vitality: the ensembles of crosses, the most famous is the Hill of Crosses in Šiauliai region, 2004. Photo by Lithuanian National Culture Centre Archive.



St. John's Day in Lithuania, 2009. Photo by Vytautas Daraškevičius.

Juodaragis, Suklegos, Kilkim Žaibu, among others. They are acknowledged events that also include lectures by various academics working in the field of ICH. The historical and archaeological festivals are also held; one of the biggest – Festival of Experimental Archaeology ‘Days of Live Archeology in Kernavė’ (Eksperimentinės archeologijos festivalis „Gyvosios archeologijos dienos Kernavėje”) – is international. Moreover, the youth takes into consideration the ancient Baltic traditions and worldview, e.g. through Baltic cultural and religious communities: Ancient Baltic Religious Community ‘Romuva’ (Senovės baltų religinė bendrija „Romuva”), Ancient Baltic Fellowship of Battles ‘Vilkatlakai’ (Senovės baltų kovų brolija „Vilkatlakai”), Baltic Warfare Club of the Living History ‘Varingis’ (Baltų karybos gyvosios istorijos klubas „Varingis”), Ancient Baltic Reconstructed History Club ‘Sūduvos žirgas’ (Senovės baltų atkuriamosios istorijos klubas „Sūduvos žirgas”).

The Lithuanian picture is varied and covers a spectrum of activities and people; we are proud to say that we are passionate about ICH preservation and continuity, although unfortunately one of the persistent problems concerning the ICH field that we have identified is the ICH register, which does not fully function yet. Nonetheless, it is in progress: the formation of new ICH chapter of Lithuanian National Culture Centre is almost completed, the funding is reorganised, and the research on the suitable informational system is ongoing.

As far as the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is concerned, Lithuanians hold three inscribed elements: ‘Cross crafting and its symbolism’, ‘Sutartinės, Lithuanian multipart songs’, and the tradition of ‘Baltic song and dance celebrations’ (together with Latvia and Estonia).

**Cross crafting** is a Lithuanian folk-art tradition that emerged in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is a synthesis of craftsmanship, artistry, and faith; every step of the making and maintenance of crosses is important, including establishing the purpose of the cross (in honour of the deceased, God or saints, search for mercy or protection), choosing the right craftsmen, following the creative process, erecting and consecrating the crosses, visitations to crosses, chanting, and other related ceremonies that include the burning of a collapsed monument and other activities.

In this tradition, the ideas of Christianity and the archaic human relationship intertwine with nature. The monuments are built not only in cemeteries but also in villages, towns, near water areas and wells, and stones that are considered to be sacred; they are also hung on trees. The shapes of sculptures vary, for example, they can be crosses, pillars with roofs, ornaments and statuettes of saints, as well as chapels with paintings and metal parts – it depends on the region.



Even though the crafting of crosses had been forbidden during various periods of occupation, it did not stop people from resurrecting the tradition. The best examples of cross crafting vitality are the ensembles of crosses; the most famous is the Hill of Crosses in Šiauliai region.

Nowadays there are more than active 200 cross craftsmen in Lithuania.

*Sutartinės* is a syncretic art form based on interlinking polyphonic music, lyrics, and movement. The meaning of the word *sutartinė* is derived from a Lithuanian verb *sutarti*, which means 'to be in tune'. *Sutartinės* are usually sung by women and the instrumental versions are performed by men on pan-pipes, horns, long wood trumpets, and *kanklės* (similar to citterns). The choreographic part is moderate; for example, walking in a circle while holding hands and stomping feet. The poetic lyrics relate to work, calendar cycle, weddings, family, wartime, and other moments of everyday life.

*Sutartinės* represent an ancient form of two- or three-voice polyphony. Melodies contain 2 to 5 pitches and comprise distinct simultaneous melodic parts, accompanied by different sets of lyrics: a meaningful main text and a refrain that may include archaic vocals. Folk singers distinguish three main types of *sutartinės* in terms of performing practices and the number of performers, location, and function: *dvejinės* (twosomes), *trejinės* (threesomes) and *keturinės* (foursomes); however, it is further divided into almost 40 variations. The distinctive feature of *sutartinės* is the presence of second interval harmonies that derive from polyphonic melodic lines.

The tradition of singing *sutartinės* is most common in North-East Lithuania; they are performed on solemn occasions, as well as festivals, concerts, and social gatherings.

Lithuanian Song Celebration is an ongoing cultural development process, involving amateur and professional ensembles, artists, as well as cultural and educational institutions. It is also a prominent event that assembles more than 40,000 participants every 4 years since 1924 when it first took place in Kaunas.

The celebration consists of 4 main parts: the Folklore Day dedicated to the traditional culture; the Ensembles' Evening, which is a theatrical concert of stylised folk song, dance and instrumental groups; the Dance Day, on which 10,000 dancers present massive choreographic compositions; and the Song Day that gathers more than 20,000 singers that perform arranged folk songs and professional repertoire of modern and classic Lithuanian composers. The distinctive feature of the celebration is *a cappella* singing. The festivities are usually held for 7 days; the programme expands and improves by adding other, equally significant events: folk art exhibition, the national musical instrument *kanklės* concert, performances of amateur theatre groups, shows of brass orchestras, and colourful participant parades.



The tradition and symbols of the Baltic song and dance celebrations (including Lithuanian ones) were inscribed in 2008 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The list is relatively short, although important to Lithuanians and their attempts to form their notion of identity. Therefore, there are numerous examples of institutional and independent good practices in the safeguarding of ICH in Lithuania, which include the society and help to disseminate the importance of ICH and the objects themselves.

## The Lithuanian good practices in the safeguarding of ICH

### The Folklore Day of the Lithuanian Song Celebration

One of the examples of Lithuanian good practices in the field of ICH preservation and the wide-spread dissemination of traditions is the experience of organising the Folklore Day (Folkloro diena), which is a part of the Lithuanian Song Celebration programme. It is also an instance of natural folklore movement continuation after the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990.

It is not just an ordinary event; it is significant that around 400 folklore groups and communities, including craftsmen and other ICH promoters – 7000 participants altogether – take part. Even though the event is held only once every 4 years, the preparation process is always under way and of an inclusive character.

Eventually, the main aspects of Folklore Day and related activities have been formed, namely:

- to respect ICH and increase knowledge about it;
- to highlight and present the cultural diversity of regions;
- to celebrate the range of ICH areas: traditional singing, dancing, playing games and instruments, storytelling, customs, crafts, cuisine, costumes, medical knowledge and practices, forms of agriculture (beekeeping, farming, fishing, sauna traditions, etc.);
- to involve participants in the making of the celebration (from the preparation of the material to the participation in the main event), and to allow them to express themselves fully;
- to include the spectators in the activities and help them interact with the participants, and to learn from the experience.

In our opinion, one of the distinctive guidelines is to provide the preparation, programme activities and of course the context that contains celebration-specific themes and ideas. We aim not only for a respectful presentation of traditions, but also for ideas which are relevant for modern



individuals and which correspond to everyone's worldview, personal standpoints, and universal, humanistic, progressive values such as sustainable development.

The programme of the 2007 Song Celebration Folklore Day 'Saulutė rateliu tekėjo' (The sun rises in a wheel) was dedicated to the concepts of day and night, and the organisation of human life according to the solar cycle (Lietuvos nacionalinis kultūros centras 2007). The idea was to highlight all the elements of the day – morning, afternoon, evening and night; as well as their domestic context, in order to show the activities of people at different times of the day, such as eating, working, playing, etc. Moreover, there was an emphasis on the most significant, traditionally meaningful and sacred stops of the sun's journey around the sky: the sunrise, the noon, the sunset and the midnight; and also on their relation with human life: birth, wedding, etc. The event actually started with sunrise at 4:45 am and was planned to continue until late at night. However, a heavy rain stopped it.

In the 2009 celebration 'Žemynėle žiedkelėle' (The earth in blossom) (Lietuvos nacionalinis kultūros centras 2009), we tried to reflect the relation of a human being with the earth. The most important premise is that the earth has been always considered sacred, the source of food, the mother (the sky is the father) which gives birth and accepts after death. One of the most obvious expressions of respect is to kiss the earth (the saying goes 'By kissing the earth and kissing the crucifix we indulge in the same act'). The participants also demonstrated in the programmes that the work on the field – ploughing, sowing, harvesting – is a sacred action followed by rituals. The idea of the programme was also to discover the mythological images of the origin and the place of the earth and its parts in the cosmological structure, and the symbolical aspects of the earth in the history of the Lithuanian state. And even more importantly, it tried to revive the emotional relationship between human beings and the earth in general: the connection with their birthplace, the place in which they live, their motherland, the earth's manifestations in the landscape, and the relationship of human beings with the land of all citizens – the Homeland, Lithuania.

It is difficult to shortly present the content of the 2014 celebration's Folklore Day 'Laimužės lemta' (Destined by Laima). The topic was rather abstract and all-embracing – happiness. In our tradition, we consider happiness as a principle which integrates human beings, their environment (home), life, and activities.

In Lithuanian tradition, happiness is related not only with joy, but also with fate, destiny, success, fulfilment, economic welfare, abundance, healthiness, and other things. Every human being, depending on the gender and age, has their own happiness or luck, and an ability to realise the qualities and talents (a talent is conceived as a human success) bestowed to them by destiny.



Those gifts are signs of fate, which can be found in nature, the environment, or changed by actions – attracting or distracting. Another very important quality in the Lithuanian tradition is luck. There are successful or unlucky places and moments; even a word can change one's fate. Laimė (luck) or Laima is the name of the Lithuanian goddess of fate. Another very important aspect is sharing. The more good one shares (for example, good words or thoughts), the more happiness he spreads. However, the implementation of this concept was not easy at all – there were many separate smaller programmes and rituals. It was even said that the place which hosted these events became the happiest place in entire Lithuania.

As mentioned, the preparation of the participants for this event took a long time as they had studied the material in detail, choosing the elements that seemed close to them, thus entering and staying in context; and able to choose themselves the accents reflected in the programme. By allowing the organisers to choose specific rituals and other activities as highlights of the programme, we united all participants and the audience.

### **Continuation of ICH traditions by the society and communities**

As stated before, the communities have the greatest impact on the preservation of ICH in its natural environment and on the support to the bearers. Here, several more examples of the best practices in this field will be discussed.

The villages and towns in the Dzūkija ethnographic region (Southern Lithuania) are a good example of ICH centres where oral, agricultural, and living traditions are passed on naturally. Only a few decades ago, most women of Dzūkija could sing at least a hundred songs; the most accomplished singers remembered as many as four hundred. Songs were passed from generation to generation, exchanged among villages, and changed or augmented in the process. Nowadays, for example, the locals of Žiūrai village in Southern Dzūkija pass on their singing traditions to the younger generations. For the villagers, the songs, customs, beliefs, and the oral folklore are a natural part of their everyday life that impacts their spiritual practices, family and community celebrations. What is more, 45 years ago, one of the first ethnographic ensembles in Lithuania was founded in the village. It is still active and the members pass on their experience to their children and grandchildren. During the anniversary concert, the whole community and the four generations of the ensemble sang the traditional songs of Žiūrai village.

In fact, children are getting increasingly more involved in the activities concerning ICH. In Lithuania, a growing number of families want their children to grow up according to the traditional





upbringing, following the subtle and creative means that appeal to their spiritual world. Increasingly more often people choose the values of traditional culture: they organise family clubs and family folklore groups. They foster family and community traditions, celebrate calendar holidays, expand knowledge and experience of ethnic culture and apply it to the upbringing of their children. Nowadays, the customs, lullabies, games, and other inherited knowledge can help adults to communicate with children, to soothe them, play with them, nourish them, and improve various skills, such as language, the ability to listen, sense of rhythm, coordination and focus.

It is worth mentioning that there is a number of implemented and on-going projects in the capital city and other regions, dedicated to the ethnocultural education of young families. For instance, for 10 years, a private non-formal education school Diemedis in Vilnius has held folklore lessons for mothers and children. Their methods and gathered knowledge have spread to other cities, for example, to the Panevėžys ethnoclub 'Raskila', which implemented them in their lessons for mothers; also, in Klaipėda, the ethnoculture club organises theme nights called 'Traditional lullabies and playing' and 'Song club for everyone'; Vilnius Ethnic Culture Centre (Vilniaus etninės kultūros centras) invites families to 'Afternoons for toddlers'; and the folklore ensemble 'Virvytė' carries out ethnocultural education camps for families.

There are more than 100 folklore groups for children, youth, and higher education students. Usually, they function under cultural or educational institutions; however, there are some active independent groups and clubs. The young people interested in traditional culture are keen on folklore trainings and master's courses, where ethnomusicologists and folklorists share their experience. This contemporary folklore community of students gathers together every year to celebrate St. George's Day (it has been organised by the Palanga ethnoclub 'Mėguva' for more than 20 years), and every two years to attend Lietuvos studentų folkloro festivalis (Lithuanian student folklore festival), organised by the Lithuanian National Culture Centre.

### **Measures that promote nationwide ICH continuity**

Lithuanian National Culture Centre pays particular attention to the dissemination of traditional art among the youth. In line with this notion, it organises a youth contest 'Sidabro vainikėlis' (Silver coronet), which maintains traditional art forms and revives those on the edge of extinction and encourages the youth to become interested and educated in traditional crafts. Hundreds of school students all around Lithuania apply to be a part of the contest and hold craft exhibitions and seminars. This competition has also fostered the idea of children crafts workshops.



Since 2005, the Lithuanian National Folklore Centre together with the Kaunas National Culture Centre (Kauno tautinės kultūros centras) and traditional culture teachers have been organising the ‘Tramtatulis’ contest, dedicated to Lithuanian school and pre-school children and Lithuanian folklore performers. Its purpose is to encourage children to learn about their local traditional culture, to disseminate folklore, and to train the young folklore performers: singers, musicians and storytellers. The project includes various seminars, trainings, local auditions in all municipalities and regions of Lithuania. Children learn how to understand and convey the artistic value of folklore, performance authenticity, expressiveness, natural-sounding voice, as well as the skills of playing music and stage culture. The most praised are the participants and teachers that cherish their local and family folklore traditions. Youth contests are an appealing and effective method to introduce crafts and folklore traditions to children and to ensure that they remain protected.

### **Practices that raise ICH-related public awareness**

Even though the younger generations are continuously reminded of their cultural heritage, there remains a part of the society that knows very little about it or is not encouraged enough to embrace the traditional culture. Therefore, the Lithuanian National Culture Centre initiates increasingly more public events that educate and entertain people. What is more, since there is a sacred counterpart to traditional culture, and a symbolic purpose is often added to it, the participation is voluntary and usually takes a form of an unforced communal gathering.

One of the public initiatives is the cultural gathering Lithuania Dance (Lietuvos nacionalinis kultūros centras 2016). The purpose of the project is to gather and unite Lithuanians through traditional dances and music and strengthen their sense of cultural identity. Of course, foreigners are very welcome.

The project started in 2015, when we noticed that traditional dances were becoming popular again as a social and educational phenomenon, especially among the youth who are eager to continue traditions. With the help of several folklore groups, the staff of the Centre recorded 16 traditional regional dance lessons and put them on YouTube (Lietuvos nacionalinis kultūros centras 2015), spread the news via national broadcast and kindly asked cultural workers and communities from all around Lithuania to hold dances on the same day in various public outdoor places in order to attract as many people as possible. As a result, 85 events took place at around 5 pm on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September in Lithuania, and one in United Kingdom, organised by the local Lithuanian community. The main event from Vilnius, as well as other clips from districts, was broad-





casted. The hosts explained the dances, their purpose and origin. The success of the first event led to a second one in 2016, and the event is planned to continue. In this way, a new tradition reminds people of their roots and regional characteristics, improves opinions about traditional culture, and helps to preserve the traditional dances through combined efforts of specialists and communities.

Moving on to the second public initiative, its purpose is similar – to strengthen, encourage, and embrace the sense of ethnic identity. The object of the national costume contest ‘Woven identity’ is a focus on the national costume. It is worn on family gatherings, national holidays, weddings, and therefore it carries cultural, artistic and historic value. In 2015 (*Lietuvos radijas ir televizija* 2015), individuals and groups were invited to send us pictures of their costumes together with their technical and personal specifications: the origins, details of their makers, region of making, whether it is inherited, and what kind of emotional value it brings to the owner. In the final part, the most accurate, authentic and artistic costumes won; they were judged by professionals from various cultural fields. It might bear signs of unfair competition at first – as if its evaluation exploited traditions. Yet again it was a huge social gathering not only for the participants from all over the country but also for the audience. And that was the purpose – to create an environment that celebrates Lithuanian roots.

On the whole, in Lithuania, the state ensures the safeguarding of ICH in terms of legal and institutional systems overseen by ICH specialists, who as a result work toward the motivation of the bearers and their communities in order to preserve traditions and promote ICH among the rest of society. Moreover, the number of independent initiatives in terms of ICH is growing and this tendency manifests itself through various communities, events, and the revival of certain practices. There are still issues concerning ICH: the media presents a rather negative view of ICH, the educational programmes of ICH are shutting down because of decreasing numbers of interested students, and the National ICH Register is still in the process of creation. Nevertheless, the continuity of ICH all over Lithuania is safeguarded both by institutional and non-governmental initiatives, which ensures a continuous increase of its public awareness.



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# Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Hungary



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*Elements chosen for inscription on the National Inventory are announced annually at the opening ceremony of the European Heritage Days national event. ... State awards also contribute to raising awareness about traditional values in society. These awards ensure that talented artists from laic artistic activities become visible to the masses.*

*The flame must be kept alive.<sup>1</sup>*

In 2006, Act XXXVIII on the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage<sup>2</sup> enabled the ratification of the UNESCO 2003 Convention in Hungary – making it the 39<sup>th</sup> state to do so. Hungary was elected a member of the Intergovernmental Committee for a period of four years at the first General Assembly of State Parties in 2006, and later in 2014. According to the law, the implementation of the Convention in Hungary rests on the ministry responsible for cultural heritage.

In April 2009, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Oktatási és Kulturális Minisztérium; today: Ministry of Human Capacities, Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma) entrusted the coordination of tasks emanating from the state implementation of the Convention to the Hungarian Open Air Museum (Szabadtéri Néprajzi Múzeum). The Museum established the Directorate of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Szellemi Kulturális Örökség Igazgatóság) as the structural unit coordinating all tasks related to the implementation of the UNESCO Convention. The Directorate serves as an intermediary between the institutions and organisations taking part in this work by facilitating and coordinating the further tasks in the process of safeguarding and preserving such elements. This work is achieved through maintaining and managing the continually expanding Hungarian National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Szellemi Kulturális Örökség Nemzeti Jegyzéke), developing the Network of Experts, providing free public access by maintaining the Intangible Cultural Heritage Website ([www.szelle-](http://www.szelle-)



<sup>1</sup> Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály, whose 50<sup>th</sup> death anniversary is celebrated in 2017 in association with UNESCO, is remembered today for his contributions to the fields of ethnomusicology and music education as much as he is for his musical creations. His metaphor is in accordance with the purpose of the Forum, and so are his following words: 'Culture cannot be inherited. Ancestral traditions evaporate rapidly unless each generation reacquires them for itself.'

<sup>2</sup> 2006. évi XXXVIII. törvény a szellemi kulturális örökség megőrzéséről szóló, Párizsban, 2003. év október hó 17. napján elfogadott UNESCO Egyezmény kihirdetéséről, Magyar Közlöny [Hungarian Gazette] no. 22, 24 February 2006.



One of the objects of the collection, 14 June 2015.  
Photo by Vanda Illés.



Education, 1 June 2015. Photo by Vanda Illés.

miorokseg.hu), providing continuous pertinent information and raising awareness among experts and the public, as well as through organising conferences and workshops in the field. The Directorate has also established a nation-wide network of intangible cultural heritage county coordinators.

The Hungarian National Commission for Intangible Cultural Heritage (Szellemi Kulturális Örökség Magyar Nemzeti Bizottsága) was established in September 2008, and after restructuring in 2012 it became the Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee of Experts of the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO (UNESCO Magyar Nemzeti Bizottság Szellemi Kulturális Örökség Szakbizottság). Members of the Committee are delegated by relevant institutions, organisations and ministries involved in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. The Committee, comprised of 22 members, is responsible for developing the process of implementing the Convention in Hungary, recommending to the Minister of Culture the heritage elements to be considered for inscription on the National Inventory, selecting elements to be nominated for inscription on the UNESCO Representative List, developing and submitting proposals for programmes and educational projects that facilitate the implementation of the Convention, and developing and advancing the initiatives of cultural diplomacy for international cooperation on the multi-national elements of intangible cultural heritage.

The first Hungarian nomination – ‘Busó festivities at Mohács: masked end-of-winter carnival custom’ – was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009. Later, in 2012, two further Hungarian nominations were inscribed on the List – ‘Folk art of the Matyó, embroidery of a traditional community’ and ‘Falconry, a living human heritage’, as a multinational nomination. In addition, two programmes were selected for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices: ‘Táncház method: a Hungarian model for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage’ (2011), and ‘Safeguarding of the folk music heritage by the Kodály concept’ (2016).

According to the Convention, safeguarding requires each state party to identify and make an inventory of the elements of intangible cultural heritage present on its territory. To achieve this end, the Ministry of Culture has made a public appeal to communities, groups, and individuals in Hungary to apply for inscription on the National Inventory with the intangible cultural elements they identify as their own. The objective of the inventory is not only to compile a record of cultural expressions still practised by communities and considered as their own, but also to make the inventory publically accessible. The nomination of the elements for inscription on the National Inventory requires the bearer communities to fill out the nomination forms and compile the necessary documentation. The Intangible Cultural Heritage Directorate then prepares nomination proposals for



the Hungarian Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee of Experts. Upon review, the Committee makes recommendations to the responsible minister, who gives the final approval of elements to be inscribed. The process is initiated by the bearer communities themselves: by identifying, defining, and drawing up plans of safeguarding their own living heritage under the guidance of experts. This procedure complies fully with the principles of the Convention; inventorying is not intended to be a top-down process with national treasures listed by experts.

The complete National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage elements of Hungary, together with the complete nomination material is accessible online.<sup>3</sup> Elements chosen for inscription on the National Inventory are announced annually at the opening ceremony of the European Cultural Heritage Days national event. The Directorate of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has established several series of programmes with the aim of increasing visibility and public awareness of the intangible cultural heritage to the wide public. The most important and well-known events are the nation-wide Cultural Heritage Days and the Pünkösdi Örökség Fesztivál (Whitsun Heritage Festival) – International Gathering of the ICH of the Hungarian Open Air Museum.



## Good practices in ICH safeguarding at the Hungarian Heritage House

This study will present the good practices applied at the Hungarian Heritage House (Hagyományok Háza) to preserve craftsmanship for future generations as a part of the intellectual-cultural heritage, to allow it to inspire new contemporary works, and to raise the awareness of these values among the general public.

The Hungarian Heritage House is a state institution founded by the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage (Nemzeti Kulturális Örökség Minisztériuma) in 2001 with the purpose of preserving and promoting Hungarian folk tradition.<sup>4</sup> The Hungarian Heritage House has three departments:

The Hungarian State Folk Ensemble (Magyar Állami Népi Együttes) was founded in 1951 with the purpose of collecting, preserving, and presenting the treasures of Hungarian folklore. The Ensemble presents traditional dances collected in the Carpathian Basin during stage shows and by means of other interactive sessions.<sup>5</sup>

The 'László Lajtha' Folklore Documentation Centre (Lajtha László Folklórdokumentációs Központ) was established in order to meet both scientific and functional demands. The Centre inherited and

<sup>3</sup> [www.szellemikulturalisorokseg.hu/index0\\_en.php?name=en\\_f22\\_elements](http://www.szellemikulturalisorokseg.hu/index0_en.php?name=en_f22_elements) [all cited Internet sources accessed on 28 November 2016].

<sup>4</sup> [www.hagyomanyokhaza.hu/hh/about\\_us](http://www.hagyomanyokhaza.hu/hh/about_us).

<sup>5</sup> [www.heritagehouse.hu/mane](http://www.heritagehouse.hu/mane).

enlarged the stock formerly belonging to the House of Professional Folk Dancers (Néptáncosok Szakmai Háza). By means of modern technology and the Internet, it provides access to all available documents on the folklore of the Carpathian Basin. The Centre digitalises folk music, folk dance, and other documents on folklore in their original form.<sup>6</sup>

The Department of Applied Folk Art (Népművészeti Módszertani Műhely) is the most important department for craftsmanship (at the Hungarian Heritage House). Its mission is to transmit, introduce, and present traditional culture to the public. Its aim is to incorporate folk traditions as liveable elements of cultural literacy, treating it as valid knowledge in community culture, entertainment, and education. The department also makes efforts to allow the traditional folk culture – especially folk dances, folk music, folk poetry, and craftsmanship – to live on as a part of general culture. It is in this spirit that the department organises its courses and conferences, disseminates information, announces calls for proposals, publishes materials, and certifies the works of contemporary handicraft artists.<sup>7</sup>

This department collaborates with the Association of Hungarian Folk Artists (Népművészeti Egyesületek Szövetsége). The AHFA is a national network that provides interest representation for folk artists. They are active in safeguarding and preserving our traditions and values of our heritage crafts. They work together with international partners, providing foreign possibilities for Hungarian folk artists. They also provide national and international entry-level opportunities: trade presentations, exhibitions, workshops, and other kinds of events. They also run professional committees in all folk art trades, whose members are elected from among the renowned masters of the member organisations.<sup>8</sup>

The following is a presentation of good practices applied by the Department of Applied Folk Art to preserve craftsmanship:

### Documentation and collection activities

The Museum of Applied Hungarian Folk Art (Magyar Népi Iparművészeti Múzeum), which is a part of the Hungarian Heritage House, has been collecting objects from craftsmen for 50 years now; mainly textiles, pottery, and sculptures. It is a unique contemporary collection in Hungary on this topic that represents qualified folk artworks. The collection has high visibility, and it is open for everyone.<sup>9</sup>

### Exhibitions

Another practice for visibility is realised through organising temporary exhibitions. In the Museum

<sup>6</sup> [www.heritagehouse.hu/fdk](http://www.heritagehouse.hu/fdk).

<sup>7</sup> [www.heritagehouse.hu/nmm/aboutus/handicrafts](http://www.heritagehouse.hu/nmm/aboutus/handicrafts).

<sup>8</sup> [www.nesz.hu/english/association-of-hungarian-folk-artists/essences](http://www.nesz.hu/english/association-of-hungarian-folk-artists/essences).

<sup>9</sup> [www.heritagehouse.hu/main/special\\_events/exhibitions/museum](http://www.heritagehouse.hu/main/special_events/exhibitions/museum).





of Applied Hungarian Folk Art, there are approximately 25 exhibitions annually. They provide entry level opportunities for folk artists, either individually or as AHFA member organisations. The opening ceremonies of the exhibitions are not only attended by people from Budapest – members of the local artistic communities also are represented. These presentation opportunities help artists to realise the values of their craftsmanship skills, and they also provide an occasion to raise the awareness of their art among the leaders of their local communities. Such an exhibition – in the capital city, in the gallery of the most important applied folk art museum – is valuable and prestigious.

### Open Handicraft Studio

Among our most important activities are the operations of the Open Handicraft Studio (Nytott Műhely). It is a very effective method of introducing 'living' folk art, and to popularise traditional folk crafts.

The Studio is a place where visitors can see applied folk artists at work for free on a daily basis. They can ask questions, request assistance, or simply speak with the masters.

The Studio provides work opportunities to graduate weavers, basket weavers, pearl jewellers, felt and lace makers of the Hungarian Heritage House's handicraft courses and handicraft masters of other trades.

The aim of the Studio is to make visitors acquainted with the secrets of traditional handicraft and to share their insights with the youth as well as adults, professionals, students, and all those who are interested in folk arts, the Museum collection and in the work of contemporary folk artists.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, a new hall of the Museum opened on the Day of Hungarian Culture on Fő Street.

The Studio's services include:

- museum pedagogy – It is an interactive way of allowing for a better understanding of the Hungarian history, tradition and heritage. We cooperate with Budapest schools; thus, the children from the city have the opportunity to get acquainted with the modern idea of traditional craftsmanship at a young age, considering the fact that they have no contact with it when growing up at home. They are not only spectators of the exhibited objects; they can actively participate in the manufacture of simpler items of daily use, which they can later take home and use every day. The presence of professional handicraft masters and their professionalism itself is also a motivating factor for the children.
- programmes for families – The experience of creating items with one's parents is not only important to the children; it is also an occasion for the parents to relax. We organise such events

<sup>10</sup> [www.heritagehouse.hu/main/special\\_events/open\\_handicraft\\_studio](http://www.heritagehouse.hu/main/special_events/open_handicraft_studio).



around the holiday period, allowing families to enjoy the preparations as well – as a form of shared experience.

- Interactive presentations and talks about ethnographic subjects on interesting topics, such as Hungarian gastronomy; the pottery masters introduce their pieces of artwork while cooking in them at the kitchen show of the Open Studio. The audience of these events can also sample the dishes. These occasions serve the purpose of transmitting complex knowledge with the use of experience-based methods.
- workshops for hobby artists – These programmes are intended for people who do not want to grasp a deeper knowledge of either of the crafts but would rather prefer to spend a few (2–3) hours creating simpler handicraft objects.

## Education

The Handicrafts Section of the Hungarian Heritage House, therefore, organises educational programmes for handicraft teachers and coordinates crafts masters training programmes countrywide. The applicants for these courses would like to become acquainted with certain crafts or would like to broaden their existing knowledge.

The folk handicrafts instructors' training course includes branches of folk art, such as rug weaving, pottery, leatherwork, lace-making, basket weaving, rush work, straw work, and making corn-husk objects. The course issues a certificate in instructing folk handicraft activities at play-houses and in teaching chosen folk crafts, both in and out of school curriculums.

There are also courses for further education of teachers of folk arts. The 'Master course' and the 'Teacher of teachers' course cover the areas of embroidery, weaving, leatherwork, and instructing folk handicraft workshops. The participants of these courses gain thorough professional knowledge. The course is invitation-based only. Beside the opportunity to acquire knowledge, they provide an opportunity for the craftsmen from the same areas to meet.<sup>11</sup>

## National competitions for craftsmen

We organise national competitions for craftsmen in different professions (embroidery; weaving; pottery; carving in wood, horn, bone; making instruments etc.). These competitions serve the purpose of keeping craftsmen motivated to create high quality, new works of art.

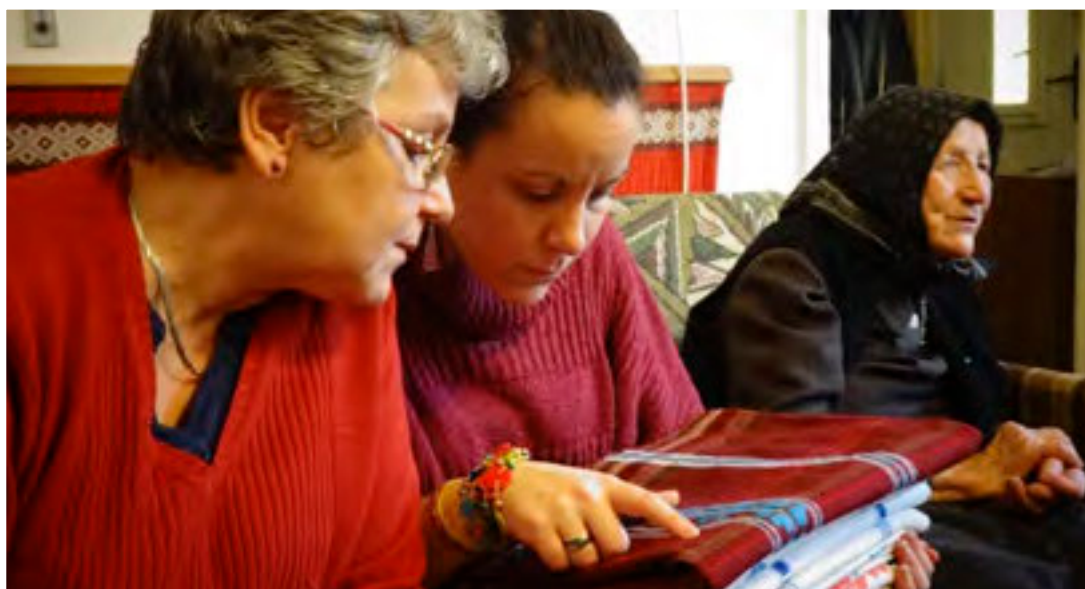
We announce these calls in cooperation with organisers from the countryside. We collaborate with associations of AHFA, and each of the professions has their own locations. These events are

<sup>11</sup> [www.heritagehouse.hu/nmm/aboutus/handicrafts](http://www.heritagehouse.hu/nmm/aboutus/handicrafts).





Certified product with the trade mark, 10 March 2016. Photo by Vanda Illés.



Collecting materials from elderly locals, 23 February 2014. Photo by Vanda Illés.

important because they agitate local organisations and communities, provide meeting and developing possibilities for the profession at conferences, reach a wide audience through exhibitions and catalogue, and facilitate raising awareness.

The last event in 2016 was the Kisjankó Bori National Embroidery Competition (Kisjankó Bori Országos Hímzőpályázat). 429 textiles arrived, and there were approximately 200 competitors.<sup>12</sup>

### Certification of folk crafts

Quality control is of primary importance to the Hungarian Heritage House. Therefore, we organise certification events on applied folk art products for craftsmen, building on traditional sources. In this way we can ensure that the objectified forms of handicraft values protected by our institution constitute high-quality, well-functioning applied folk art pieces that have appropriate ethnographic backgrounds. The Hungarian Heritage House conducts this task as a state responsibility based on Paragraph 3 of the Minister of National Cultural Heritage Decree 12/2004.<sup>13</sup>

We invite the members of the jury from the Applied Folk Art Qualification Committee (Népi Iparművészeti Bíráló Bizottság), who are theoretical and practical experts. Anyone can submit their traditional handicraft works to the certification event, during which the members of the Committee decide on the products anonymously, considering aspects such as materials, execution, and the quality of design (in terms of form and pattern composition). They examine whether the objects serve their specified functions, whether the traditional elements used are authentic, and whether their appearance meets aesthetic standards.

Similar certification events have taken place since 1953, thus establishing a well-functioning method of quality control, which is still regularly reviewed and adapted to the requirements of given times in order to ensure that the certified objects are always adaptable to contemporary housing and clothing culture and to public spaces.<sup>14</sup>

We organise nearly 40 certification days per year, during which over 3000 items of every type of traditional craft are scrutinised. Every month, in collaboration with regional member organisations of AHFA, we organise qualifications of different crafts in Budapest and other cities in Hungary.

<sup>12</sup> [www.hagyomanyokhaza.hu/page/12649](http://www.hagyomanyokhaza.hu/page/12649).

<sup>13</sup> *A nemzeti kulturális örökség miniszterének 12/2004. (V. 21.) NKÖM rendelet a népi iparművészettel kapcsolatos állami feladatok végrehajtásáról*, Magyar Közlöny no. 69, 21 May 2004.

<sup>14</sup> [www.heritagehouse.hu/nmm/aboutus/folkarts](http://www.heritagehouse.hu/nmm/aboutus/folkarts).



## Trademarks

Craftsmen can apply trademarks on their officially qualified products. (8. picture) The 'qualified' trademark sticker is a unique sign that proves the quality of the item. The text on the trademark bears a twofold message: on the one hand, it signals to foreigners in English that the item is a Hungarian handicraft, and on the other, it emphasises to Hungarian customers that the item is certified and thus represents high quality.

By purchasing products with this trademark, even laic customers can be assured that they are buying valuable Hungarian folk art and applied folk art items, with which they can support Hungarian applied artists, and thus promote the sustenance of traditional Hungarian folk art and applied folk art. (9. picture) As the certified products are all numbered, they can be retraced and verified. AHFA operates a website ([www.pavavedjegy.hu](http://www.pavavedjegy.hu)), where the customers can find the picture of the item, information about the crafts master and other items from the artist.

## State awards

State awards also contribute to raising awareness about traditional values in society. These awards ensure that talented artists from laic artistic activities become visible to the masses. We have three important State awards in Hungary in crafts: Artist of Applied Folk Art (Népi Iparművész), Young Master of Folk Art (Népművészet Ifjú Mestere), and Master of Folk Art (Népművészet Mestere).

The owner of more than one (positive) certification number can officially use the name Artist of Applied Folk Art and will receive an official certificate (card). (10. picture) The title and the certificate are granted by the Applied Folk Art Qualification Committee. Receiving the certificate is subject to certain requirements: the artist must have at least 30–35 certified items (with numbers); in order to ensure continuous artistic activity, and items must be submitted at least every 3 years; after receiving the certificate card, it must be renewed every 5 years, which ensures the successful certification of new items. This system ensures that artists have a vested interest in supplying high-quality items and its constant renewal.<sup>15</sup>

The selection process of the Young Master of Folk Art Award is organised by the Hungarian Heritage House, based on a decree by the Ministry of Human Capacities. Awardees can be creative or performing folk artists between 15 and 35 years old. Craftsmen must conduct collection works, the collected materials must be subsequently documented, and 5 new items must be created from the source materials.<sup>16</sup>

A Master of Folk Art Award has been awarded since 1953 by a legal act of the Minister of Human Capacities. It awards the life work of outstandingly talented folk artists based on recommenda-

<sup>15</sup> [www.hagyományokháza.hu/page/10857](http://www.hagyományokháza.hu/page/10857).

<sup>16</sup> [www.hagyományokháza.hu/nmm/nim](http://www.hagyományokháza.hu/nmm/nim).



tions and nominations by the local communities and associations in five categories (folk dance, folk singing, instrumental folk music, storytelling, and traditional handicrafts). Since 2008 it has been a part of the national inventory of ICH.<sup>17</sup>

### **Working together with NGOs on projects**

Our last important practice is working together with NGOs on special projects. We will present in detail one of them, called the Barkó Project. The Hungarian Heritage House was asked to provide professional support by the locals of Ózd region, where the so-called *Barkó* people live. They wanted to search for their roots, and their goal was to create their own item that would have traditional inspirations. The aim of the project was to help local communities regain their lost knowledge. The programme was attended by a mix of participants from various backgrounds: talented youth, absolute beginners, the unemployed, skilled embroiders, sewing women, and fashion designers.

We selected four professions that were typical for the region: embroidery, costume making, weaving, and furniture painting. For each discipline, we had 4 mentors, who were famous craft masters from other areas. We taught them how to collect weaving patterns from elderly people or from old photos. We then showed them that with the help of the copies and original patterns, they can understand the arrangement of the pattern; we also taught them the traditional crafts techniques (stitching, sewing, weaving, and painting). Only after these basics were accomplished, the creation of new items could commence.

For visibility, we need to advertise our products. Thus, the first renewed Barkó clothes were worn by a celebrity who hosted the TV talent show *Felszállott a páva* (the peacock), organised by the Hungarian Heritage House for talented folk dancers, singers, and musicians.

## **Closing statement**

The implementation of the Convention and good practices also affect several organisations in Hungary. We are happy to share our experiences with institutions that work in similar fields. We are open to all forms of international cooperation that promote the preservation of the values of traditional culture and their transmission to future generations.

<sup>17</sup> [www.nesz.hu/a-nepmuveszet-mesterei](http://www.nesz.hu/a-nepmuveszet-mesterei).









PART 2.

ICH AND THE EXAMINATION  
AND DOCUMENTATION  
OF PHENOMENA



# The strategy of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage in the Czech Republic



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*Between 1994 and 1997, the work on the film encyclopaedia Folk dances from Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia started. The encyclopaedia consists of ten volumes which map all distinct ethnographic areas. The exceptionally positive results of the documentation of folk dances contributed to UNESCO's decision to provide financial support for a new series of documentaries – the film encyclopaedia Folk handicrafts and folk art production in the Czech Republic. The new series started in 1997, and the recordings still continue today.*

The number of intangible cultural heritage elements, which the Czech Republic pays attention to and which it safeguards is significantly smaller than that in the neighbouring Central-European countries. The national list is defined as a List of Intangible Elements of Traditional Folk Culture of the Czech Republic (Seznam nemateriálních statků tradiční lidové kultury České republiky), which emphasises the fact that it focuses primarily on the phenomena of the traditional culture of rural communities. Such specification is understandable due to the long participation of the Czech Republic in the UNESCO projects which for an extended time have been aimed at traditional folk culture and folklore. In response to the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore adopted in 1989, several important meetings of experts from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were organised in the Czech Republic; these meetings dealt with the safeguarding of traditional folk culture. The main subject-matter of the meetings included: principles of the protection of traditional folk culture against inappropriate commercialization (1996); ethics and traditional folk culture (1997); national policies focused on the preservation and fostering of traditional folk culture as an important part of intangible cultural heritage (2005); and the safeguarding measures for the elements of the intangible cultural heritage (2009). The meetings included questionnaire surveys, expert reports and papers which have been edited and subsequently integrated into several printed methodical handbooks (Krist 1997; Jančář 1999; Blahůšek and Krist 2005). The handbooks are still among the UNESCO-recommended working materials.

After UNESCO had adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, the Czech Republic made first steps to comply with it. The Ministry of Culture



of the Czech Republic (Ministerstvo kultury České republiky) and the National Institute of Folk Culture (Národní ústav lidové kultury) created basic documents with the framework for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, which were however restricted to the phenomena of traditional folk culture due to their previous course. The efforts of both institutions resulted in the first systematic conception which was adopted by the government, and which is well-known under the name the Strategy of Improved Care for Traditional Folk Culture (henceforth Strategy). The document was in force between 2004 and 2010, and it was subsequently assessed and supplemented with new tasks and finally implemented as the Strategy for the years 2010–2015 and 2016–2020.

One of the first tasks prepared and implemented by the Institute and the Strategy was the identification and documentation of the phenomena of traditional folk culture in the Czech Republic (Blahůšek 2006). The work included a large survey in the form of a questionnaire about the contemporary situation of traditional folk culture. The questionnaires for particular groups of tangible and intangible phenomena of folk culture were subsequently interpreted in cooperation with the research fellows from the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Etnologický ústav Akademie věd České republiky) and Masaryk University (Masarykova univerzita), in categories such as: folklore; religiosity; customs and traditions; nutrition; social relations; ways of livelihood; settlement, house and habitation; transport, trade, market; clothing and visual culture. The data collection in particular regions was coordinated by the regional accredited workplaces, whose staff ensured the personal or remote completion of the questionnaires. A company from Brno called FOCUS provided controlled data collection and addressed the local authorities.

The above large-scale and long-term project resulted in tens of thousands of questionnaires which were subsequently digitally assessed by FOCUS at the nationwide and regional levels. The questionnaires are accessible online ([www.lidovakultura.cz](http://www.lidovakultura.cz)); they are currently processed as a GIS map application ([mapy.nulk.cz/lidove-obyceje](http://mapy.nulk.cz/lidove-obyceje)). The pilot map, which focuses on customs and traditions, displays the occurrence of certain phenomena in the field; it filters information according to specific criteria and displays textual information; it also allows the users to print maps and lists of locations as well as the questionnaires themselves.

The institutional groundwork for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the Czech Republic has a strong structure, which interconnects the administration officers, the experts from professional institutions, and the bearers of elements as well as the communities in which



they live. At the Ministry of Culture, the Regional and Minority Culture Department (Odbor regionální a národnostní kultury, RMCD) is in charge of organising the process of safeguarding. Its major tasks include the coordination of international and national activities, such as sending expert observers to the sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Strategy in order to participate in the preparation of nominations for the inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, to evaluate the nominations for the inscription on the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Traditional Folk Culture of the Czech Republic, and to assess the documents for the National Council for Traditional Folk Culture (Národní rada pro tradiční lidovou kulturu), an advisory board to the Minister of Culture. Furthermore, the RMCD is a managing department to the National Institute of Folk Culture, a state-funded organisation of the Ministry of Culture; the Institute is also the national central workplace in charge of the care of traditional folk culture. Based on this mission, the Institute issues methodological guidance to Regional Centres for Traditional Folk Culture (Regionální centra pro tradiční lidovou kulturu) established in particular regions. Within their respective regions, the Regional Centres cooperate with regional and local museums and local communities, as well as with the bearers of traditional folk culture. Together, they prepare the documentation and identification of the intangible cultural heritage in their areas, and based on this they prepare documents for the inscriptions of these elements on the Regional Inventories of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which is a necessary precondition for a possible nomination of an element to be inscribed on the National List.

The List of Intangible Elements of Traditional Folk Culture of the Czech Republic was established in 2008 by the order of the Minister of Culture. The first elements were included on the National List based on their previous inscriptions on the List of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, and their following inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In 2009, the following elements were included on the national List: 'Slovácko Verbuňk, recruit dances', 'Shrovetide door-to-door processions and masks in the villages of the Hlinecko area', 'Rides of the Kings in the south-east of the Czech Republic', and 'Falconry, a living human heritage'. In 2011 another inscription was added, namely: 'Gamekeeping – planned sustainable management of game animals and of their environment as a natural part of life in rural areas'. In 2012, the following elements were included: 'Odzemek – Wallachian male solo dance', 'Leading the Judas - Easter door-to-door processions with a person dressed as Judas in Eastern Bohemia', and 'Puppetry in Eastern Bohemia' – the art of the produc-





*Odzemek* dance is inscribed in the national inventory, 2016. Photo by Jan Kolář, Wallachian Open-Air Museum in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm.

tion of puppets and the interpretation of traditional puppet plays. In 2013, the 'Run for the Barchan' was added – a town festival associated with the contest for the fastest runner. In 2014, the List was extended by the 'Blueprint manufacturing technology' (Indigo hand-block printing), 'Traditional healing procedures and the legacy of Vincenz Priessnitz', and 'Czech puppetry – folk performing arts'. In 2015, when the following elements were included: 'Production of Christmas decorations from glass beads' and the 'Nativity crèche path in Třešť' – a Christmas tradition of building and production of family crèches. The latest inscription was made in 2016 when two elements were added: Skřipácký-style music in the Jihlava area and Easter door-to-door processions with boys dressed as Judas in the Bučovice area, South Moravia

The close cooperation between the Czech Republic and UNESCO on the preparation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity list resulted in the inscription of the 'Slovácko Verbuňk, recruit dances' in 2005, when *verbuňk* was inscribed as one of the first masterpieces. The Slovácko *verbuňk* is a male dance which includes jumping up, with a high level of improvisation. Its peculiarity is caused by the fact that although *verbuňk* is usually danced in groups, each of the dancers dances on his own and expresses his regional and local citizenship, individual dancing skills and character.

After the Czech Republic joined the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009, it was possible to submit the elements proposed to be inscribed on the newly established Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In 2010, the 'Shrovetide door-to-door processions and masks in the villages in the Hlinecko area' were inscribed. The processions are held at the end of the winter season, which is called Shrovetide. Village men and boys disguised in traditional masks go from door to door around the village, accompanied by a brass music band. The procession stops at each house, and with the householder's permission, four masked figures perform a ritual dance. The dance is meant to secure a rich harvest and prosperity for the family. The Shrovetide processions are well-established and important public activities of the local community.

2011 saw the inscription of the Ride of the Kings in Slovácko. This tradition is one of the important festivities that can be observed in diverse forms throughout Central Europe. However, it is held very rarely at present. The major reason is that the tradition has always been connected with agrarian rural culture, as it has depended on the availability of horses without which the ceremony could not be performed in its traditional form. For this reason, the tradition has survived only in a few Moravian settlements in the south-eastern part of the Czech Republic.







St. Nicholas masked procession in southern Wallachia, 2008. Photo by Eva Románková-Kuminková.



At the end of 2016, in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, another element was inscribed on the List: the 'Puppetry in Slovakia and Czechia'. Currently, there is also a common nomination for the 'Traditional blueprint technique in Central Europe' being jointly prepared by the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, and Germany, submitted in March 2017.

In response to the safeguarding measures prescribed by the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore adopted in 1989, the Czech Republic has awarded the exceptional experts in production techniques since 2001. Since that year, the Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic has awarded the title of the Bearer of Folk Craft Tradition (Nositel tradice lidových řemesel), which is the national version of the UNESCO Living Human Treasures system. The award is intended for the producers that master the folk production techniques which are at risk of extinction; it strives to present their techniques and participate in their preserving and passing them to next generations. The major objective of the award is to highlight the folk masters and to draw the attention of the society to them, as they are very modest in their private life and only a narrow circle of customers know their work. These efforts are supported by the bestowal of the 'Bearer of Tradition' trademark, which helps to make the products visible and to provide basic information about the award. Printed materials and representative publications are published regularly; several thematic exhibitions have been organised to date. The awards are conferred during the National Opening of European Heritage Days, which takes place on the first week of September in different historical towns of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. The award can be conferred to a maximum of five persons every year. The awardees are recommended to the Minister of Culture by a special commission, whose members come from professional associations of producers, the Ministry of Culture, the National Heritage Institute (Národní památkový ústav), as well as academic, university, and museum backgrounds.

The National Institute of Folk Culture is managed by the Ministry of Culture and it is the central accredited institution that coordinates the safeguarding of traditional folk culture in the Czech Republic. The Institute complies with the requirements for safeguarding not only through its main activity but also by means of research projects. It provides the professional and lay public with methodological, expert, and informational service in the field of traditional folk culture; it also organises education and documentation for all kinds of folklore activities in the Czech Republic; moreover, it mediates the cooperation between professional institutions and amateur groups related to traditional folk culture. Since 1956, it has organised the prestig-



ious International Folklore Festival Strážnice, which is one of the oldest and largest festivals in Europe. Since 1974, it has also managed the Strážnice Open-Air Museum of Rural Architecture in South-East Moravia (Muzeum vesnice jihovýchodní Moravy), which is an open-air museum that focuses on the safeguarding of traditional earth architecture.

Based on the UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore adopted by UNESCO in 1989, the Institute began to work on documentaries that would capture remarkable expressions of traditional folk culture. Between 1994 and 1997, the work on the film encyclopaedia *Lidové tance z Čech, Moravy a Slezska* (Folk dances from Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia) started. The encyclopaedia consists of ten volumes which map all distinct ethnographic areas. The screenplay and accompanying publication were written by Hannah Laudová and Zdena Jelínková, Academy of Science research fellows. The film encyclopaedia continued between 2000 and 2007 and it was accordingly titled *Mužské taneční projevy* (Male dance expressions). Among other dances, the documentaries focused on the *verbuňk* solo male dances and their regional forms, which were captured in six volumes; and *odzemek*, which was pictured in one documentary.

The exceptionally positive results of the documentation of folk dances contributed to UNESCO's decision to provide financial support for a new series of documentaries – the film encyclopaedia *Lidová řemesla a lidová umělecká výroba v České republice* (Folk handicrafts and folk art production in the Czech Republic). The new series started in 1997, and the recordings still continue today. The basic series of documentaries was divided according to the processed materials, such as ceramics, plaiting materials, wood, textiles, glass, metal, leather, and others. The particular documentary volumes were made by experts in the fields of traditional handicrafts, who not only proposed the structure of recorded techniques and the producers who would demonstrate their craft but were also authors of the accompanying publications. The second series of documentaries was made in cooperation with the National Heritage Institute and it recorded building techniques associated with the construction of wood, stone, and mud houses, as well as houses with roofing and heating systems. The latest series shows procedures related to folk outfits, hairstyles and headdresses, types of headscarves and methods of tying them, and the ways of layering garments. To date, thirty-nine volumes of film documentaries have been made, each with an accompanying specialised publication.

The National Institute of Folk Culture is a research organisation; it conducts basic and applied research and experimental development, as well as distributes its results through



teaching, publishing, and transferring technologies. Until 1995, the research and development tasks had been formulated as independent partial projects, among which two large ones must be mentioned: the long-term research into Shrovetide customs conducted by Josef Tomeš, and the research into Anabaptist faience conducted by Jiří Pajer. Between 1996 and 1998, the research project was called 'Collection, Documentation and Different Forms of Scientific Treatment of Documents about Traditional and Folk Culture'. This project was followed by two research projects: 'Research of the Phenomena of the Tangible and Intangible Heritage in the Realm of Traditional Folk Culture and Folklore' in 1999–2003, and 'Transformations in Traditional Folk Culture and its Ties to the Tangible and Intangible Heritage of Humanity' in 2004–2010. The intentions featured different forms of scientific treatment, protection, preservation, and presentation of the phenomena of traditional folk culture: cultural heritage, traditional folk culture and folklore, folk dance, songs, music, folk habits, ceremonies and customs, folk handicrafts, techniques used in folk art production, folklore, principles of museum work, and others. Based on the positive results of its scientific activity, the National Institute of Folk Culture was given the status of a research organisation in 2011 and was integrated into the programme Long-Term Conceptual Development of Research Organisations. It was also assigned a regular financial contribution to implement the research projects. The institution can also apply for contributions from grant agencies and take part in public procurements in science and development.

In addition to its special and scientific tasks, the National Institute of Folk Culture focuses on digitalising the oldest periodicals with ethnographic themes and making them accessible in the form of a large online electronic edition accessible on the Institute's website. This process has entailed journals such as *Český lid* (Czech folk; 1891–1931), the *Národopisný věstník československý* (Czechoslovak ethnographic journal; 1906–1934), the *Národopisné aktuality* (Ethnographic news; 1964–1990) and the *Národopisná revue* (Journal of ethnology; 1990–). The project continued with the electronic edition of the oldest song collections and collectors – Karel Jaromír Erben, František Sušil, František Bartoš, and Ludvík Kuba. The digitised documents offer the possibility of searching for specific articles or keywords, and in the case of song collections, it is possible to play the basic note transcriptions of the melodies and to search according to note characteristics of the songs.

The National Institute of Folk Culture uses several mutually linked websites, such as [www.nulk.cz](http://www.nulk.cz), [www.festivalstraznice.cz](http://www.festivalstraznice.cz), and [www.skanzenstraznice.cz](http://www.skanzenstraznice.cz) to present the above-men-



tioned outcomes and the reports about own activities, research projects, and publication activities. The information about traditional folk culture can be accessed at [www.lidovakultura.cz](http://www.lidovakultura.cz). The website structure allows the experts, informed amateurs from the folklore movement, and common visitors to folklore festivals and open-air museums to find relevant information. It also contains links to research institutions focused on ethnology and social anthropology, their scientific projects and interesting outcomes. There are also lists of song and dance ensembles, voice choirs, and music bands, and an overview of previous festivities and folklore festivals observed during fieldwork.

## Conclusion



The broad institutional anchoring of the National Institute of Folk Culture covers the research, memory, education, and experimental and methodical activities, which the Institute implements actively on the international, nationwide, regional, and local scales. The particular counterparts and dimensions of its activities are mutually reinforcing, and cover a variety of users. It enables the Institute to link together theoretical requirements for the safeguarding of traditional folk culture with practical experience of its implementation and presentation. Due to its institutional profile, the National Institute of Folk Culture is unparalleled in the Czech Republic, and it is irreplaceable in its activities. The achieved results are for the most part of excellent quality, which is demonstrated by the positive assessments of particular VaVal (Informační systém výzkumu, vývoje a inovací, Research and Development Information System) priorities and projects under the Applied Research and Development of National and Cultural Identity Programme NAKI, commitments resulting from the fulfilment of the Strategy, as well as by numerous awards from professional organisations (e.g. International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts, Czech Ethnological Society [Česká národopisná společnost], Association of Museums and Galleries [Asociace muzeí a galerií], among others). Finally, we can observe an increasing number of visitors to the International Folklore Festival and the Open-Air Museum.

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# Estonian inventory of intangible cultural heritage. The case of cross-trees

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*A community that wishes to draw attention to their intangible heritage by means of the inventory, needs experts both on the inside (e.g. advocates of a phenomenon and compilers of the inscription) and on the outside (e.g. counselling museum workers and specialists in folk culture). However, the main factor is the interest in the (public) interpretation of intangible heritage and an inner urge to write the inscription for the inventory, beside or instead of other forms of expression (contributions to museums and archives, publications, websites, etc.).*

## Introduction

‘Community’ and ‘heritage’ are words and concepts that can be seen in policy documents, academic texts, media, as well as everyday contexts. For many people ‘community and heritage are comfortably self-evident, defined by place and shared histories and often ethnicity and nationality, and redolent of shared values and their celebration’ (Smith and Waterton 2009, 12). It is difficult to say who constitutes a community for a particular heritage and what is understood as heritage by the community. Both ‘community’ and ‘heritage’ can be interpreted quite diversely by different people and in different contexts (Bardone et al. forthcoming).

The new conception of heritage gives importance to the role of community-based heritage management in the sustainable development of local cultures (Van der Auwera, Vandesande, and Van Balen 2015, 7–10). Participatory heritage culture is also supported by the growing impact of digital technologies and social media. The role of heritage curators and conservators is thus currently seen as ‘facilitators rather than authoritative scripters and arbiters of authenticity and significance’ (Silberman and Purser 2012, 13–14). This people-centred understanding of heritage is expressed most powerfully in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)<sup>1</sup> that defines intangible cultural heritage as:

the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals

<sup>1</sup> Along with the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, one of the most popular UNESCO cultural conventions is the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. 172 states have acceded to the latter (as of May 2017), and 193 states to the former (as of January 2017). UNESCO has 195 member states and 9 associate members.





recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.<sup>2</sup>

In Estonia, the year 2013 was proclaimed the Year of Cultural Heritage. What is cultural heritage? How does it evolve? Who does it belong to and how does it concern us? These are questions the Year of Cultural Heritage seeks to answer. Its motto/slogan – ‘There is no heritage without the heir’ – refers to the fact that we are the heirs, but at the same time, we are also the bequeathers. The aim of the thematic year was thus to increase people’s awareness of the cultural heritage everywhere around them, and to develop the understanding that heritage should be protected by our joint efforts, as it is the foundation of our identity.

While safeguarding heritage, we should think not only about how, but for whom we keep it; what we protect today and how will it be re-interpreted by future generations.



## Estonian inventory of intangible cultural heritage

Estonia signed the UNESCO 2003 Convention in 2006. As a state party to the Convention, it can introduce its cultural heritage through the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The preceding list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity includes ‘Baltic song and dance celebrations’ (2003, together with Latvia and Lithuania) and the ‘Kihnu cultural space’ (2003). In 2009, ‘Seto leelo, the Seto polyphonic singing tradition’ was also entered. In 2014, the tradition of the Võru smoke sauna, or chimneyless sauna, was added onto the list. The sauna has been the traditional place for cleansing and healing, a symbol of the togetherness of community, and of the rural way of life that strives for harmony with nature.

Different areas of cultural heritage – folklore, literature, (folk) music, landscape heritage, architecture, and handicraft – are much easier to describe than to ascribe meaning to. For cultural heritage to be preserved, first of all, its sustainability should be supported. Primarily, the creativity of local inhabitants in producing and reacting to the elements of cultural heritage (neighbourhood

<sup>2</sup> *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris, 17 October 2003*, art. 2:1 (available online: [www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention)).

and landscape preservation, artefacts, and other elements) should be appreciated and valued (Rahvakultuuri Keskus 2016).

In 2006, when Estonia joined the Convention, a decision was made in favour of compiling a national inventory based on the initiatives and interpretations of communities. What problems might arise in this seemingly ideal democratic solution? What issues are encountered when drawing up an inventory? How to find balance between the institutional expectations and the requirements of imagined communities?

The inventory focuses on the idea of strong and active communities, which make decisions about their intangible heritage, the ways to maintain and protect it, and subsequently, start the compilation of the inscription. During the training courses and information days, the participants are encouraged to use the concept of intangible heritage in a broad sense: to express subjective interpretations and regard themselves as experts in their own heritage. It is emphasised that these are not scholars or officials that prescribe what the community could introduce as intangible heritage (Porila 2015, 10). In 2017, the inventory included 86 inscriptions.<sup>3</sup>

Each entry includes short texts and audio-visual materials. The structure of the inventory contains 4 types of entries: important for the community; corresponding to the definition of ICH; living heritage; transmitted from generation to generation.

The inventory is based on community initiative, and it is the community representatives that compile the entries and decide if their ICH should be on the inventory, which elements should be there, and how to present them. The Folk Culture Centre (Rahvakultuuri Keskus) helps and encourages them (ICH trainings, ICH homepage, presentations at local conferences and community meetings, articles in the media, special brochures – e.g. the ICH information kit in Estonian).

A community that wishes to draw attention to their intangible heritage by means of the inventory, needs experts both on the inside (e.g. advocates of a phenomenon and compilers of the inscription) and on the outside (e.g. counselling museum workers and specialists in folk culture). However, the main factor is the interest in the (public) interpretation of intangible heritage and an inner urge to write the inscription for the inventory, beside or instead of other forms of expression (contributions to museums and archives, publications, websites, etc.). Despite the work on spreading the idea of the usefulness of those other forms (as a supportive means for evaluating, maintaining, and transmitting the traditional skills and knowledge, the sustainable development

<sup>3</sup> Statistics can be seen online (Rahvakultuuri Keskus 2017a, 2017b).





South Estonia: the crosses, 2015. Photo by Marju Kõivupuu.



Rosma cross-forest, 1931, © Estonian Folklore Archive.

and creative industry) and the offered training courses, new inscriptions are not added as quickly and smoothly as it was expected by the Ministry of Culture (Kultuuriministeerium).

## From community stewardship to complex heritage management: cross-trees in southeast Estonia

Cross-trees in southeast Estonia are related to the issues of tangible as well as intangible heritage maintenance. For various reasons, the cross-trees, as objects and as things related to a practice, are cases of liminal, 'hybrid', and in some respect also 'dissonant heritage' (cf. Kõivupuu 2014; Kuutma 2013). A 'cross-tree' is a tree (pine, spruce, birch, or other) on the side of the road leading to a cemetery, onto which a cross is carved by the closest male relatives of the deceased. It is a commemorative practice and a way to signify a conscious or unconscious border which the deceased cross when they are excluded from the living world. Cross-trees are an expression of 'vernacular religion' (Primiano 1995), probably a combination of pre-Christian and Christian beliefs (Kõivupuu 2009, 2014). Cutting a cross in the tree has been a part of the funerary tradition, especially in historical Võrumaa,<sup>4</sup> which according to earliest records dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and has survived until today only in southeast Estonia (Kõivupuu 2009, 2014).

The persistence of cross-trees has fallen under threat because local communities have undergone transformations (population declines, immigration) and not all locals may belong to the community that practices this tradition and acknowledges the need to preserve it. The traditional funerary customs have changed likewise (e.g. cremation instead of coffin burial) (Kõivupuu 2009, 2014). However, it can be said that today it is the heritage that defines the community, and both the locals and those living outside the region know the meaning of the trees, value this custom and follow it. Internationally, cross-trees belong to the category of sacred natural sites and objects; there are many native groups in the world for whom certain trees and groves and related customs may have strong spiritual or religious meanings. Sacred natural sites connect people and nature, as well as the personal and collective memory; they may confirm the cultural identity for a family, community, or the whole nation. Such religious landscapes and places related to cultural memory



<sup>4</sup> Historical Võrumaa is a separate cultural region in southeast Estonia, which according to the present-day administrative division covers areas in Võru, Põlva, Valga, and Tartu counties. The region features several enduring traditions and a dialect used in everyday life. The Võru Institute (Võro Instituut), which was established on the basis of the so-called Võru Movement, originated in the 1980s, and actively investigates, maintains, and advocates the cultural heritage of historical Võrumaa.

often emerge as a result of practices or with the help of oral traditions, folklore, and narratives that support the collective process of remembering (Fox 1997, 8–9; Siikala 2004; Rønnow 2011, 225).

Edmund G. C. Barrow points out that traditionally, the sacred trees are under ‘community stewardship’, which saves them from being cut down or damaged. Today, local communities, as well as their ways of life, have changed considerably and the modern socio-economic values tend to dominate over traditional spiritual values (Barrow 2010). Therefore, a question arises: why should sacred trees be safeguarded for the future – and by whom – if they are no longer part of all community members’ everyday life? What happens if community stewardship does not function the same way as in the past?

The tradition of carving crosses in trees was still alive in Soviet Estonia and it had an ambivalent status: officially, the forests belonged to the state; yet, they were managed by local people who respected local customs. Cutting a cross at the funeral was also considered a supplementary act to the Christian funeral; local clergymen accepted the ritual, and sometimes even participated in it. After Estonia became independent, forest management became centralised, and the local community stewardship practice was disrupted. During the transition period in post-socialist Estonia, several cross-trees and cross-forests still related to the lived practice were cut down – partly because of forest managers’ ignorance, and partly due to the disregard towards this tradition. Forestry companies and sometimes also forest owners (especially those to whom land had been restituted) did not recognise this as law-breaking, as the majority of cross-trees were not under heritage or nature protection. The State Forest Management Centre (Riigimetsa Majandamise Keskus) has cut down cross-trees in production forests, and expanded roads by the expense of cross-tree groves, which in several cases has caused deep resentment among locals (see Kõivupuu 2009). Due to these developments, the community who wanted to preserve cross-trees needed external authorities (including heritage officials as well as academic scholars), who would legitimise the importance of the tradition by giving it the value of cultural heritage that needs safeguarding.

Natural heritage, including sacred natural sites, is regulated by several international and national ‘heritage regimes’ (Bendix, Eggert, and Peselmann 2012): e.g. The Man and the Biosphere Programme (1970), the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972), and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention (2003). The guidelines for protecting natural sacred sites were formulated in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and UNESCO in 2003–2008. According to the IUCN definition, ‘sacred natural sites are areas having special spiritual



significance for peoples and communities', and they are often 'community conserved areas' (Wild and McLeod 2008). However, the meaning of 'community' in the document is somewhat problematic, because it is related to the Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989)<sup>5</sup>. Similarly to the case of the UNESCO 2003 Convention, community involvement in conservation and community participation in the development of national heritage politics is of crucial importance. Stakeholders of sacred natural sites are defined as natural resource users and managers; yet, stakeholder identification and analysis based on understanding different interests, characteristics, and circumstances is stressed in order to manage sacred natural sites better (Wild and McLeod 2008, 46–47).

The definition of sacred natural sites in Estonia is based on the IUCN document. Today, there are about 500 historical sacred sites and objects (sacred groves, trees and springs, sacrificial stones, among others) that have been located, mapped, and designated as monuments under natural or cultural heritage protection.<sup>6</sup> Among these two categories we can distinguish the following: sites that relate to cultural memory and not to lived practices, and sites or cult objects that are currently related to the cultural heritage and lived practices of certain groups (Kõivupuu 2009, 224). Cross-trees belong to the latter. Furthermore, they belong to both the natural and cultural world, as well as to both tangible as well as intangible heritage. Despite the IUCN guidelines for protection, there is a lack of legal regulations in Estonia that would define sacred natural sites as unique objects of both natural and cultural heritage, and that would reflect diverse values for varied groups (see Kultuuriministeerium 2008). 700 cross-trees have been currently included in an inventory, but only a few of them are under protection as natural monuments. In the Estonian introduction to the IUCN guidelines, cross-trees are defined as part of 'community heritage', however, the 'community' remains undefined in the local context. A stakeholder group related to the maintenance of sacred natural sites such as the neo-pagan organisation Maavalla Koda (Estonian House of Taara and Native Religions) relies on and exploits a romantic ideal of the native Estonian community rooted in the national movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and does not correspond with actual communities and their practices in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Estonia.

Although the traditional community stewardship of sacred sites has changed, there are various groups of interest, communities, and heritage stakeholders who have become involved

<sup>5</sup> Convention adopted under the auspices of International Labour Organization [Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention].

<sup>6</sup> According to historical sources, there are about 2800 historical sacred sites known to researchers.







Cross-spruce in the cross-forest Rosma (South Estonia), 2015. Photo by Marju Kõivupuu.



in the issues related to their protection and preservation. For example, during roundtable meetings discussing the protection of cross-trees along with other sacred natural sites, participants have included NGOs as well as state institutions.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the past few years, the collaboration between different stakeholder groups (e.g. locals, scholars, officials, and forest managers) has increased, aiming for a better protection of the cross-trees. However, the current practice of forest management in Estonia clearly shows that the state forest management bodies should show more respect towards local religious relationships with nature.

The implementation and intervention of international heritage regimes (e.g. UNESCO, IUCN) exert a noticeable impact on local heritage politics and management, as well as on people's everyday lives. Like several other local traditions, cross-trees as a funerary custom in historical Võrumaa have been included in the Estonian inventory of intangible cultural heritage analysed in the previous example (Rahvakultuuri Keskus 2016). The inscription in the inventory and nomination as (intangible) heritage certainly dignifies a cultural tradition (cf. Bendix and Hafstein 2009). Thus, participation in defining cultural heritage may, in turn, increase the community's self-awareness, consciousness, and through this also the visibility and social, economic, and political capital, thereby marshalling the community (cf. Silberman and Purser 2012, 20–21). For instance, in 2014, a traditional bathing practice – ‘Smoke sauna tradition in Võromaa’ – was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as a result of community initiative. This may also indirectly influence the status of cross-trees as valuable cultural heritage of the region. Thus, external recognition may change how the local people value their customs, and draw state and international attention to a particular custom, although one also cannot overlook the negative impact of this attention to the viability of cultural heritage (see Labadi 2013, 141–42). ‘Heritagisation’ is inevitably a process of cultural intervention – if traditions that have formerly been part of everyday life become seen as heritage, it may enforce people to see them as something separate from the mundane; this, in turn, may change the meaning of the traditional practice itself (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Kockel 2007).



<sup>7</sup> The organisations and institutions who have taken part in roundtables are: Hiite Maja (House of Sacred Groves) Foundation, Maavalla Koda, representatives of different disciplines from the University of Tartu (Tartu Ülikool) and Tallinn University, including the Centre of Sacred Natural Sites (Looduslike pühapaikade keskus) at the University of Tartu, and representatives from the Ministry of Environment (Keskkonnaministeerium); Ministry of the Interior (Siseministeerium), the Environmental Board (Keskkonnaamet), and Estonian Fund for Nature (Eestimaa Looduse Fond), among others.

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# Intangible cultural heritage of Albania and the challenges in creating the National Inventory and the list of phenomena and elements



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*One of the projects that could provide inspiration for the new inventorying process in Albania is the project Show Your Culture. ... It involves a wideranging appeal to communities in Albania to document various practices, knowledge, and skills that they maintain and identify as their cultural heritage through means of video and brief textual information. The project uses YouTube as a web-based platform and practically does not require any preliminary investment, as the video and photo recordings can be performed with mobile phones and can be accompanied with a sample selection of basic information about the practised ICH element.*

## Introduction

Albanian intangible cultural heritage, conveyed from generation to generation, has been continually recreated by communities and groups in terms of their function in the environment and their interaction with nature and history; it gives them a sense of identity and continuity and provides assistance in promoting the respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

Albania joined UNESCO on 16 October 1958. The safeguarding of the intangible heritage of Albania is legally and directly guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and the national law for cultural heritage. The National Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage (Komiteti Kombëtar i Trashëgimisë Kulturore Shpirtërore), in addition to its specific tasks, lists the most remarkable intangible heritage creations: the Albanian Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Kryevepra të trashëgimisë kulturore shpirtërore shqiptare). Albania has also ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The 2003 Convention states that in order to ensure a better visibility for the intangible cultural heritage, better awareness of its importance, and in order to favour dialogue while respecting cultural diversity, the Committee, upon the proposal of the concerned States Parties, should make decisions on the inscriptions on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Based on the national legislation and international conventions, Albania adopted the National List of Masterpieces of Intangible Heritage of its territory in 2010.

To ensure national and international recognition as well as the protection, treatment, study, popularisation, inventory, and computing values of the intangible cultural heritage, the Ministry





*Dropulli Girls Folk Dance, one of the masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greek ethnic minority in Albania, at the National Folk Festival in Gjirokastra, 2015. Photo by Adnan Beci.*



*A wedding reception in Kolonje (Southeastern Albania). Photo shows the full orchestra harmonica (*sazet*), playing *llahutë*, clarinet and violin, the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Photo by Dhimiter Vangjeli.*

of Culture (Ministria e Kulturës) intends to reform and modernise the structure, methods, and the character of the institutions dealing with intangible cultural heritage on the national and local level. It also aims to develop a national inventory of the phenomena and elements of intangible cultural heritage and complete the dossier of the phenomena of masterpieces of national intangible cultural heritage. The Ministry of Culture maintains contacts with other institutions and their counterparts in the world, as well as UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and other institutions specialised in the field of heritage and cultural anthropology, in order to make Albania's cultural heritage known and integrate it into the global network of cultural heritage.

In this article, we will present two elements of Albanian intangible cultural heritage featuring on the national list: the Logu i Bjeshkëve festival in northern Albania, and folk music instruments craftsmanship, which is a distinct craft among all Albanian techniques and includes hand-crafted music instruments such as the *cyle dyjare*. These two elements are approached in the territories of their origin and are still being developed; they remain alive in the communities.

## Intangible cultural heritage in Albania

Albania is located in the heart of the Mediterranean region and stretches along the seashores of the Adriatic and Ionian seas. Known as the Land of the Eagles (Shqipëria), it is an epic country with a rich history and culture, where people speak one of the oldest living languages in Europe. The Albanian language is the only branch of the Indo-European language family and is now spoken by close to eight million people around the world.

It is also an important gateway to the Balkan Peninsula, located at the North-South and East-West crossroads, with the proximity to reach major European capitals within two or three hours by air. As a result of its geographical location and setting, Albania displays traces of different civilisations and cultures, including Illyrian, Hellenic, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman. It shares borders with a number of countries, including Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Greece, and Italy (across the Adriatic Sea).

The intangible heritage, as one of the most important vectors of the Albanian culture inherited from generation to generation, is continuously preserved and diligently safeguarded among the communities that created and transmitted it as a part of their national identity and pride – by the public and private institutions which are responsible for its safeguarding.







Group of young artists from the Gjirokastra District, performing Iso-polyphony at the National Folk Festival in Gjirokastra, 2015. Photo by Adnan Beci.



National Folklore Festival of Gjirokastra, Albania – aerial view of the Castle of Gjirokastra, 2015. Photo by Egon Musliut.

According to the Albanian Law for cultural heritage, adopted in 2003,<sup>1</sup> intangible cultural heritage consists of: the use of Albanian language; oral folklore; vocal, choreographic and instrumental folklore; traditional customs and practices; traditional beliefs; traditional crafts. These forms of intangible heritage have been created in the Albanian way over the centuries, by communities and groups interacting with nature and history. It gives them a sense of identity and continuity.

Albania has inherited extremely rich phenomena of ICH, diverse in their forms and widely distributed across all parts of the country, marked by a common feeling of shared sensitivity to its importance and its value as a resource of cultural identity. However, on the other hand, in present-day contexts, this heritage is facing significant constraints in maintaining its viability and is under considerable and increasing threat of disappearance and decrease of vitality. The dynamic transformations that the country had faced after the end of the communist regime in 1990 have opened new venues for economic and social development, but have also introduced a new reality of economic problems, collapses of previous state enterprises, and a steady rise in unemployment, which in turn has led to increased population mobility and mass migration outside and inside the country, and has led to the concentration of population in the main urban centres. Elements of traditional crafts have suffered, quickly replaced by mass-manufactured furniture, decorative objects and industrial tools, which have drastically changed people's lifestyles. Traditional, individual workshops have become bankrupt or begun to respond to new demands of lifestyle thus becoming consumed. Having an enormous effect on Albanian economic and social development in the last two decades, these processes have affected particularly the rural communities and the cultural traditions maintained by them. Many of the previous forms and genres of the verbal, musical, and dance folklore have been either lost as a shared cultural tradition or limited to a set of examples. This has been paralleled with the disappearance of many folklore instruments, costumes and traditional craft items; paired with a dramatic decrease in the knowledge and skills related to their production and use. Whilst many of the bearers are ageing and only a few are passing their knowledge and skills on to the next generations, young people have either migrated abroad or to larger cities, or have become disinterested in maintaining the traditional practices and expressions. In such a context, the few forms that still remain active as means of transmitting knowledge and skills about the cultural traditions are related to the various regional and local folklore festivals, which are held on a regular basis (most of them annually) and are attended by a relatively large number of young people.

Albania has adopted a number of international cultural agreements, introduced new legislative acts and measures specifically targeted at cultural heritage, realised administrative and institu-

<sup>1</sup> *Ligj nr 9048, datë 7.4.2003. Për trashëgiminë kulturore*, Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë [Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania] no. 33/2003.



tional reforms in this sphere, and made first steps in inventorying and inscribing elements onto the national list of ICH elements. It has also participated in various other initiatives aimed at raising awareness and popularisation of cultural heritage.

The Ministry of Culture, the central national body responsible for the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Albania, together with its two main directorates – of arts and cultural heritage – has directed its work basing on four pillars, which correspond to the four main objectives set out by the 2003 Convention itself: to safeguard and preserve the intangible heritage; to ensure the respect for it; to raise awareness of its importance and ensure mutual appreciation; to provide for international cooperation and assistance.

These objectives are constantly present in its work on the creation of a strategic framework designed to better address the problems and challenges related to Albanian ICH. In collaboration with research institutes, private NGOs, and the communities themselves, the Ministry of Culture is continuously increasing the ability of relevant structures to protect and promote Albanian ICH. The communities and bearers of ICH elements are actively involved in a series of activities aiming at their preservation, transmission, and promotion.

As a result, a significant number of institutional, legal, educational, and promotional efforts have been undertaken over the recent years. More specifically, the Ministry of Culture has undertaken efforts to obtain funding from the state budget, as well as other donors, related to promotional activities such as festivals, fairs, and workshops. Despite the continuous change of people and structures, a valid was introduced to the stakeholders, but it is still not approved (as of June 2017) in Parliament due to changes and debates between the stakeholders. A significant result has been achieved in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sport (Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit), namely, one including both tangible and intangible heritage-related curricula in the educational system.<sup>2</sup> Despite the excellent and tangible results, more efforts should be made by the relevant structures in the area of community involvement and on the increase of international cooperation with countries and organisations.

Albania's Law for cultural heritage was amended in 2005–2006 to include articles directly concerning the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, and to specify the institutional tasks and actions required for its protection. The law, adopted in 2003, made first steps towards

<sup>2</sup> The introduction of iso-polyphony in the school curriculum, which acquaints the pupils with the values of intangible cultural heritage and cultural diversity, proceeds as follows: in the 9-year basic education, from grade 5 to grade 9, in 'Musical education' which is a compulsory subject. In the upper education: in grade 10, in the subject 'Our cultural heritage', one of the optional subjects within the compulsory package, and in grade 11 in the subject 'The European cultural heritage'. In the higher education curriculum, at graduate and post-graduate levels, in a course called 'Albanian intangible heritage' (at the University of Tirana, Faculty of Philology, and at the University of Arts).



a national legislation of ICH and permitted the creation of the National Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Albania (Komiteti Kombëtar i Trashëgimisë Kulturore Shpirtërore) – the beginning of listing ICH – and the inscription of iso-polyphony on UNESCO's List of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005. Subsequently, the Albanian Music Council (Këshilli i Muzikës Shqiptare), a non-governmental organisation, compiled the first publicly accessible database of this element. Since its inscription to the List of Masterpieces a series of legal, institutional, and other measures have also been undertaken by the Ministry, including an action plan for the protection of iso-polyphony approved by the Ministry of Culture (2005), and a Ministerial order for the preservation, protection and promotion of Albanian iso-polyphony (2005).<sup>3</sup> Its inclusion is a source of pride among the performers and has increased their sense of responsibility for its transmission and practice; moreover, it has increased the interest of other bearer communities in their own intangible cultural heritage. In 2010, the Albanian National List of Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Lista kombëtare e kryeveprave të trashëgimisë kulturore jomateriale) was created with 7 elements in total (Qendra Kombëtare e Veprimtarive Folklorike 2014, 11–15).

In the category of vocal, choreographic and instrumental folklore:

1. Iso-polyphony, which is an epic form of singing in Albania, one of the world's most ancient a cappella song traditions, which originated in ancient times and can be traced back to the Illyrians, the ancestors of modern Albanians. Transmission of iso-polyphony is prompted by cultural projects in the field of intangible cultural heritage. Also, in order to preserve this phenomenon of our cultural heritage, we organise national activities<sup>4</sup> devoted to types and musical genres of iso-polyphony.
2. North Albanian epos of heroes – a cycle of legendary songs accompanied by *llahuta* (Albanian music instrument), which are sung in epic verse and focus on the adventures of two brothers: Mujo and Halil, and their band of mountain warriors.
3. Homophonic folk music in Central Albania (Tirana, Elbasani, Kavaja, Durrës, Krujë, and Berat).

<sup>3</sup> *Udhëzim nr 1, date 09.12.2005 per ruajtjen, mbrojtjen dhe promovimin e iso-polifonise shqiptare* (published in 'Iso-Polifonia Newsletter' 2009, Nëntor, no. 1, pp. 14–15).

<sup>4</sup> These events include:

- Festivali Kombëtar i Iso-Polifonisë (National festival of iso-polyphony) organised by the city municipality, which takes place every year in the city of Vlora.
- Activities organised by private or state institutions at the local level, such as: Përmeti Multikulturor (Multicultural Përmet) in Përmet, Festivali Ndërkombëtar i Polifonisë "Bylisfonia" (International Festival of Polyphony 'Bylisfonia') in Mallakastra, "Sofra Ilire" ('Sofra Illyrian') in Fier, Festivali i Këngës dhe Valles Çame (Song and dance festival of Cham) organised in Saranda, and others.
- Concert with the Masterpieces of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in 2011.
- Festivali Folklorik Kombëtar i Gjirokastrës (National folklore festival of Gjirokastra), which is organised every four years in the castle-museum of Gjirokastra, and is included in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO.
- Festival of musical instruments of iso-polyphony and the festival of harmonica players, which are held annually in the city of Korça and are organised by the Ministry of Culture together with the City Hall of Korça.



4. The urban music of the town of Shkodër<sup>5</sup>.

5. *Dropulli* folk girl dance, which is one of the Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Greek ethnic minority in Albania and an important part of the cultural diversity in Albania.

In the category of traditional craft:

6. Folk music instruments craftsmanship, which is a distinct craft among all Albanian crafts and includes hand crafted music instruments such as *gajde*, *fyell*, *cyle djare*, *çifteli*, *lahuta*, *dajre*, and others.<sup>6</sup>

In the category of oral folklore:

7. Linguistic dialects and the Gegë-Tosk dialect.

Additional element added later:

8. *Xhubleta*, which is a traditional folk garment of women in North Albania. It has an ancient origin and represents the oldest type of garments in Albania and in the Balkans.

The viability and recognition of each element included in our inventory by the concerned communities and groups have already been fully taken into account. The inventory describes the bearers, the groups connected to it, the modalities of the element (such as polyphonic singing modalities), and also the potential risk of extinction if such is the case. For each element, a card is issued that describes its features, history, values, and its bearers. In addition, there are supporting materials, such as photographs, as well as video and audio recordings of the element. The format ID of the element is currently under preparation to be digitised and entered into a specific database. In addition, the viability of intangible cultural heritage is secured by financing certain elements through the financial support issued by the Ministry of Culture.



## Safeguarding institutions, programs and measures

The institutions that are engaged in preserving intangible cultural heritage in our country include the Ministry of Culture, Academy of Sciences (Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë), the National

<sup>5</sup> One of the most important elements of the repertoire of the Gheg ethnic group Albanian folk music is the Shkodra song. The Ahengu (urban music) consists of 12 musical counterparts comprised of song, instrumental, and dance performances – the repertoire is based on a musical scale. It is estimated that there are around 300 different songs sung during this ceremony. Research also shows that this event began to take shape at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The ceremony in Shkodra has a special rule: the songs must be sung one after another. It usually occurs during the wedding night. It begins in the evening, when the couple is crowned as the newly wed, and lasts until the morning. It is played on instruments of both national and foreign origin. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in northern Albania, instruments used included the clarinet, the *saze*, the violin, the *kaval*, the tambourine and castanets. The music in the ceremony is expressed in single voice or single voice with accompaniment.

<sup>6</sup> Once, popular folk instruments were made by families and in particular by folk-bearers. This tradition continued until about the break of the 19<sup>th</sup> century 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the first stores were opened for the preparation of musical instruments.

Committee for ICH, the Albanian National Commission for UNESCO (Komisionit Kombëtar Shqiptar për UNESCO-n), Albanian Public Radio and Television (Radio Televizioni Shqiptar), the General Directorate of State Archives (Drejtoria e Përgjithshme e Arkivave), museums, National Centre of Folk Activities (Qendra Kombëtare e Veprimtarive Folklorike), Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies (Instituti i Antropologjisë Kulturore dhe Studimit të Artit), Institute of Linguistics and Literature (Instituti i Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë), Regional Directorates of Cultural Heritage (Drejtoria Rajonale e Kulturës Kombëtare), universities, the National Central Inventory of Cultural Property (Qendra Kombëtare e Inventarizimit të Pasurive Kulturore), as well as local government institutions in their respective fields. All these institutions perform the tracking, collecting, studying,<sup>7</sup> preserving and protecting the intangible cultural heritage of Albania, but also engage in the popularisation, promotion, inventory and dissemination of information on this precious heritage of our country.

ICH is increasingly more often included as a significant dimension of the identity of communities in various local and national developmental, educational and scientific programmes and projects.<sup>8</sup> For the first time, the Ministry of Culture has included a specific chapter on intangible heritage in the Strategy of Culture, drafted by experts from various fields. In this chapter, the priorities and objectives are clearly set, and for the first time language is also listed as one of the most important domains of intangible heritage.

The efforts to develop the legislative basis have continued with the preparation of several laws and strategies in the last several years, including the Draft law on handicrafts (2009),<sup>9</sup> the National

<sup>7</sup> The study of iso-polyphony includes:

- the publication by the Albanian Music Council of the *Encyclopaedia of Albanian Folk Iso-Polyphony*, Albanian–English edition (2007), with the support from the US Ambassador Fund for Cultural Preservation;
- the publication of the *Iso-Polifonia* journal as an online periodical, which informs about the issues of iso-polyphony, its importance for the community, and the cultural identity of Albanians;
- organisation of national and international conferences on iso-polyphony, such as the conference organised by the Ministry of Culture, the Albanian National Commission for UNESCO, and the Academy of Sciences in the city of Vlora in 2010 on the occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inscription of iso-polyphony on the UNESCO List;
- the introduction of iso-polyphony as a study topic on the Master and PhD levels at the Albanian and foreign universities.

<sup>8</sup> The initiatives for cultural projects in the field of intangible heritage, which promote the transmission of iso-polyphony:

- The Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies is currently implementing research project and survey titled 'Living on the border', which aims at assessing and inventorying the manners of living and elements of ICH on both sides of the border;
- 'The chambers of iso-polyphony' 2007–2009, supported by UNESCO and the Japanese Government. It was implemented in four cities and towns of South Albania. Well known singers of iso-polyphony presented to the youth the manners of singing and interpreting the iso-polyphony;
- The Himara Iso-polyphony, a project financially supported by UNESCO-BRESCHÉ, designed to produce a CD and TV programme with iso-polyphonic music;
- The CD of the iso-polyphony children band Obelisku, in the museum city of Gjirokastra, supported by the Vodafone Albania Foundation, in the framework of 'The world of change', 2010–2011;
- Presenting various documentaries about iso-polyphony and its singers, financed by the Ministry of Culture, the National Film Centre (Qendra Kombëtare e Kinematografisë) and the Albanian Public Radio and Television, such as: *Polifonia shqiptare* (Albanian polyphony; 2009); *Magjia klarinetë* (The clarinet magic; 2009); *Mjeshtri i fudit* (The last master; 2010); *Këngët e kafesë* (Café songs; 2010) etc.

<sup>9</sup> Final document adopted at the National Conference of Artisans in Albania in 2009.





Strategy for Promotion of Creative Small and Medium Businesses (2010), the Draft law on cultural heritage (section 2014–2016 has a specific chapter related to ICH that reflects obligations of the 2003 and 2005 Conventions), and Draft law chapter on cultural products (2014). However, as long as the initial proposals of these laws are not approved, the development of the legislative base that would specifically address ICH and its links with sustainable development still remains a niche that awaits relevant legislative measures in need of undertaking as soon as possible.

One of the features of recent transformations in the institutional infrastructure, as a new national scheme of ICH that deserves more attention in Albania, is the work of individual ICH experts as a part of Regional Directorates of Cultural Heritage, which has been underdone in the six administrative areas in Albania. Their mission is to develop activities for documenting cultural heritage in their respective regions, to gather the information about different forms of ICH and their bearers, to carry out educational and awareness-raising initiatives, to collaborate with local institutions and firms in supporting projects connected to ICH safeguarding, as well as other activities. Initially, some of the steps undertaken by ICH experts in the Regional Directorates had been related mainly to the Friends of Monuments project of the Ministry of Culture aimed at documenting the monumental heritage and the social practices around it. Gradually, however, the scope of their activities has expanded to include activities addressing the documentation and popularisation of ICH, e.g. research of local dialects and heritage of different ethno-linguistic groups, documentation of popular celebrations and feasts, workshops for the preparation of traditional textiles and costumes, and photo exhibitions and publications dedicated to different ICH elements. The Regional Directorates of Cultural Heritage and the ICH experts affiliated with them will definitely play a crucial role in the development of policies of safeguarding ICH in the forthcoming years, therefore it is important to outline some of the main challenges they encounter at the present stage and the related needs in this paper. The first major challenge is connected with the overall approach to ICH, and with the need of a clearer understanding of its scope and meaning in line with the spirit of the 2003 Convention. Although general knowledge on ICH issues is present among the experts of this network, special training and workshops are still extremely necessary for employing these newly established positions better. The second major challenge relates to the critical problem of inventorying intangible cultural heritage in respective regions. There is confusion about the existing cultural traditions in the regions and about the safeguarding measures that can be applied in the future. The Ministry is responsible for coordinating the work of these Regional Directorates and for facilitating the implementation of activities for ICH safeguarding





that each of them organises within the respective part of the country. In addition to the establishment of this new institutional network, the Ministry continues to play a major role in coordinating the activities connected with documenting, presenting, and promoting different forms of cultural heritage; facilitating the organisation of folklore festivals, workshops, exhibitions, and promotional materials; and coordinating the work and partnership with main cultural heritage institutions in the country. The national body charged with safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is the Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Revitalization of the Albanian Language (Drejtoria e Trashëgimisë Jomateriale dhe Rijetëzimit të Gjuhës Shqipe), a department of the Ministry of Culture. The National Committee for ICH, in turn, is a collegial body established in 2006, and it is the highest decision-making body in the field of intangible cultural heritage. It is chaired by the Minister of Culture responsible for intangible cultural heritage and comprised of nine members from different scientific institutions. The composition and functions of the National Committee for ICH are defined by the Decision Council of Ministers; its mission covers the major tasks of nominating elements to the national list and approving ICH programmes and activities in the country that are organised by state institutions and NGOs. It also approves the main lines of intervention.

Another body under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture is the National Centre for Folkloric Activities (Qendra Kombëtare e Veprimtarive Folklorike). It is one of the main state institutions responsible for the promotion and safeguarding of intangible values. The Centre organises folk festivals<sup>10</sup> and related activities throughout the country, such as traditional music and dance festivals, the National Folklore Festival of Gjirokastra (held once in four years and involving performing groups from all regions of the country, as well as from abroad), popular instruments (in Korce), festivals of bards and popular instrumentalists/players (in Lezhe), festivals of popular

<sup>10</sup> The folk festivals enjoy a high level of popularity and seem to be a productive form of presenting overviews of folklore traditions on regional and national basis. Using the format that was promoted during the communist period as a basis, many of these festivals have appeared and flourished over the last two decades, signifying, in a way, the public sensitivity to the gradually disappearing cultural traditions. Beyond the undisputable significance of these festivals for maintaining the knowledge and skills of traditional practices, some reservations need to be expressed with regards to their role in contributing to the safeguarding of ICH in the country.

The organisation of these festivals involves the preparation of special criteria and a preliminary evaluation for selecting the groups that will perform at them. The criteria (prepared in collaboration between the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies, National Centre for Folkloric Activities, and the Ministry of Culture, and based also on questionnaires filled out by the local authorities of these festivals) involve the relevant presentation of the respective domain, the geographic presence in every part of the country, as well as the presentation of cultural traditions of different minority groups. The recommendations of authenticity that guide the organisation of most of these festivals guarantee the careful preliminary examination of the texts, costumes, music, etc. used by the festival participants. This is also made sure through the guidelines of experts in the festival juries – involving specialists in music, instruments, texts, costumes, etc. The festivals are accompanied by a series of side activities (e.g. conferences, workshops, reviews of traditional costumes, etc.) and are attended by visitors from all parts of Albania and abroad, mostly from the neighbouring countries of South-Eastern Europe.



songs (in Elbasan), iso-polyphony, popular song and dance (in Lushnje), and multicultural festivals (in Permeti), the 'Oda Dibrane' festival (in Peshkopia), or the 'Sofra Dardane' festival (in Tropoje region). It also organises traditional craft fairs based on scientific criteria, as well as workshops and meetings of experts on intangible heritage, and publishes books and promotional materials thus carrying out policies related to education and ICH safeguarding in collaboration with local governments. Financed by the state budget, the Centre implements its approved yearly plan set by the Ministry throughout the country and operates according to its statute. The Ministry of Culture offers a yearly financial support for organising the activities in the field of ICH. Half of the amount of this subsidy is dedicated to the activities organised by the National Centre for Folkloric Activities, which holds annual events throughout the country.

Another important body with key potential and significance for the policies of safeguarding ICH is the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies, which is a part of the Centre for Albanian Studies (Qendra e Studimeve Albanologjike). As a primarily research-oriented institution, the Institute dedicates its activities to the documentation and study of traditional cultural heritage, develops MA and PhD training courses, organises scholarly conferences and publishes specialised publications on various aspects of Albanian traditional culture. The Institute collaborates with bearers, communities and individuals, and proposes safeguarding measures to the National Committee for ICH, where the most important decisions are made. A major asset of the Institute is its rich archive, which includes ethnographic materials, musical records and video materials, collections of verbal folklore, photos, sketches, and drawings.

Furthermore, the Law for cultural heritage requires all public institutions to draw up inventories<sup>11</sup> of cultural heritage (including intangible heritage), and to fulfil the spirit of the 2003 Convention, which in Article 11(a) states that 'each State Party shall take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory'.<sup>12</sup> This is complemented with

<sup>11</sup> Institutions, communities and bearers usually collaborate with the experts that collect the data in the field, and they are also involved in related research projects. The criteria used for the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage in the inventory are the following: the element belongs to one or more categories of intangible heritage; the community has identified the element as part of its cultural heritage; the element contributes to the diversity of the ICH in the List; the element belongs to specific categories of people such as minorities, ethnic groups, etc.; and the element is in danger of disappearance. Hence, the inventory takes into account the viability of intangible cultural heritage and the potential risk of its disappearance. The List is updated when a new intangible heritage element is inscribed; any revision of information on previously inscribed elements is decided case-by-case. If any changes occur to the element, the bearers are to notify the experts (ethnologists and others) who then forward this information to the Ministry; alternatively, the bearers may notify the Ministry directly.

One critical area affected by restricted financial resources is the ICH inventorying. That is why Albania submitted a request for International Assistance to UNESCO for the amount of US\$158,200 which was examined by the Intergovernmental Committee in December 2014. The Committee identified some weaknesses in the request and provided a number of recommendations for improvement. A new request, taking into account the recommendations, can be submitted for the next cycle.

<sup>12</sup> *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris, 17 October 2003* (available online: [www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention)).



the clarification in Articles 11(b) and 12, which state that the identification of the ICH present in their territory takes place through the preparation of one or more inventories prepared with the full participation of the involved communities, and it is regularly updated. In 2010, the National Committee for ICH proclaimed the first seven elements on the National List of Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage (see above).

The Centre for Albanian Studies is the main ICH documentation<sup>13</sup> institution; another body that also holds relevant documentation is the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies. Various museums are also involved in documentation activities related to their own ethnographic collections, including the National Historical Museum (Muzeu Historik Kombëtar) in Tirana, the National Ethnographic Museum (Muzeu Kombëtar Etnografik) in Berat, and the Ethnographic Museums (Muzeu Etnografik) in Shkodër, Krujë, and Vlore. Another institution in charge of the inventory of intangible heritage is the National Inventory Centre of Cultural Properties. This is a state funded institution under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, which is in charge of the computerised inventory of all movable and immovable properties. The Centre keeps the data in the national database also for ethnological objects of private and public ownership. Since 2011 it has been in charge of designing specific software for a database dedicated entirely to intangible heritage. The database (under construction) will keep hard copies of all the data the Institutions have compiled so far. Until now, the Albanian Music Council is the sole non-governmental organisation that has successfully completed inventorying activities (on iso-polyphonic singing and its bearers).

Many independent institutions and non-governmental organisations<sup>14</sup> are also active in safeguarding ICH, awareness-raising, and the popularisation of ICH. They include the Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organization (Organizatës për Ruajtjen dhe Zhvillimin e Gjirokastrës), the Albanian Artisans Association in Shkodër (Shoqata Artizaneve Shkoder), the Rozafa Foundation (Fondacioni Rozafa) based in Tirana, and the Albanian Music Council created in 1999 – a member of the International Music Council IMC founded in 1949 upon request of the UNESCO Director General.

<sup>13</sup> Periodic report of Albania on the implementation of the 2003 Convention is available online: [www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/download.php?versionID=33117](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/download.php?versionID=33117).

<sup>14</sup> NGOs have played an important role in carrying out safeguarding activities in different realms of cultural heritage, particularly those related to traditional arts and crafts; in organising crafts markets and artisan incubators in some of the larger cities in Albania (e.g. in Kruja, Gjirokastra, Shkodër); in the organisation of fairs and festivals of traditional culture; in educational and training initiatives, etc. In Gjirokastra, since 2007, the NGO Cultural Heritage Without Borders has been involved in organising 15 cultural restoration camps in the area (attracting more than 440 participants), with a range of other educational and awareness-raising activities, such as drawing classes in traditional ethnographic houses in the city, cooking classes, and craft-related workshops. Other NGOs focus exclusively on the preparation and organisation of folklore festivals in various parts of Albania. As forms that present both an overview of the cultural traditions, and a lively context of their popularisation, folklore festivals in Albania are proving to be a productive mechanism for the promotion of intangible cultural heritage, and for the beneficial collaboration in this sphere between state and independent institutions. The procedure for approval of activities initiated by NGOs needs an affirmation from the National Committee for ICH and is thus frequently followed by resulting complications on the local and district levels.



## Inventorying ICH in Albania

Developing provisions for inventorying ICH could be an important aspect of strategy and policy for safeguarding ICH, especially in order to understand the viability of ICH in Albania better, and to support communities in safeguarding their ICH. It will be important to involve key stakeholders and communities concerned. Despite the fact that the major coordinating work will be concentrated in the capital, the main tasks in the preparation of the inventory have in fact to be carried out on the local and regional levels. A much more adequate and successful approach would be to involve local communities and institutions in building up the capacities for inventorying. Such an approach would allow the promotion of inventorying as an important step in the long-term safeguarding process, and subsequently allow the collaboration with communities and relevant NGOs from different cultural and linguistic groups, who sometimes live in remote locations.

To carry out this process, it would thus be also necessary to undertake a new approach to understanding the ICH inventorying in line with the spirit of the 2003 Convention. This means that the inventory would need to focus on elements that are present as living traditions and that continue to be performed by communities today. The inventorying of extinct practices or traditions, which are re-enacted only on festivals and in museum contexts, would not need to be in the centre of the inventorying procedure. Similarly, the inventory should not concentrate only on selected representative examples, but on the diversity of cultural heritage country-wide. The inventory would, in particular, give an account of the viability of the elements and the threats that they encounter, thus promoting awareness about the need of measures for their safeguarding. In such a way, the inventory would not represent an extensive account aimed at detailed research, but rather the core information about the identification of the elements and about the primary aspects related to their viability in present-day circumstances. Thus, the inventory has to be an ongoing process involving the fullest cooperation of the communities and bearers of the traditions, engaging them as much as possible in the documentation and safeguarding of their heritage (Vukov 2014).

One of the projects that could provide inspiration for the new inventorying process in Albania is the project Show Your Culture. It was initiated by the staff of the Ministry of Culture and the Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Revitalization of the Albanian Language. It involves a wide-ranging appeal to communities in Albania to document various practices, knowledge, and skills that they maintain and identify as their cultural heritage through means of video and brief textual information. The project uses YouTube as a web-based platform and practically does not require any prelim-



inary investment, as the video and photo recordings can be performed with mobile phones and can be accompanied with a sample selection of basic information about the practised ICH element. Therefore, the focus is put mainly on the two sides of the inventorying process – the communities willing to record, process, and upload the recorded practice on the specially created network on YouTube (Ministria e Kulturës e Shqipërisë 2015); and on the specialists and staff who work in cultural institutions, as the ones who gather the uploaded records systematise the information and include it into the inventorying system. The initiative represents a mere strategy for inventory of intangible cultural heritage, but it is in fact much more: namely, the first step of protection and preservation of its kind to transmit to further generations. It aims to develop partnerships aimed at popularising cultural heritage with the use of new methods and collaborating with cultural organisations in entire Europe, together with actors of the public and private sector, capable of integrating services to include certain groups. It also seeks to establish cooperation with the touristic sector, aiming for the recognition of cultural heritage through the development of digital mapping, and an inventory of their data in order to reflect the physical and virtual aspects of cultural heritage, as well as increasing its sensitivity.

Recently, two projects have been initiated by experts of the Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Revitalization of the Albanian Language and the National Inventory Centre of Cultural Properties aimed at the inventorying of two elements of Albanian intangible cultural heritage, contained in the national list: ‘Logu i Bjeshkëve’ in Northern Albania and ‘Folk music instruments craftsmanship’.



## International cooperation in ICH safeguarding

With regard to bilateral, sub-regional, regional, and international cooperation, Albania collaborates with other States on ICH-related issues, especially those of the South-East Europe sub-region; and these are included in bilateral and/or multilateral agreements, mainly concerning the exchange of information, experts, and knowledge on various aspects of intangible cultural heritage. What is more, traditional, annual folklore festivals are held, which gather together groups and cultural communities from outside Albania. Albania was a member of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage from 2010 until 2014 and participates actively in the meetings organised by other partners. Experts, mainly from the research institutions and museums, participate in international meetings of experts, especially those concerning South-East Europe, where they formally or informally exchange knowledge about ICH elements and safeguarding problems.

In 2016, Albania took over the presidency of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe. This was announced at the meeting of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe 'For the Promotion of Culture for Sustainable Development', which was assembled in Istanbul. The forum adopted a joint plan, the Ohrid Declaration, which provided the detailed work in the management of culture and cultural heritage by stressing the importance of intangible heritage as an important element of identity, but also as a powerful instrument of cultural diversity.

The Ministry of Culture, together with local authorities, also supports capacity building and awareness-raising activities such as workshops, exhibitions, classes, performances, production of audiovisual recordings and other related materials. A national training workshop was held on 14–18 September 2015 in Tirana, called 'Building capacities for the Convention of 2003 of UNESCO'. Another workshop on methods of registering ICH elements in video format was held on July 2015 in Tirana, where 100 individuals received training. An important project in the area of capacity-building for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, implemented by the Albanian Music Council in collaboration with UNESCO and supported by the UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust, organised training courses for young people in the ways of interpreting and singing isopolyphony. Vodafone Albania has also supported another project for training of young people in isopolyphonic singing. Educational programmes are also offered by different governmental bodies, associations (non-governmental organisations), and experts to promote traditional craftsmanship and arts in craft centres throughout the country, for instance by revitalising traditional crafts and empowering their bearers to transmit them. What is more, education on natural and cultural heritage is an integral part of the official school curriculum. At the local level, efforts are made to raise the awareness in the communities themselves and among the young generation.

## Conclusions

Despite the various efforts that have already been made in the recent years, it is evident that there is still an inadequate level of awareness of ICH and its safeguarding, both on the side of governmental and independent institutions and on the side of the stakeholders.

Despite positive steps, there are certain weaknesses that still hinder the development of adequate policies and measures for safeguarding ICH in the country. These weaknesses include, for example: the absence of an integrated strategic plan for ICH issues; the lack of coordination



and unified efforts of state and independent institutions for carrying out safeguarding policies; the absence of special provisions in the existing laws that would directly approach ICH and its safeguarding; the scarce financial resources for ICH-related initiatives; the tendency to establish lists of intangible cultural heritage rather than comprehensive inventories; the insufficient presence of ICH in educational programmes; and last but not least, the low level of involvement of communities, civil society, and media in the policies related to ICH. Altogether, these priorities and activities call for a major step that needs to be undertaken on the state level in Albania, one that would prioritise culture on the list of state policies, including placing ICH issues on the national agenda and promoting the idea of direct connection between heritage and sustainable development.

Intangible heritage in Albania needs to be re-discussed in all aspects, ranging from cultural policies, its value and importance for our cultural identity, and heritage and education together with their transmission to the younger generations, especially important in interdisciplinary studies. Variety and diversity of this type of heritage, its widespread occurrence across the country, its permanence throughout all historical periods among all sections and groups of the population, its human and democratic values as well as the beauty of its multitude of arts and symbols: all these make us realise that before any material monuments, no matter how old, there is a human being, with its language and dialects, rituals, folklore, oral, musical, choreographic and musical artistry, clothing, lifestyles, and a plethora of other colourful cultural forms. The human being is the oldest monument of the world.



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# Ambiguity in the system of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the Republic of Macedonia



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*The first attempt to normatively define the notion of intangible cultural heritage in the Republic of Macedonia was made back in 1988, with the definition of 'cultural wealth' in the Cultural wealth bill. According to this preliminary definition, apart from descriptions of mobile and immobile cultural wealth, the term 'cultural wealth' also included: 'folk songs, dances and other creations, rituals, and other folk elements; crafts and performance pieces of cultural and historical importance (intangible cultural wealth)'.*

The contemporary history of Southeastern Europe marks an exceptionally important period of political and economic transition of the society. It has brought changes and reforms, and the re-creation of nations and cultures, which despite all similarities and common history opted for complete independence and transformation into independent states with unique national identities and symbols (Czekanowska 1996; Laušević 1996; Buchanan 1996). Discerning this newly established context is also related to the newly established social identities, with the respective 'new' musical expressions that also surfaced in the Republic of Macedonia during the 'social transition'. Similarly to the rest of the countries, the Republic of Macedonia, as a relatively new independent state – and facing serious challenges related to its identity, history, and existence imposed from outside in many ways – needs to prove itself and to be present on the world stage, which is somewhat specific for 'small' countries (Zebec 2013, 330).

The crossroads between the East and the West, as the Macedonians stereotypically identify their own country, are considered a country rich in different layers of traditional culture, and thus also in intangible cultural heritage. The state, however, is not always prepared for its adequate identification, legal protection, preservation, absorption, and the dissemination of the knowledge about it. The political elites have recognised the relationship between the intangible cultural heritage and the national identity since the 1950s, which also continued throughout the period of transition in the society of the early 1990s. It is also a matter of prestige in a world of United Nations activities to be networked in this system and to cooperate on an equal level with other states. ICH has the power to solve conflicts, mainly because in many different ways it goes beyond political borders.



The living traditional culture is still present in the everyday life of Macedonia and plays a major role in the positioning and policy making connected to the system of safeguarding of its intangible cultural heritage.

The first attempt to normatively define the notion of intangible cultural heritage in the Republic of Macedonia was made back in 1988, with the definition of 'cultural wealth' in the Cultural wealth bill. According to this preliminary definition, apart from descriptions of mobile and immobile cultural wealth, the term 'cultural wealth' also included: 'folk songs, dances and other creations, rituals, and other folk elements; crafts and performance pieces of cultural and historical importance (intangible cultural wealth)'.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1990 legislative project in this area, 'intangible goods' were not subject to protection, under the pretext that the problem of their protection has not been sufficiently studied, as well as that in terms of intangible cultural heritage, it is the nurturing of the goods that matters, rather than their *protecting*. Furthermore, the exclusion of intangible goods from the protection acts, regardless of their terminological identification, was announced in the 1995 Strategic concept for normative regulation of culture.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, according to the source text of the 1998 Law on culture,<sup>3</sup> 'all intangible culture regardless of its value and significance' was eligible for protection.

This preliminary definition distinguished five types of intangible cultural heritage, including music, theatre, and other performance arts. However, in the normative part of the concept of the 2002 Cultural heritage law proposal, as already stated, intangible goods were formally referred to as 'spiritual goods', hence the legal definition of intangible cultural heritage became 'spiritual cultural heritage' and included only folklore, toponyms, and traditional crafts.

In the 2003 Cultural heritage protection bill, the folk goods,<sup>4</sup> language, and toponyms were identified as types of spiritual and cultural heritage, with definitions for each. With slight corrections, these definitions remained in the final draft of the national Law on protection of cultural heritage from April 2004:

<sup>1</sup> *Zakon za izmenuvanje na zakonot za spomenici i spomen-obeležja*, Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija [Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia] no. 51, 31 December 1988, art. 4.29.

<sup>4</sup> *Strateški koncept za kulturata*.

<sup>3</sup> *Zakon za kulturata*, Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija no. 31, 2 July 1998.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Law on protection of cultural heritage in the Republic of Macedonia, the term 'folklore goods' encompasses all manifestations of traditional culture that the UNESCO 2003 Convention defines as intangible cultural heritage. Having in mind all the debates on the definitions of this term (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 53–54), in this article we use the term 'folklore goods' as it is stated in official domestic legal acts.



### 1.3. Intangible cultural heritage

#### *Folklore goods*

##### Article 24

As folklore goods shall be considered the habits, rituals, tales, mental creations, folklore songs, stories, legends, adages, riddles, dances, plays, old and rare crafts, traditional crafts and other expressions of the immaterial national creation.

#### *Language*

##### Article 25

The language is the literature, i.e. the standard language and its alphabet, as well as the local speeches of the same languages (dialects).

#### *Toponyms*

##### Article 26

The toponyms are the names of lakes, rivers, springs and other water objects (hydronyms), cities, villages and other settlements (oikonyms), natural or administrative areas (horonyms), roads (dromonyms), agricultural spatial facilities (agronyms), mountains and other objects of nature related to forests (dendronyms) and other genuine, local and official names which are subject to the toponymy of the Republic of Macedonia.<sup>5</sup>



Apart from the national legal framework, Macedonia ratified two international conventions. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, only 8 days after it officially came into force, namely on the 28 April 2006,<sup>6</sup> and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Paris 2005) ratified on 2 April 2007.<sup>7</sup>

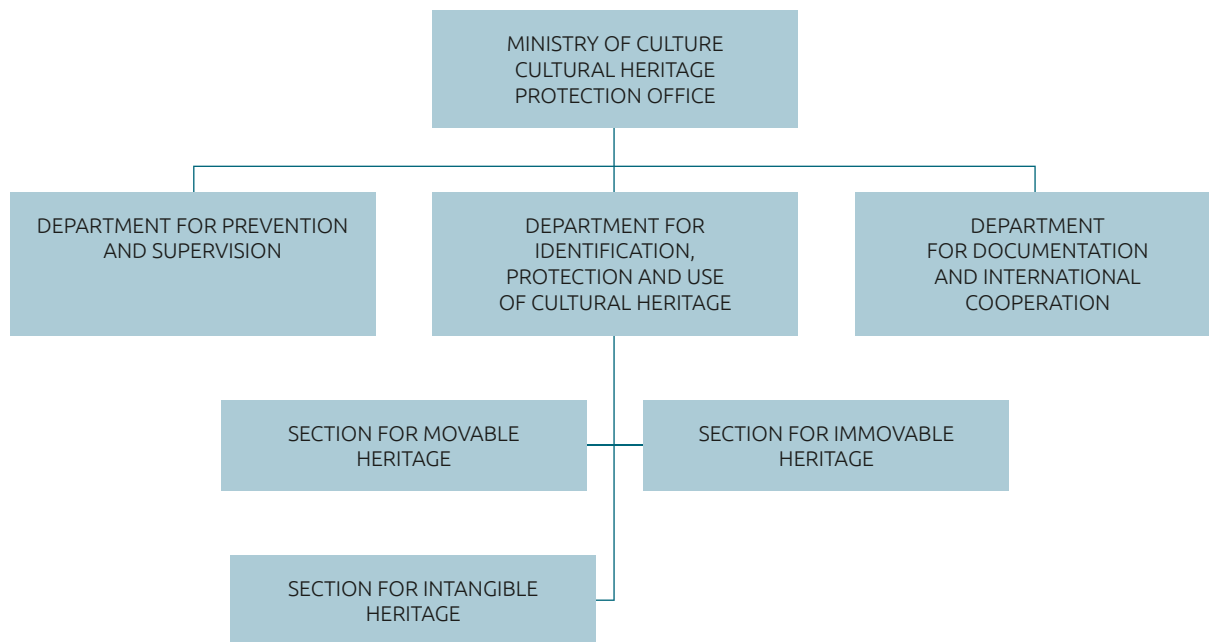
From the onset of the idea of creating this system for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, the Republic of Macedonia has recognised its importance and supported the entire process of its promotion, especially in this region of Southeastern Europe. Moreover, the Republic of Macedonia is an active participant in the South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage, which meets annually around the region, and is placed under the auspices of the Venice UNESCO Regional Office. Regarding the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the national law in question, and in order to identify the intangible cultural

<sup>5</sup> *Zakon za zaštita na kulturnoto nasledstvo*, Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija no. 20, 2 April 2004.

<sup>6</sup> *Zakon za ratifikacija na Konvencijata za zaštita na nematerijalno kulturno nasledstvo*, Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija. Međunarodni dogovori [Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia. International Agreements] no. 59, 12 May 2006.

<sup>7</sup> *Zakon za ratifikacija na Konvencijata za zaštita i unapređivanje na raznovidnosta vo kulturnite izrazuvanja*, Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija. Međunarodni dogovori no. 47, 13 April 2007.

goods, a National classification of Macedonian cultural heritage<sup>8</sup> and National Registry of Cultural Heritage (Nacionalniot registar na kulturno nasledstvo)<sup>9</sup> have been prepared.



Institutional structure of the Cultural Heritage Protection Office in the Republic of Macedonia

By decree of the Ministry of Culture from between 2005 and 2011, five institutions were appointed as protectors<sup>10</sup> of the intangible cultural heritage:

1. The Institute of Folklore 'Marko Cepenkov' in Skopje, as a legal entity for the safeguarding of folklore ([www.ifmc.ukim.mk](http://www.ifmc.ukim.mk));

<sup>8</sup> Odluka za donesuvanje na Nacionalna klasifikacija na kulturnoto nasledstvo, Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija no. 37, 28 March 2006.

<sup>9</sup> National Registry of Cultural Heritage in Macedonia is only a synonym for the UNESCO National inventory of inscribed goods. There are three types of registries in the Macedonian system: national registry of immovable cultural heritage, national registry of movable cultural heritage, and national registry of spiritual cultural heritage.

<sup>10</sup> The audio/video heritage in the Republic of Macedonia, which is strongly connected with intangible cultural heritage, according to the Law on protection of cultural heritage is separately defined as movable heritage. The institutions authorised to protect the audiovisual cultural heritage are: the National and University Library 'St. Clement of Ohrid' – Skopje (Nacionalna i univerzitetska biblioteka „Sv. Kliment Ohridski” – Skopje) and National Film Laboratory – Skopje (Kinoteka na Makedonija).

2. The Krste Misirkov Macedonian Language Institute (Institut za makedonski jazik „Krste Misirkov“) in Skopje, as a legal entity for safeguarding Macedonian language, its dialects, and the ethnic minority dialects spoken in the Republic of Macedonia ([www.imj.ukim.edu.mk](http://www.imj.ukim.edu.mk));
3. The Museum of Macedonia (Muzej na Makedonija), which made a quiet entrance into the system of safeguarding intangible goods with a project on traditional cuisine at the initiative of the National UNESCO Office in Turkey ([www.musmk.org.mk](http://www.musmk.org.mk));
4. The Institute for Old Slavic Culture in Prilep (Institut za staroslovenska kultura – Prilep), authorised in May ([www.isk.edu.mk](http://www.isk.edu.mk));
5. The Institute for Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of Albanians in Skopje (Institut za duhovno i kulturno nasledstvo na Albancite – Skopje), since 2011.

In the Republic of Macedonia, this concept of ‘protection’ instead of ‘safeguarding’ of folklore is conceptualised on the basis of protecting material culture and introduces a system of validation/valorisation of the importance of the intangible type of culture. The Law on the protection of cultural heritage in the Republic of Macedonia lists two main categories of values of cultural heritage: ‘cultural heritage of exceptional value’ (divided into two subcategories: ‘cultural heritage of extraordinary value’ and ‘cultural heritage of great value’) and ‘important cultural heritage’.<sup>11</sup>

This concept of measuring the value of cultural expressions is against the nature of intangible culture since each community considers their cultural heritage – its rituals, songs and games – to be unique. For them, these expressions are unconditionally beautiful and regarded as the most important in their public life. In the second half of 2006, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia approved the foundation of the special Intangible Cultural Heritage Department (Oddelenie za duhovno kulturno nasledstvo) as a part of the Cultural Heritage Protection Office in the Ministry of Culture of Republic of Macedonia. The responsibility of this institution is to implement the state policy regarding cultural heritage, to coordinate the network of different types of institutions, non-governmental organisations including individuals, and to improve the implementation of the laws and conventions that are already in force.

Over the active period of 12 years, since the establishment of the Cultural Heritage Protection Office, and 10 years from the enactment of the Law on ratifying the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Office has placed 88 intangible goods

<sup>11</sup> The Government of the Republic of Macedonia declares all cultural goods which apply for the first category, while the cultural goods of the second category are declared by the Cultural Heritage Protection Office.





The Gavrovski Trio – bearers of the UNESCO inscribed element ‘Glasoechko, male two-part singing in Dolni Polog’, on the solemn concert which marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 23 October 2013, © ICTM NC for Macedonia.



on the National Inventory List, including: 58 folk creations; 19 dialects of Macedonian language; 10 dialects of the ethnic minority languages in Macedonia; 1 position in the category of cultural goods-toponyms.

All activities that have arisen since the establishment of the system of ICH require intensive, dynamic, and continuous activities, not only on the national level. Thus, in 2011, Republic of Macedonia submitted three files for UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage; two multinational applications have been also pending since 2013.

## First national inscriptions

The 'Feast of the Holy Forty Martyrs in Štip' was the first ICH element inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (in December 2013). The second was 'Kopachkata, a social dance from the village of Dramche, Pijanec', inscribed in 2014. In addition, 'Glasoechko, male two-part singing in Dolni Polog' was inscribed in 2015 on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.



## Multinational nominations

The Republic of Macedonia participated in nominating the following elements for the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity: 'Spring celebration, Hidrellez' (The initiative was taken by the UNESCO National Commission of Turkey. The file was submitted by Turkey and Republic of Macedonia for possible inscription in 2017) and 'Cultural practices associated to the 1<sup>st</sup> of March' (The initiative was taken by the UNESCO National Commission of Romania. Four Southeastern European countries participated: Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, and Macedonia. The file was submitted for possible inscription in 2017).

All of these elements inscribed on the national and UNESCO lists are results of the cooperation on various levels. Initiatives have been coming from the bottom to the top, and the local community NGOs appear as initiators for almost all activities. Nowadays, through the Fund for Annual Cultural Programme, local cultural operators receive funds from the Ministry of Culture to work on the safeguarding of ICH, not only on the national level but also to promote their cultural goods internation-

ally. The diversity of the system of the safeguarding of ICH complements the actions of one of the world's best-known non-profit organisations associated with UNESCO, the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), through their National Committee for Macedonia which appears as central non-profit and non-governmental consultative organisation for the Ministry of Culture. Together with the Macedonian Research Society, they are officially accredited within UNESCO.

Traditional culture is in a dynamic relationship with social, political, and economic processes, and safeguarding practices must consider this dynamic relationship. Although the long-term effects in our case remain to be seen, the processes of safeguarding ICH, when implemented in ways that empower local tradition-bearers, may be effective in sustaining cultural traditions even when safeguarded ICH elements are simultaneously employed for other political or economic ends. A considerable number of community projects are active at this moment in the Republic of Macedonia, and allow the traditional culture to function somewhat independently through new possibilities provided by innovative discourses, such as the creative industries, or through programmes such as the new agenda for sustainable development.<sup>12</sup>

In the Republic of Macedonia, the establishment and development of institutional mechanisms for the safeguarding of ICH are inextricably linked to politics on the international level, particularly with regard to the contestation of the existence of the Macedonian ethnicity characterised by a distinct language and culture. Even before its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, Macedonia's geographic neighbours had challenged the ethno-national distinctiveness of the Macedonian nation and ethnic Macedonian people. Throughout the socialist period, Greece officially denied the existence of the Macedonian ethnicity and language, while Bulgaria claimed both of them as parts of the Bulgarian nation and language. In many ways, these contestations constitute concrete threats to the distinct Macedonian identity, resulting in 'identity' (*identitet*) itself emerging as a politicised concept (and an influential political tool) since the 1990s. As a consequence, the state has put significant focus on affirming and publicising the national and cultural identity, which, in turn, has spurred processes of recontextualisation and heritagisation of ICH.

Within the process of industrialisation, when the primary cultural (ritual) functions of ICH elements (such as rituals, traditional music and dance folklore, crafts and oral expressions, even the language and the dialects) begin to fade, the process of gradual disappearance of traditional music and dance as ICH also starts. However, in the period of transition and under the threat

<sup>12</sup> See [en.unesco.org/sdgs](http://en.unesco.org/sdgs).



of losing identity, and especially with the ethno-renaissance movement in Republic of Macedonia that started in 1993 – that is the repopularisation and reaffirmation of the cultural and the national identity – the 2003 Convention arrived as an excellent pretext for the repopularisation of the ICH elements also in another context, that is, as a means of strengthening the local and national identity (Stojkova Serafimovska 2014).

UNESCO 2003 Convention states that the ‘intangible cultural heritage’ is defined as practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, scholars have increasingly linked music and dance to various conceptions of identity (see Rice 2007; Stokes 1994; Frith 2004; Nettle 2005, 263, 268–71). There are four observed positions in which music and dance relate to identity in ethnomusicological literature: music gives shape to a pre-existing identity; musical performance provides opportunities for communities to see their shared identities ‘in action’; music contributes an effective quality or ‘feeling’ to an identity; and gives identity a positive valence (Rice 2007, 34–35).

A case study for elaborating these processes and issues is the *Kopačkata* dance, a social dance from the village of Dramche in Pijanec, which is still alive and shows an interesting case of implementation of the UNESCO 2003 Convention on several levels. *Kopachkata*, as it was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List in December 2014, is a dynamic social chain dance (*oro*) from the region of Pijanec in the eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia. The male version of *Kopačkata* takes place as a series of four sections, each involving a particular dance sequence performed in a semicircle: *šetanica* (walking sequence), which serves to set the formation of the dance and warms up the dancers; *sitnoto* (small steps sequence), in which the dancers’ steps are swift and short (skilful dancers actually slide their feet on the ground); *prefrlačka* (crossing-legs sequence), in which the left foot is swiftly crossed over the right foot and the dancers and musicians speed up the dance to its climax; and *kopačkata* (digging sequence), the fastest and most dynamic sequence in which the dancers dramatically jump, landing firmly on the right foot while the left foot repeatedly

<sup>13</sup> *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris, 17 October 2003*, art. 2 (available online: [www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention)).



hits the ground with the intention of digging, which is how this dance got its name. The dance has typically been accompanied by two *tapani* (double-headed drums) usually played by Roms, but nowadays also Macedonians equipped with four or even five *tapani*. In addition to *tapani*, variants of *Kopačkata* may also be accompanied by a *kemene* (bowed fiddle), and less often, by a *tambura* (long-necked fretted lute) or a bagpipe.

Through parallel processes of inscription and heritagisation, this cultural practice has come to exist in multiple parallel performance contexts. The case of *Kopačkata* from eastern Macedonia illustrates the potential for living traditions to embody multiple meanings when they involve the same participants in different contexts. At present, *Kopačkata* exists in 4 different renderings: as a living local tradition; as a staged performance by local practitioners; as a part of the repertoire of professional and amateur folk ensembles nationwide; and as portrayed in the media and social media discourse and perceived by the public as a symbol of Macedonian national identity.

The first of these, its local context, involves spontaneous performance at social gatherings, including weddings and festivals. For example, the annual gathering in Dramče on the Day of St. Michael the Archangel (21 November) concludes with a collective and spontaneous performance of *Kopačkata*, bringing together around one hundred dancers. *Kopačkata* was also part of the first group of nominations from the Republic of Macedonia for the possible inscription on UNESCO ICH lists in 2011. The process leading up to this nomination has put into motion a new heritagisation process intertwined with both UNESCO ICH implementation guidelines and contemporary political factors. We (the authors of this paper) began working with the tradition bearers in 2003, and we were also part of the team that prepared the applications for the first three elements proposed for inscription. We soon found ourselves in two roles. In the first, we served as mediators between theory and practice – that is, we assumed the position of interpreters of the UNESCO 2003 Convention in terms of content and implementation, both for the tradition bearers and for the institutions that were less familiar with the Convention and the term ‘intangible cultural heritage’ itself. In our second role, we were given the task of identifying cultural practices as ICH – a task that required us to alter our way(s) of thinking about ICH. We had to align our thinking with political concerns at the expense of scholarly ones, and to redirect our interest away from the analysis of living folklore and instead focus on the processes related to the institutionalisation of ICH, and the related concerns of heritagisation and recontextualisation (Pečheva 2014, 292). In Kirschenblatt-Gimblett’s (2004) terms, we became embedded in a metacultural process that implicated the fundamental conditions for cultural production and reproduction of traditional music and



dance forms. Thus, although *Kopačkata* has been heritagised and recontextualised in the course of its inscription on the UNESCO List – that is, as a symbol of national identity and an example of staged folklore at the national level – it continues as a living local tradition in parallel with its newer contexts. These parallel contexts relate to the multi-layered identities of the tradition bearers, the significance of which was highlighted by dancers from the younger generation. One junior dancer, when asked what he feels has been safeguarded by UNESCO and to whom *Kopačkata* belongs, stated, ‘*Kopačkata* is primarily mine, and only after that it is a Macedonian folk dance’.

Since the nomination and the inscription of the *Kopačkata* on the UNESCO Representative List, the folk dance group Kopačka from the village of Dramče now has been annually applying for these funds and receiving them, which results in improved conditions for rehearsing *Kopačkata* (as well as other local folk dances and songs), the ability to maintain and purchase instruments and folk attire, and the means to promote the interest in folk music and dance among younger generations. The group was prioritised to receive funds from the Ministry of Culture for projects involved in safeguarding and promoting the dance. Indeed, 2014 witnessed a revival of several ICH traditions in the Pijanec region, an increased interest among youth, and several projects that mapped other music and dance ICH elements in this region, essentially establishing a community-based inventory, one of the goals of the UNESCO 2003 Convention. Tradition-bearers have also continued to take steps that indicate that the tradition at the local level is not a ‘frozen’ one, but a living, evolving practice. At the same time, the implementation of the Convention in tandem with national identity politics in Macedonia resulted in *Kopačkata* becoming a symbol of national identity. This had the effect of directing significant funds to tradition bearers, who have thus far been able to participate in maintaining control over their tradition itself in accordance with UNESCO guidelines.

UNESCO’s efforts to establish an instrument for the protection of what it now calls intangible heritage date back to 1952. The focus on different legal concepts, such as intellectual property, copyright, trademark and patent, as the basis for protecting what was then called folklore, has been always twofold. Folklore, by definition, is not the unique creation of an individual; it exists in versions and variants rather than in a single, original, and authoritative form; it is generally created as performance and transmitted orally, by custom or example, rather than in tangible form (writings, notes, drawings, photographs, recordings). ‘Living archive’ and ‘library’ are common metaphors. Such terms do not assert a person’s right to what they do, but rather their role in sustaining the culture (for others). According to this model, people come and go, but culture persists, as one generation passes it on to the next. However, all heritage interventions – such as the globalising



pressures they are trying to counteract – change the relationship of people with what they do. They change how people understand, perceive, and practice their culture, as well as the people themselves. They change the fundamental conditions for cultural production and reproduction throughout time. Change is intrinsic to culture, and measures intended to preserve, conserve, safeguard, and sustain particular cultural practices are caught between freezing the practice and defining the intangible cultural heritage. So far, *Kopačkata* has been a positive, living example of an ICH element that endures through all of these processes and meanings.

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# The implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Republic of Serbia: documentation of the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade

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*...the collaboration among professionals, heritage bearers, and local communities plays an important role in the process of identifying heritage elements and recognising them as part of the heritage that can qualify for the National Register of ICH. In this respect, the role of the network of regional coordinators, which has been established in the heritage safeguarding system in the Republic of Serbia, becomes particularly evident.*

The establishment of a system of intangible cultural heritage in the Republic of Serbia and the introduction of this concept in the professional, scholarly and wide public debate have raised a series of questions regarding not only its definition, but also its place within the existing system of institutional heritage protection. The study of spiritual culture, social rituals, knowledge and beliefs specific to a particular community, skills, and the making and using everyday objects – have all belonged to the area that has been subject to systematic and professional research within scholarly disciplines, such as ethnology and anthropology, folklore studies, ethnomusicology and others, from the very beginning. However, after the adoption of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, it is coming back into the public focus and is being reconsidered through a new prism.

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted by UNESCO with the idea of devising a new approach to the safeguarding of this part of cultural heritage, while establishing a new mechanism and expanding the circle of stakeholders involved in its protection and preservation, in order to ensure that it is passed on to the next generations. In order to accomplish this task, the care for heritage has also been entrusted to the heirs, bearers, and local communities apart from the professionals and official institutions. As a result, it is frequently heard in professional circles that the issue is raised and there is a need to define the roles entrusted to these stakeholders in the newly established system of ICH. On the one hand, the Convention has instituted administrative measures, the implementation of which requires action on the part of state administration, whereas, on the other hand, the study of all aspects of heritage



within the domain defined by the Convention necessitates studious expert work and systematic scholarly research.

The agency of museums, since their beginnings, has not been limited to making various collections; they have been rather involved in detailed documenting and recording of the life of heritage-bearing communities and all that relates to it. Therefore, according to Richard Kurin (2007), it is already their current structure that makes them the most eligible institutions to be entrusted with the care for the implementation of the Convention. However, in order to successfully implement its key principles, it is crucial to define the roles of those who have been actively involved and recognised in heritage conservation systems: the bearers of heritage and local communities. Their role is recognised already in the implementation of the first prerequisite for the systematic safeguarding of the heritage referred to as intangible, namely, the identification of heritage items and the establishment of an inventory of intangible cultural heritage. However, their role is also crucial in transferring and maintaining the function of heritage in the communities of heirs. The unification of the activities undertaken by these seemingly remote actors in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage – heritage bearers – and heritage professionals can be perceived through the implementation of the first step defined in the Convention: the identification of ICH items and their inclusion in relevant registers. Through recognising the importance and value of their own heritage and identifying the need to preserve and protect this heritage through the system foreseen by the Convention, the heritage bearers take on a very active role, which later acquires a prominent place in the further stages of the heritage safeguarding system. What is more, through their work, and through the methodology of recording and interpreting heritage, the heritage professionals play a significant role in ensuring the safeguarding of ICH, especially in the area of documentation and registration. That is why the establishment of a national inventory of ICH, which is mandatory for State Parties to the Convention, is the best indicator of the efficiency of the ICH safeguarding system in their territory; also, because the maintenance and enhancement of such an inventory require intensive cooperation between the aforementioned stakeholders. By placing the National Register of the ICH of the Republic of Serbia and the ICH elements inscribed in it under the auspices of the Ethnographic Museum, it has been made possible to apply the existing body of knowledge and experience to the exploration and documentation of heritage, as well as to devise new methods of work stemming from the features specific to documenting ICH as living heritage. At the same time, this method has allowed enhancing the presentation means that are available due to digitisation and the development of information and communication technologies. This, in turn, has improved the documentation methods.



## Establishing a system for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the Republic of Serbia

Since the adoption of the Law on the ratification of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage<sup>1</sup> in May 2010, the Republic of Serbia has been undertaking its implementation by establishing a network of professional bodies and introducing regulations that make it possible to put the defined framework into practice, as well as facilitate the promotion of the importance of recognising intangible cultural heritage as part of their own cultural heritage and an active participation in the education of the professional and general public. The safeguarding of ICH found its professional and scholarly anchor in the decades-long activities of institutions. Through their ethnological, anthropological, ethnolinguistic, and ethnomusicological research, and through the collection of data about the traditional ways of life, social festivities and practices, customs, beliefs, oral traditions, crafts and knowledge, they have laid the foundations for further study and preservation of the living heritage present in Serbian communities for generations. Based on these principles, a network for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage has been established. Its activities are directed towards providing a solid safeguarding system that enables heritage protection and the continued transmission of cultural heritage; it facilitates cooperation among professionals, the bearers of the knowledge of intangible heritage, and institutions (Živković 2011).

The Ministry of Culture and Media (Ministarstvo kulture i informisanja), the body responsible for the implementation of the Convention, has established key expert and advisory bodies which operate as a network for the safeguarding of ICH, with precisely defined responsibilities and roles. The National Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Nacionalni komitet za nematerijalno kulturno nasleđe) comprised of experts in various fields has been established within the Ministry of Culture and Media. It is in charge of devising and adopting a strategy for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage of the Republic of Serbia and is involved in a coordinated process of including the domain of intangible cultural heritage in the national legislation. It also decides on the nominations for the inclusion of heritage items in the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Nacionalni registar nematerijalnog kulturnog nasleđa) and accepts nominations for inclusion in the UNESCO lists. The multidisciplinary character of the activities associated with intangible

<sup>1</sup> On 5 May 2010, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Law on ratification of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (*Zakon o potvrđivanju Konvencije o očuvanju nematerijalnog kulturnog nasleđa*, Službeni glasnik RS, Međunarodni ugovori [The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia. International Treaties] 001/2010, 21 May 2010).



cultural heritage is reflected in the work of the Commission for the Inscription of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the National Register, which as part of this network of experts is responsible for evaluating and preparing proposals for inscription in the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The activities of seven regional coordinators responsible for Vojvodina, Belgrade, Central Serbia, West Serbia, East Serbia, South Serbia and Kosovo, and Metohija are particularly important in the process of identifying, nominating, and monitoring the elements of intangible cultural heritage, and help establish cooperation among communities, groups, individuals, experts, museums, centres of expertise, and research institutes in collecting, documenting, archiving and preserving data related to heritage.

The Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade was established in June 2012 as a particularly important part of the system of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage in Serbia. One of its main tasks is to keep the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The idea to place the Register under the auspices of the Centre established at the Museum is in accordance with the conviction that the identification, registration, and documentation of intangible cultural heritage should be a part of the overall system of safeguarding cultural heritage. Although certain professional debates about the role of museums in the implementation of the Convention raise major dilemmas, one needs to keep in mind that since their beginnings, museums have collected items that belong to the sphere that is presently defined by the concept of 'intangible cultural heritage'. Therefore, it seems quite natural that the care for intangible heritage is institutionally placed under the auspices of museums (Bižić-Omčikus 2005).

Consequently, it is possible to ensure that the new safeguarding system is integrated faster within the general care for heritage, based on the gained experience. This aspect is particularly apparent in the field of documenting ICH, i.e. the process of compiling, preparing, and archiving dossiers for individual elements of intangible cultural heritage, which is entrusted to the Centre for ICH. The Centre also maintains the complete documentation for the elements inscribed in the National Register of ICH of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the documents for the ICH inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices. The important tasks of the Centre include coordinating and establishing cooperation among communities, groups, individuals, professionals, centres of expertise, and research institutes. The Centre implements activities related to research, collection, documentation, preservation and presentation of the elements of intangible cultural heritage in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, as well as those related to the publication and presentation of ICH.



## The National Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Serbia

The establishment of the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage is the first step in heritage safeguarding, and the basic precondition for this is the act of identifying an element by the members of a local community as representing their specific value. However, in order to create all conditions for safeguarding heritage, it is also necessary to ensure other stages in the process: documentation, education, and presentation. It is also important to note that documentary films, photographic documentation, scholarly and technical papers, audio-visual recordings of the elements of intangible cultural heritage made during field research by researchers and participants and, above all, the education of professionals and new generations that would stress nurturing the diversity of customs and adopting local identities and values are not merely methods aimed at recording the current status of heritage elements, but also means for their preservation. All these factors are covered by the criteria for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity defined in the Convention, which provide a framework that countries should rely on when establishing a procedure for inclusion of ICH elements in any of the established lists.

Furthermore, the collaboration among professionals, heritage bearers, and local communities plays an important role in the process of identifying heritage elements and recognising them as part of the heritage that can qualify for the National Register of ICH.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, the role of the network of regional coordinators, which has been established in the heritage safeguarding system in the Republic of Serbia, becomes particularly evident. The regional coordinators, in the same way as professionals who perform field research, have an opportunity to identify heritage elements and encourage heritage bearers, individuals, groups and communities to recognise the importance and value of their intangible cultural heritage. The general principle in the previous heritage practice was to establish an administrative legal framework for heritage safeguarding and secure technical and research activities aimed at monitoring and studying heritage. The Convention, however, actively involves heritage bearers in this process. It is thus precisely the way to create conditions for the next step, which follows the process of registering and documenting heritage items by relevant expert institutions – passing it down to the next generations.

The identification of a heritage element, its recording and registration in the National Register by no means imply efforts to conserve it and artificially keep it in its present form. On the contrary,

<sup>2</sup> On the importance of developing a new approach in which museums will be more closely linked with the territories and communities they should cover, see Boylan 2006, 57.





Consecration of the family Slava cakes in the church, 2013. Photo by Saša Milutinović, © Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade.



it is very important to remain aware that we are dealing with 'living heritage' (Blake 2002, 7), which implies change and adjustment to new environments and new circumstances. Therefore, the act of including a heritage element in the inventory of intangible cultural heritage means that safeguarding measures are adopted, but also that the system to ensure the sustainability of this element is put in place. Along with heritage bearers, an important role in accomplishing this task is played by organisations, associations, and institutions that ensure – through their programmes – the visibility and sustainability of an element. In this aspect, particularly important roles are played by relevant collaborating museums (Boylan 2006, 62) and other expert institutions and individuals, local communities, non-governmental and other organisations and associations which have recognised the importance of heritage for the survival of the community or have realised that heritage and its interpretation offer new opportunities.

In order to enable the inclusion of the identified elements in the lists of intangible cultural heritage in the Republic of Serbia, the National Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted the form for the registration of elements. This form basically follows the model of the application form for the UNESCO Representative List, but it is adjusted to the specific character of field research and the current state of legal framework in the Republic of Serbia. It covers all important issues of identification, safeguarding, preservation, and survival of intangible cultural heritage and it clearly highlights the most important participants in the process of ICH safeguarding: heritage bearers, local communities, non-governmental organisations, expert institutions, and the state that initiates activities in the field of intangible cultural heritage and warrants their implementation. The activities and programmes of each of these bodies aimed at ensuring the sustainability, preservation, and protection of individual elements are also an integral part of the data necessary to complete the form. Through individual sections of the form, it is defined and explained how the accomplishment of planned activities will ensure compliance with the fundamental postulates of the Convention. In this way, it is possible to grasp the basic tasks put before the most important participants in the process of heritage safeguarding from several aspects: the legislative and financial perspective, the accomplishment of which is the primary task placed before a State Party to the Convention; the professional aspect in terms of research such as recording and education, which primarily depend on the strength and capacity of institutions responsible for heritage safeguarding and education; as well as the aspect of preservation and sustainability, which largely depends on heritage bearers, local communities, and non-governmental organisations.



Taking into account the priorities established by the Convention and the need to define the procedure for compiling the lists of ICH elements in the Republic of Serbia, the National Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted the Regulations on the Registration in the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage. As the criteria for the registration of intangible cultural heritage are primarily determined by the postulates in the 2003 Convention and the Operational Guidelines for its implementation, the Regulations additionally specify the procedure of registration, define the lists of intangible cultural heritage elements,<sup>3</sup> and specify the mandatory content of the documentation dossier for ICH elements.

The National Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Serbia was established in June 2012 and currently includes 32 inscribed ICH elements, based on the decisions of the National Committee for ICH. The establishment of the Register has made it possible for the Republic of Serbia to propose and prepare nomination dossiers for inscription in the UNESCO Representative List of the elements of intangible cultural heritage. The first nomination from the Republic of Serbia, prepared with the support of local governments, regional museums, tourist and non-governmental organisations and individuals, 'Slava' (celebration of the family saint patron's day), was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in November 2014; whereas the nomination of the '*Kolo*, traditional folk dance' is still under evaluation for the 2017 cycle.



## The documentation of the National Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Serbia

Along with printed materials, the National Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Serbia, maintained at the Centre for ICH at the Ethnographic Museum, contains an electronic database which brings together all types of documentary materials about the elements inscribed in the Register. The documentation dossier necessary for inscription on the lists of intangible cultural heritage consists of a completed application form and relevant accompanying documentation: audio and video materials, photographic documentation, technical papers, proofs of the informed

<sup>3</sup> According to the Regulations, the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage includes the Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage as well as the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and the list of nominations for the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, which at the moment does not contain any elements.

consent of heritage bearers (individuals, groups, or communities), and the opinions of expert institutions (museums, institutes) or specialists in the area of intangible cultural heritage. The nomination for inscription on the lists of intangible cultural heritage can be submitted by individuals, communities, institutions, or relevant non-governmental organisations.

The application form, as a basic document, is structured in such a manner that the work on its completion reflects both the accomplished activities and those necessary to prepare and implement in the system for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, an important part of the documentation is the proof of informed consent of specific heritage element bearers. By signing these consent documents, a heritage bearer confirms that an ICH element is a part of his or her identity and heritage, passed-on from generation to generation. At the same time, the bearers confirm their own intention to ensure that the transfer of heritage elements will continue. Thus, by signing the document, the bearers transcend the framework set by the previous practice, in which they were passive observers of scholarly and technical documentation of their knowledge and skills, and become the protagonists of a process in which they will contribute, together with other stakeholders, to the survival of a part of their heritage.

Simultaneously, the opinion of a responsible museum or another institution provides the certification that the nominated element is subject to professional research and ensures that it belongs to the specific heritage of individuals, groups and communities who nominate it, and that relevant sources about it are available. Furthermore, the audio, video and photo documentation is also essential in the process of recording and documenting elements of intangible heritage, and forms a part of the dossier. Together with the statements of informed consent, the dossier is a specific feature of the documentation on elements of intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, the very fact that it is necessary to provide documentation that shows the changes of elements – because the documentation of intangible cultural heritage as living heritage implies constant monitoring, amending and updating – contributes to the complexity of this documentation and makes it necessary to define new rules for its handling and studying.

Based on the experience gained while documenting ICH and maintaining the National Register, the Centre for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Serbia has identified the need for improvement of this process through a development of an electronic database. Bearing in mind that the efforts aimed at preserving ICH involve constant monitoring and updating of data on the elements inscribed in the National Register – and therefore of the documentation that makes their integral part – a task of designing an electronic database proved to be necessary. In order to ensure the





A collective performance of the *kolo* by members of folklore ensembles, participants in Čivijada at Šabac, 2011. Photo by Dragutin Petrović, Ethnographic Museum.



A *kolo* performance as part of a satellite programme within the celebration of Đurđevdan (St George's feast) in the village of Vrtovac near Knjaževac. The youngest members of the local folklore ensemble present a *kolo* variant from their cultural heritage, 2010. Photo by Saša Milutinović, Homeland Museum Knjaževac.

preconditions for the proper archiving of ICH documentation, as well as its use and presentation, a digital National Register of ICH was thus developed.<sup>4</sup> It contains an inventory of ICH, as well as records associated with the elements inscribed on and nominated for the UNESCO list, i.e. the documentation about elements of intangible cultural heritage in a digital format.

Taking into consideration the specific character of the documentation in which audio-visual recordings are prioritised over textual records and information, an electronic database was developed as an optimal solution for storing, preserving, and presenting the data about ICH elements. The database structure basically corresponds with the structure of the Form for the Registration of Elements and it enables to store all relevant documents associated with the items inscribed in the Register in a digital format. The database of the National Register also allows to enter and regularly update the data about the elements inscribed in the National Register, as well as to deposit different types of documents that make up the dossier of an ICH element (official documents, videos, photographic and audio materials). It also enables to define user access levels with various user privileges (in addition to the access level granted to administrators and database operators, under defined conditions, the data may be made available to other users for research or scholarly purposes). It also allows keeping a record of the stages in the process of adopting heritage elements – from nomination to the final decision on acceptance or refusal. Additionally, limited sets of data are publicly available on a website (see below). The data access is ensured by defining different levels of access to the data contained in the database and these levels comply with the Regulations on Maintaining the National Register. This means that only those pieces of information for which consent is provided by heritage bearers can be used in promoting intangible cultural heritage or the values of the Convention. Respectively, the data that can be used for the education of various segments of society on intangible heritage is presented online and publicly available. Other data contained in the electronic database may only be used under the terms and conditions defined in accordance with the standards set by the 2003 Convention and the laws pertaining to the use of data and technical materials. The access to the documentation is thereby enabled to professionals, interested communities, and the general public.

<sup>4</sup> The National Register of ICH, namely the database of the National Register, was developed within the project Digitizing the Documentation of the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Application of New Information and Communication Technologies in the Protection and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage, supported under the UNESCO Participation Programme 2014–2015.





Partial access to the content of the National Register of ICH is made possible through the web platform ([www.nkns.rs](http://www.nkns.rs)), which enables to display a selected set of data from the database on the website dedicated to the intangible cultural heritage of Serbia. Along with the basic information about the system for the safeguarding of ICH, developments within the system, and the activities of local communities in the area of ICH preservation, the platform contains an excerpt from the National Register. The digitisation of documentation on intangible cultural heritage and the access to it through the web platform ensure an increased visibility of ICH, whereas the application of new technologies in its presentation facilitates its inclusion in the educational, cultural, touristic and other programmes implemented by institutions within the system or by communities. At the same time, this approach creates preconditions for networking with other entities involved in the safeguarding of cultural heritage (museums, archives, libraries, private collections, websites, and online databases). Moreover, through the new forms of communication, the young generations that play a crucial role in the transfer and – accordingly – preservation of intangible heritage, become familiar with heritage. Similarly, the platform allows establishing the necessary connections with multimedia materials and new ways of presentation and accessing via mobile phones or tablets.

An example of the successful application of new technologies in the presentation of digital documentation on the elements of intangible cultural heritage was the promotion of the ‘Slava’ (celebration of the family saint patron’s day) and its inscription on the UNESCO Representative List.<sup>5</sup> With the use of modern information and communication technologies and multimedia in a variety of formats, such as 3D digitising, holographic projection and interactive augmented-reality applications, the presentation of this ICH element achieved its set objectives by creating new cultural content and bringing cultural heritage closer to new presentation modes, and at the same time opened up space for new interpretations of traditional culture.

## Challenges in documenting ICH

Through the implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the establishment of an ICH safeguarding system in the Republic of Serbia, and especially through the establishment of the National ICH Register, a new framework has been

<sup>5</sup> The ‘Slava’ (celebration of the family saint patron’s day) was presented at an exhibition at the Cultural Centre of Serbia in France and the 2015 World EXPO in Milan within the project The Food Culture of Serbia.



created in which the professional public is once again encouraged to identify and record heritage items, as well as to motivate heritage bearers and local communities to preserve traditions, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and all that belongs to the category of intangible heritage. The objectives set by the Convention are achieved and a new field of action is created for professionals in various disciplines by inventorying the elements of intangible cultural heritage, compiling the necessary documentation, facilitating involvement, and educating the bearers of this heritage, and by committing to ensure its transfer to future generations.

The establishment of the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage is the result of the full cooperation of all those who have been recognised in the Convention as significant bearers of the process of preserving this form of heritage. Museum professionals and museums as institutions, primarily the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, make up the part of the professional audience that is actively involved in the process, which at the same opens up new possibilities for defining the role of scholarly and cultural institutions. This pertains primarily to museums, which nowadays seek to build a new concept that does not aim at destroying the old, but – to put in the words of Tomislav Šola (2011, 25) – seeks to build upon it and enrich it with new possibilities. At the same time, it is in the interest of local communities and heritage bearers to make their heritage visible and recognisable, and ensure that it is preserved for the future. In this sense, the decision to place a register and the documentation on intangible cultural heritage under the auspices of a museum, as it is the case with the Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Ethnographic Museum, brings a new type of materials to the museum, opens up the possibility of using and interpreting the already existing collections and documentation, performing new research, and opening up museum spaces for new programmes that also involve the bearers. It also offers an opportunity for the Museum to upgrade its activities through the implementation of a system instituted by the Convention. Consequently, with support from official institutions, the system forms a stable framework for the safeguarding of ICH.


Thus, the process of documenting ICH, in the same way as living and developing heritage, requires constant monitoring and regular updating; hence the documentation is constantly expanding. The approach to ICH documentation, especially in the context of museum documentation, is, therefore, a major challenge. That is why the establishment of standards for documenting ICH is one of the tasks that will become a priority for experts in this field in the years to come. Specifically, digital content management implies the establishment of a consistent system for networking, presenting, and creating content. By defining metadata as a precondition for networking and





exchange of information and digital (digitised) documentation about ICH, we ensure the use and share of information about the elements of ICH among institutions involved in documenting ICH and among those that are directly involved in segments of heritage safeguarding, also on the international level. By creating an online platform accompanied by the activation of social networking sites with the bearers and promoters of the ICH elements that are already inscribed in the National Register, it is possible to bring about a new impetus and give a sense of united action to the stakeholders that are already involved in the system, as well as to expand the actions so that they involve new users and potential nominators.

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# Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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*The bearers of the elements included on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage organise various activities for promoting their heritage, for example: traditional events held in the areas where the elements originate from (picking of iva grass on Ozren mountain, Nevesinje Olympics); schools for transmission of skills, knowledge, and mastery (School of Zmijanje embroidery); the study on the 'secret code for communication of Osat builders' (Osat language) by the local community.*

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a country in Southeastern Europe located on the Balkan Peninsula. It has two entities: Republic of Srpska (RoS) and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBH). The capital city is Sarajevo.

On the basis of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, culture is the responsibility of both RoS and FBH, acting as one entity. The Constitution of BiH also guarantees freedom of expression of ethnicity and culture. Moreover, specific laws of this entity regulate issues such as cultural heritage and its protection, use, improvement, and acquisition.

On the state level, the Ministry of Civil Affairs (Ministarstvo civilnih poslova) is responsible for coordinating the activities of government entities in the field of culture, aimed at its presentation on the international level.

The State Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina for UNESCO (Državna komisija za saradnju sa UNESCO) has been established as an advisory body to the Council of Ministers of BiH. What is more, within the framework of the Commission of BiH for UNESCO the Committee for Culture was founded, which includes experts in intangible cultural heritage. The Commission for UNESCO adopted the rules and procedures related to the processes of nominations for the inscription of elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

BiH ratified the 2003 Convention in February 2009. Both entities, in accordance with the highly decentralised decision-making in the field of culture, gave its approval to the Convention





Zmijanje embroidery making workshop in the Primary School 'Mladen Stojanovic', Bronzani Majdan, children from 7 to 9 grade, 2013. Photo by Dejan Kosić, © 2013 by Museum of Republic of Srpska.

as a part of the regular process of BiH aimed at the adoption of international legal instruments. The approval was preceded by a formal procedure of accession to the Convention.

The appointed experts from the entities, in collaboration with the non-governmental sector, local communities, and experts from museums and academia, have made two preliminary lists of intangible cultural heritage, one for RoS and one for FBH. The preliminary lists of intangible cultural heritage of the consolidated entity together create the Preliminary List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Preliminarna lista nematerijalnog kulturnog naslijeđa u Bosne i Hercegovine). The list is open for the inscription of new elements. BiH submitted its first Report on the implementation of the 2003 Convention and on the status of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity at the end of December 2015 ("Report on the Implementation" 2015).

The first element of intangible cultural heritage from BiH, 'Zmijanje embroidery', was inscribed on the Representative List in 2014. In 2016 and 2017, we sent two nominations for the List: 'Konjic woodcarving' (2017 cycle) and 'Picking of iva grass on Ozren mountain' (2018 cycle). The nomination of the 'Konjic woodcarving' was submitted for inscription on the List in 2014, and in 2016 we submitted additional materials with the nomination document. Also, two nominations are in the process of preparation.



## Safeguarding measures of the Republic of Srpska

RoS adopted amendments to the Law on museum activity,<sup>1</sup> which added the articles related to intangible cultural heritage. Consequently, a Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage was formed in the Museum of the Republic of Srpska (Odjeljenje za nematerijalno kulturno nasljeđe Muzeja Republike Srpske). Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Srpska subsequently formed the Commission for the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Komisija za nematerijalno kulturno nasljeđe Ministarstva prosvjete i kulture Republike Srpske), adopted the Central Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Centralni registar nematerijalnog kulturnog nasljedja), and established the rulebook on keeping the register (Pravilnik o vođenj Registar).

<sup>1</sup> *Zakon o muzejskoj djelatnosti*, Službeni glasnik Republike Srpske [Official Gazette of Republic of Srpska] no. 89, 25 September 2008; *Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama zakona o muzejskoj djelatnosti*, Službeni glasnik Republike Srpske no. 57, 20 June 2012.

Department for ICH of the Museum of RoS prepared the Rulebook on the procedure for nominating, determining and declaring of intangible cultural heritage (Pravilnik o procedure nominacije, utvrđivanja i proglašenja nematerijalnog kulturnog nasljedja). This Department documents all data on the intangible cultural heritage of RoS. The access to this information is open to the public, and the Preliminary List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Srpska (Preliminarna lista nematerijalnog kulturnog nasljeđa Republike Srpske) is available on the websites of the Museum and the Ministry of Education and Culture of RoS (muzejrs.com/site).

The classes aimed at the transmission of skills, knowledge, and mastery of making Zmijanje embroidery have been organised in elementary schools.

Within the relevant local communities, and based on the cooperation with the Museum of RoS, Association 'Duga' has organised two cycles of the 'School of Zmijanje embroidery', each lasting three months.

Between 2013 and 2015, the Department for ICH, in cooperation with the Republic of Srpska Post Office, prepared several series of stamps related to the intangible cultural heritage of RoS (old crafts, Zmijanje embroidery, and others).



## Safeguarding measures of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

In FBH, the competent institutions for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage are cantonal Ministries of Culture. Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports (Ministarstvo kulture i športa) coordinates the activities of cantons.

Within the Institute for Protection of Monuments (Zavod za zaštitu spomenika), which is an organisational unit of the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports, there is a Department of Scientific Research (Odjeljenje za naučnoistraživački rad), which is engaged in historiographical research, identification, and documentation with the aim to safeguard the intangible heritage.

In FBH, the draft version is being prepared of the revised Law on the protection and use of cultural, historical and natural heritage of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina,<sup>2</sup> which

<sup>2</sup> *Zakon o zaštiti i korištenju kulturno-historijskog i prirodnog naslijeđa*, Službeni list Socijalističke Republike Bosne i Hercegovine [Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina] no. 20, 16 July 1985.



is harmonised with the provisions of ratified international conventions, including the 2003 Convention.

At the cantonal level, two cantons have Laws on the protection of cultural heritage that are harmonised with the provisions of the 2003 Convention; a draft law is also prepared in one canton on the process of amending the Law on protection and use of cultural and historical heritage in order to include provisions on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Other cantonal laws are still to be harmonised with the 2003 Convention.

Federal Ministry of Culture keeps and updates the Preliminary List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Preliminarna lista nematerijalnog kulturnog naslijeđa u federacije Bosne i Hercegovine), while the documents are in institutions governed by the cantons.

## Activities in the ICH field in the country

Since the ratification of the 2003 Convention BiH has promoted intangible cultural heritage through the program of European Heritage Days. Specifically, there have been conferences, round tables, exhibitions, and other forms of presentation, promotion, and affirmation of intangible heritage.

Both entity ministries provide financial support to folk festivals, certified by the International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts (CIOFF), which are held in BiH. These festivals comply with international standards in the field of traditional arts and promote the intangible cultural heritage in accordance with the 2003 Convention.

All ministries of culture in BiH provide financial assistance for the implementation of projects aimed at safeguarding and promotion of intangible cultural heritage.

The bearers of the elements included on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage organise various activities for promoting their heritage, for example: traditional events held in the areas where the elements originate from (picking of iva grass on Ozren mountain, Nevesinje Olympics); schools for transmission of skills, knowledge, and mastery (School of Zmijanje embroidery); the study on the 'secret code for communication of Osat builders' (Osat language) by the local community.

Also, all local communities promote their intangible cultural heritage through electronic and printed media.





Zmijanje traditional costume, 2013. Photo by Dejan Kosić, © 2013 by Museum of Republic of Srpska.



Zmijanje traditional costume, 2013. Photo by Dejan Kosić, © 2013 by Museum of Republic of Srpska.

The National Section of CIOFF Bosnia and Herzegovina has activities that greatly contribute to the safeguarding of intangible heritage in BiH and its promotion abroad. The Association of Croatian Amateur Cultural Clubs in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Udruga hrvatskih amaterskih kulturno umjetničkih društava u Bosni i Hercegovini) is another NGO which was accredited in 2014 to provide consultative service to the Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The conference 'European Heritage Days' was held in November 2015 in Livno, and it was dedicated to one of the elements on the Preliminary List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of FBH: *ganga*, a polyphonic form of rural musical tradition. Conference proceedings were subsequently published (Bandur 2016).

The local community of woodcarvers in Konjic has been cooperating with the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo (Akademija likovnih umjetnosti u Sarajevu) by organising training for the students of the Department of Product Design.

To encourage interest in woodcarving craft, the family workshop Rukotvorine organises Open Door Days for the senior elementary school students and their parents from Konjic.

It is also important to mention the work of the Society for the Digitization of Traditional Cultural Heritage (Društvo za digitalizaciju tradicijske kulturne baštine), which was founded in 2008, and which deals with the digitisation and presentation of the content related to traditional cultural heritage. This project of the Society was presented on several international expert conferences.



The map represents the location of selected elements of intangible heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of these elements – 'Zmijanje embroidery' – is inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of ICH of Humanity. It is the first element from BiH inscribed on this List. There are also two elements that are nominated ('Konjic woodcarving' and 'Picking of iva grass on Ozren mountain' 2017 and 2018 cycles respectively), and two elements that are in the preparation phase of the nomination to the inscription on the List ('Gračanica lacemaking – kera' and the 'Custom of mowing in Kupres').



There is no institution that deals with the training in the management of intangible cultural heritage in BiH, however, following the ratification of the 2003 Convention, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Commission of BiH for UNESCO, with the financial and technical assistance of UNESCO Antenna Office in Sarajevo, have organised a workshop to provide the training for the representatives of government levels, NGOs, and public institutions in inventorying, managing, and other aspects of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The workshop was facilitated by independent international experts, and all its attendees have received a certificate of completion. This training has enabled our experts to proceed with activities connected to compiling the inventories of intangible cultural heritage. We consider it very important to strengthen the regional cooperation.



## Zmijanje embroidery

Zmijanje embroidery is undoubtedly one of the most characteristic embroidery techniques in the RoS, BiH, as well as the entire Balkan region. Its uniqueness stems from the abundance of characteristic harmonically perfected ornaments accomplished with the use of a single dark blue thread. It is a unique method that has not been altered for centuries. Zmijanje embroidery showcases the artistic sentiment, creativity, inner symbolisms of Zmijanje Highland women, as well as their spirit and temper. The base material has been transformed over the years, but the embroidery kept its authentic features.

## The picking of iva grass on Ozren mountain

The Ozren mountain is located in the northern part of BiH. There is an old folk belief in the Balkans that this herb allows mental and physical recuperation after long illnesses and severe physical and mental exhaustion. Iva grass is one of the most trusted healing herbs. It is highly regarded in mountainous areas and some people believe it can cure all diseases. There is an old saying: 'Iva grass can raise the dead'. Several local associations, among which the most notable is the Sokol Club from Boljanic, promote this element by bringing together the people in Gostilj on the day of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist.

## Konjic woodcarving

The woodcarving in Konjic is a traditional method of producing decorated items made of wood with both functional and decorative functions. The wood-carved items are made manually, using hand tools. Woodcarving is a part of the cultural heritage of Konjic residents created as a response to the abundance of forests that surround this city. Thanks to the activity of a number of workshops and masters of this craft, the continuity of this tradition has been preserved. Over more than one century of its history, wood carving has become a part of the cultural identity of all Konjic masters as well as the residents who do not actively participate in the craft. Today, there is not a single house in Konjic that would not possess at least one wood carved product. The items decorated with Konjic woodcarving are a testimony of a specific culture of living, whose users have recognised the preserved traditional values in them.

## Custom of mowing in Kupres

The Kupres Field is an area with a highly developed cattle breeding tradition, which is also closely related to mowing and harvesting grass-hay in July for feeding cattle during wintertime. The mowing in the national tradition is a skill and knowledge that young bachelors and young married men have proudly manifested on the occasion of joint mowing – through collective work. The Dani Kosidbe (Days of Mowing) event has manifested a number of traditional cultural elements: The mowing tradition using manually produced scythes, preservation of the scythe making tradition by renowned blacksmiths from Mrkonjic Grad, production and use of water buckets abundantly decorated in woodwork, preservation and use of men's summertime holiday national costumes from the Kupres area. The maintenance of this tradition involves collective work, presentation, and preservation of traditional songs and dances performed during and after the finished work, preparation and serving of traditional meals with the use of traditional wooden and metal dishes, and the establishment of acquaintances among the youth of opposite sexes (dating).



## Gračanica lacemaking 'kera'

(Gracanica, Tesanj, Mostar, Travnik, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Stolac)

The hand-made 'kera' lace is a gauzy, translucent and fragile handwork, hand-made by women who base on the imagination and skills of their numerous nameless predecessors. Unlike the lace made of flaxen or thick cotton thread most commonly used to decorate the hems of the textile parts in traditional clothing, this type of lace is made with the creative use of a thin sewing needle, and this method has been preserved until today. Throughout the passage of time, the 'kera' lace has kept its basic roles: decorating parts of women's clothes or being used as interior decorations which suit a specific culture of living.

The 'kera' lacemaking tradition carries archaic values inherited from the past that have been adopted and adjusted to new fashions and customs.

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# Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Slovakia



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*Electronic Encyclopaedia has become a base for creating new authorities related to traditional folk culture. The employees have been collecting information, particularly from private or community archives in the regions. This allowed us to obtain unique information about traditional folk culture, which is not included in archives, museums, or other institutions.*

The traditional folk culture in Slovakia represents a vivid and valuable cultural heritage. It has been created by generations of Slovak nationals, minorities, and ethnic groups that live on our territory. The diversity of folk culture is a unique indicator of abilities and creativity of the previous generations, and the preservation and support of this cultural diversity are the main aims of the Slovak Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre.

Slovak Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre is a professional institute at the Slovak State Traditional Dance Company (Slovenský ľudový umelecký kolektív), which is an established authority of the Ministry of Culture of Slovak Republic (Ministerstvo kultúry Slovenskej republiky). Its activities concentrate on documenting, storing, processing, filing, and making the elements of the traditional folk culture generally available and accessible.

## **What was the impulse and background for the complex care of traditional folk culture in Slovakia?**

In Slovakia, traditional folk culture is perceived in two forms – primary and secondary. The primary form is the actual traditional folk culture as it evolves through contact and communication in its natural environment. The second form represents mainly scenic folklore – artistically developed, stylised phenomena that live in the present environment, transferred through institutionalised communication, such as folklore groups or folklore festivals. While the secondary form is largely



supported by a network of regional cultural organisations and is the most frequent way of disseminating the information about the traditional folk culture, the primary form has no systematic support by any institutionalised network. It is documented by Institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Slovenská akadémia vied, SAV); however, none of these are suited for the wide public. Moreover, the scenic folklore is often mistaken by the lay audience as traditional folk culture. This state of affairs created the need to make the primary form of traditional folklore culture accessible for the public (Kysel' 2016).

UNESCO documents and normative framework, particularly the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Convention on Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions, have been very helpful in the efforts to seek complex care for traditional folk culture. The Slovak Republic ratified both conventions in April 2006, thus creating the legislative foundation (Hamar 2007). Subsequently, the Slovak Minister of Culture established the Council for Safeguarding the Traditional Folk Culture (Rada na ochranu nehmotného kultúrneho dedičstva), which drafted the Conception of safeguarding the traditional folk culture,<sup>1</sup> adopted by the Slovak government in August 2007. To implement this conception, the Slovak Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre was established in April 2008 and the Program of Safeguarding of Traditional Folk Culture that specified the strategic goals of the Conception was approved by the Slovak Ministry of Culture in December 2008 (Kysel' 2010).



## Conception of Safeguarding the Traditional Folk Culture

The main task of the Conception is to create conditions and tools of care of traditional folk culture in order to preserve it in its natural environment, so it does not disappear from the cultural consciousness of Slovak nationals and becomes protected by institutions. Moreover, it makes it available for the present and future generations. The entire concept has focused on 4 basic themes: education and dissemination of information, documentation and preservation, methodological support, and interdepartmental and international cooperation. These basic themes are represented by the following projects (Kysel' 2008):

1. Identification and inventory of traditional folk culture
2. Electronic encyclopaedia and documentation of traditional folk culture

<sup>1</sup> *Uznesenie vlády Slovenskej Republiky č. 666 z 8. augusta 2007 k návrhu Konceptie starostlivosti o tradičnú ľudovú kultúru.*

3. Central database of traditional folk culture (Digital Fund of Traditional Folk Culture)
4. Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovakia
5. Education
6. Publishing
7. International cooperation

## Identification and inventory of traditional folk culture

This is the most extensive part of all tasks. The aim of the project is to create a system of collecting, processing, and storing information that should provide a review of the occurrences and conditions of living or preserved phenomena of traditional folk culture in all regions in Slovakia. The individual villages of Slovakia have been determined as the basic units. In collaboration with a team of 20 experts, methodological material was prepared as guidance for processing and preserving the phenomena of traditional folk culture. The methodology was published in the form of 6 work sheets and it contains the basic classification and detailed description thereof in the following areas: Location, Cultural land and settlement, Social and spiritual culture, Material culture, Fine art culture, Art culture. This methodology has become the base for the entire system of ICH safeguarding in Slovakia (Kysel' 2010).



## Electronic Encyclopaedia

This project was the first step in identifying and inventorying traditional folk culture for the wide public, both professional and non-professional. Electronic Encyclopaedia was an extensive project conducted in cooperation with the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Ústav etnológie SAV). The working process involved 62 scholars, who used the experience gained from similar print projects, such as *Etnografický atlas Slovenska* (Ethnographic atlas of Slovakia, 1990) and *Encyklopédia ľudovej kultúry Slovenska* (Encyclopaedia of folk culture of Slovakia, 1995). The working process began in 2008 and ended in 2011. The Electronic Encyclopaedia contains more than 1800 entries from traditional Slovakian folk culture, supplemented by illustrative samples such as photographs, audio and video recordings. Each entry contains a short description of the

element, with pictures, audio or video samples, together with references to other entries related to the topic. Entries can be searched by register, alphabetical order, or by topic order (Centrum pre tradičnú ľudovú kultúru 2016a).

## Central Database of Traditional Folk Culture

The project of Central Database contains the technical and organisational part of the entire traditional folk culture documentation. The task of this project is to create a digital, virtual space for archiving and preserving data about traditional folk culture. All the information are extracted from various sources – Electronic Encyclopaedia, project of inventory of traditional folk culture, data from existing regional and private archives or collections, and data from strategic archives (Slovak Academy of Sciences or memory-related institutions such as the Slovak National Museum [Slovenské národné múzeum] or Slovak Film Institute [Slovenský filmový ústav]).

The significant part of the Central Database is our project – the Digital Fund of Traditional Folk Culture. This project plays a nation-wide role in safeguarding cultural heritage, trying to preserve archaic forms of traditional folk culture in digital form through its activities. This project has been financed by the governmental Operational Programme Informatization of Society. Due to a late entry of our Centre to the entire programme, it lasted only for an extremely short period of time. We had officially 9 months instead of several years in comparison to other national institutions involved in the project. The project lasted from March until November 2015. Its main goals were: inventorying, collecting, and digitising the phenomena of traditional folk culture, as well as creating the technological base for digitising. The project involved more than 45 external employees who helped with the collection, acquisition, and digitisation of traditional folk culture. They were divided into eight 3-member teams, covering all regions. Each team was equipped with mobile devices, which included laptops with external hard drives, printers, scanners, cameras and audio recorders.

The methodological base for the content site was our project of Inventory with its classification of traditional folk culture. Electronic Encyclopaedia has become a base for creating new authorities related to traditional folk culture. The employees have been collecting information, particularly from private or community archives in the regions. This allowed us to obtain unique information about traditional folk culture, which is not included in archives, museums, or other institutions. On the other hand, however, it meant specific requirements for work: an extremely



sensitive approach to the sources was required; most of the information and materials also had a very personal meaning to their owners and it had to be digitised directly in its place of origin (Kysel' 2016). We have been thus able to assemble a huge number of digital objects of traditional folk culture: thousands of digitalised pictures, hundreds of hours of audio and video recordings, and a large number of illustrations, most of which are now waiting for the next processing.

This project has allowed us to gain various types of knowledge. We can say that it has significant meaning not only for our Centre but also for the propagation of traditional folk culture in general. One of the positive results is the large amount of new information which has been collected. Secondly, creating the new digitising workplace will allow to post-process the material collected in the future and also to help other institutions in the coordination of their efforts in inventorying traditional folk culture. What is more, by creating the proper methodology, foundations have been laid for involving other subjects in documenting and preserving intangible cultural heritage. The 'know-how' of working with information about traditional folk culture and identifying and documenting it has been presented to the public. This project will thus help to create a basis for modern promotion and popularisation of traditions through ways which will be integrated into contemporary cultural life (Kysel' 2016). Despite the fact that the first part of the project has finished, this is a long-term project for the next several years and our Centre is ultimately responsible for its permanent sustainability.



## **Lists of Intangible Heritage Culture of Slovakia**

Our Centre is mainly responsible for compiling two National Lists: The Representative List of the ICH of Slovakia and The Register of Best Safeguarding Practices in Slovakia. The call for the submission of proposals is announced annually by the Ministry of Culture. The first call for nominations was made in May 2010. Our Centre prepares all documentation relating to the call for nominations, receives and registers all nomination files. For each nomination file, at least two expert opinions are created by experts in their respective fields. Subsequently, the committee examines the nomination and makes its decision. They are then confirmed by the Minister of Culture of Slovakia.

Slovakia already has 14 elements inscribed on the National Lists. Thirteen elements are on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovakia: 'Fujara – the musical instrument and its music'; 'The Radvaň fair'; 'Aušus services of Špania Dolina miners'; 'Music of Terchová';



Ján Kroták and Pavel Bielčík from Kokava nad Rimavicou during the Ceremonial announcement of new elements inscribed on the Representative List of ICH of Slovakia and 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the inscription of Fujara on the UNESCO Representative List of ICH of Humanity, 2016. Photo by Michal Veselský.



'Traditional manual bell ringing and the bell founders' role in Slovakia'; 'Ornaments in Čičmany'; 'Salamander in Banská Štiavnica'; 'Traditional puppetry in Slovakia'; 'Bagpipes and the bagpipe culture in Slovakia'; 'Blueprint'; 'Multipart singing in Horehronie Region', 'Tulle bobbin lace from the Myjava Highlands', 'The Vajnory ornament'. One activity is inscribed in the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices of Slovakia: 'The School of Crafts of the Centre for Folk Art Production' (Centrum pre tradičnú ľudovú kultúru 2016b).

Four elements have been included into the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

### 1. Fujara – the musical instrument and its music

Fujara is an exceptionally long pipe with 3 touch holes, which is typical of Slovakia, specifically its central region. The oldest use of the word 'fujara' which could be considered as the first reference to fujara is found in Bruk's manuscript miscellany dating back to the 1780s. Fujara has a more specific musical repertoire than any other musical instrument. This is due to its role in the life of shepherds, its relation to the shepherds and highwaymen, the musical and technical properties of the instrument, as well as due to its onomatopoeic use of high tones. Every single musical instrument is the reflection of the unique properties of its maker and performer (Hamar, Ryšavá, and Voľanská 2016).

### 2. Music of Terchová

It is an orally cultivated musical culture of the community of Terchová, which is specific for its original collective vocal-instrumental performance. The phenomenon of the music of Terchová does not apply only to the typical instrumental body with a little two-string bass, but also to the entire musical tradition. It is only complete when complemented by singing and folk dancing known as *terchovská krútená* or *čardáš* (a typical rotating dance), with its own musical style and performers who perceive it as a key part of their cultural identity and a product of their spiritual equipment. The first direct evidence of the existence of the music of Terchová dates back to the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century when a 3-member band of Terchová called Kvočkovská muzika was active in the settlement of Kvočkovia (Hamar, Ryšavá, and Voľanská 2016).

### 3. Bagpipe culture

The traditional bagpipes, as well as the entire bagpipe culture, represent a long and continuous music tradition of peasants and shepherds, who lived on the territory of Slovakia. In terms of their construction, the types of bagpipes used in Slovakia belong to the broader context of Central Europe. However, many of their attributes represent identification signs of the tradi-





Bagpiper Pavol Kužma, Kysuce Region – northern Slovakia, 2013. Photo by Michal Veselský.

tional folk culture in Slovakia, for instance: technological methods of bagpipes' construction; aesthetical forms of instruments; local as well as individual styles of bagpipe interpretation; song and dance repertoire; rituals associated with bagpipes; texts of bagpipe songs; and a folk oral tradition associated with bagpipes (Hamar, Ryšavá, and Voľanská 2016).

#### 4. The puppetry in Slovakia and Czechia

Traditional puppetry in Slovakia and Czechia is an inherent part of the vernacular theatrical and literary tradition. Initially, it was promoted by families of nomadic puppeteers who made their living by performing in theatrical plays. The original repertoires that had been based on imported European patterns underwent a rapid process of folklorisation. They were enriched by specific local linguistic and themes and developed their own typology of personages and artistic interpretations of puppets. The most famous personages are Gašparko and the codgers – peasants Škrhola and Trčka. Traditional puppetry combines dramatic, dramaturgy, staging, interpretation, scenography, fine art and musical skills, and still is a vital part of the intangible cultural heritage in Slovakia and Czechia (Hamar, Ryšavá, and Voľanská 2016)

Our next expectation in connection with the UNESCO Representative Lists is a joint multi-national submission of 'Blue-dyeing' together with four Central European countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Germany. In November 2017, a proposal called 'Multipart singing in Horehronie Region' will be evaluated by the Committee of UNESCO.



## Education

From the very beginning, it was clear that complex care would require addressing the youngest generation and finding the way to convey the information to elementary schools. The expert group proposed to create a run-through theme 'Regional Education and Traditional Folklore Culture'. This is not a particular class subject; 'run-through' refers to the fact that teachers can communicate the information through a number of different subjects. The project was approved by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu) and since 2009 has been a part of the State Pedagogical Program. Early in the project, we became aware of the lack of literature and other available materials to support school curricula on this topic. This lack was considered and addressed when implementing the next project: publishing.

## Publishing

In the publishing plan, as indicated above, we focused on books to promote and support the teaching of the run-through topic in schools. We published several titles, which were put on the list of teaching aids by the Slovak Ministry of Education. Titles such as *Vianoce na Slovensku* (Christmas in Slovakia) or *Maľovanky kroje Slovenska* (Slovakia's folk costumes) were distributed to all elementary schools and to five hundred kindergartens in Slovakia. Other publications included an edition called *Ľudové piesne regiónov Slovenska* (Folk songs from regions of Slovakia), which contains 8 song books to support musical education; or *Slovenské ľudové hudobné nástroje* (Slovak folk music instruments), which is a book with a multimedia CD that presents Slovak instruments in four ways: using text, audio, video and photographic documentation. The second part of our publishing plan was aimed at methodological support of live manifestations of traditional folklore culture and their presentation. We annually publish a booklet of the elements inscribed on the Representative Lists of Slovakia which is published in both Slovak and English. We are also planning to publish a monograph of the elements inscribed in the UNESCO Representative List of the ICH of Humanity. At present, we are working on a new project called *ABC book of Intangible Cultural Heritage*, which is designed as a set of books for primary schools.



## Conclusions

I have mentioned the crucial parts of the conception of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage in Slovakia. Each of them is important, and when deciding on the area on which we should stress more, we came to the conclusion that the values of cultural heritage will be best preserved only when our care is complex and the individual parts match and fit each other. However, most of our present efforts are focused mainly on two of our activities: creating the digital archive of traditional folk culture and completing the Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Regarding the Lists, we strongly believe in their importance. By promoting and increasing the number of elements, we raise public awareness about the significance of the intangible cultural heritage in general. The bearers and communities also become aware that their knowledge and practices have an important value for the entire society. On the other hand, we are dealing with the negative influence of the promotion: commercialisation and deformation of its presentation as an unintentional result of the listing.

We are trying to find a proper mechanism to oversee the course and changes of inscribed elements and welcome the committee's suggestion for their better safeguarding. This year, we are waiting for the first evaluation reports from the proposers, which should provide us with feedback about the problems they are dealing with, and about their point of view on the meaning of the List. Regarding the digital archive, almost eighty percent of our activities are aimed at creating a professional presentation platform, where all our digital objects will be available to the public. The first step will be to fill the archive with perfectly processed objects supplemented with complete meta-data. The next step will include creating the digital and multimedia presentations of traditional folk culture, which will be able to connect practical information with emotional stories about persons, objects, or locations. We consider this as an important way of using digital content, especially for the young generation. Such combination of new information technologies and traditional knowledge in practice means creating spaces and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, suitable for subsequent innovative solutions in creative industries.

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# Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Bulgaria

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*ICH experts carried out the necessary consultations with eminent sociologists and devised a questionnaire card, which was circulated nationwide through an extensive network of various cultural institutions: respective municipality departments, museums, and specific Bulgarian chitalishta (community cultural centres) existing in almost every settlement. Thus, the questionnaire was filled in by local representatives who were familiar with the tradition in their region and – what is more important – with its concrete bearers and masters, who could perform it and transmit it to the younger generation.*

In Bulgaria, the work on the institutional safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in accordance with the UNESCO guidelines already has a meaningful history. The state participated in the process of preparing the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, adopted on the 25<sup>th</sup> General UNESCO Conference in Paris 1989 (Santova 1990) – a significant step towards evaluating and declaring the need and importance of protecting traditional culture and cultural variety.



## National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Bulgaria is also one of the leading countries in the world in developing its national inventory of ICH. Realising the UNESCO program Living Human Treasures adopted by the Executive Board in 1993, the project 'Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria – List of Activities' was realised by a team of experts from the Institute of Folklore (Institut za folklor)<sup>1</sup> at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS, Balgarska akademiya na naukite) under the leadership of Prof. Mila Santova, D.Sc, in years 2001 and 2002.

To achieve their final goal and to prepare the lists of remaining living traditional activities nationwide and in the various regions of the country, the experts, qualified in field research and

<sup>1</sup> Since 2010, the Institute of Folklore has been merged with the Ethnographic Institute and Museum to become the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum (IEFSEM, Institut za etnologiya i folkloristika s Etnografski muzey) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.



in studying oral folk culture, cooperated with the Regional Activities Department in the Ministry of Culture (Otdel "Regionalni deynosti" na Ministerstvoto na kulturata) (Peycheva 2002; Anastasova 2003; Petkova 2004). They carried out the necessary consultations with eminent sociologists and devised a questionnaire card, which was circulated nationwide through an extensive network of various cultural institutions: respective municipality departments, museums, and specific Bulgarian *chitalishta* (community cultural centres) existing in almost every settlement. Thus, the questionnaire was filled in by local representatives who were familiar with the tradition in their region and – what is more important – with its concrete bearers and masters, who could perform it and transmit it to the younger generation. This made it possible for the project team to focus not only on the elements important for maintaining a sustainable identity of the communities on different levels (local, regional and national) but also on the 'living human treasures' themselves – people who are able to effectively re-create and hand down traditional skills and knowledge.

Parallel to learning the results from the questionnaire card and to its circulation in the country, some theoretical and training seminars were organised in order to clarify the significance and objectives of UNESCO programs for safeguarding ICH and to broaden the competencies of local specialists and officials in culture departments. After the filled cards were returned, the experts from the Institute of Folklore carried out extensive statistical and analytical work, verifying some of the confusing or unclear data in the field. As a result, in December 2002, the list titled 'Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria' was officially submitted to the Minister of Culture and was published online in Bulgarian and in English (<http://www.treasuresbulgaria.com>).

The list consists of two main levels: the first one is national and includes the activities and skills that are representative of the country as a whole, while the second one comprises of 28 regional lists that correspond to the respective administrative divisions in districts; it also particularises in more detail the activities typical for the communities from each district. Furthermore, in the inventory, six main spheres of ICH are differentiated: 'Traditional rites and feasts', 'Traditional singing and music playing', 'Traditional dancing and children's games', 'Traditional narration', 'Traditional crafts and traditional production of homemade objects or products', and 'Traditional medicine'. The respective experts have also prepared a theoretical introduction to every sphere, outlining its range and characteristics, as well as the history of its investigations. Based on the data acquired through the questionnaire cards, they also depicted its development and possible transformation in the contemporary world. The inventory and the experts' research outcomes were also published in a book – a bilingual volume in Bulgarian and in English (Santova et al. 2004).



The Bulgarian inventory – although it precedes the UNESCO 2003 Convention (adopted in Paris on 17 October 2003 and operating since 20 April 2006) – actually meets the main requirement of its article 12.<sup>2</sup> Bulgaria ratified the UNESCO Convention 2003 (see Santova 2004) with a law passed by the 40<sup>th</sup> National Assembly in January 2006. The Convention was promulgated in the State Gazette<sup>3</sup> and has operated for the Republic of Bulgaria since 10 June 2006.

In 2006, a National Council for ICH (Natsionalen savet za nematerialno kulturno nasledstvo), a successor to the preceding National Council for Folklore, was established at the Ministry of Culture. Its tasks are:

- to support and develop a strategy for safeguarding and popularisation of the Bulgarian ICH;
- to propose measures for the application of the international acts in the sphere of ICH and for the elaboration of the systems of ICH safeguarding;
- to give recommendations on issues related to the preservation and popularisation of ICH;
- to submit to the Minister of Culture's approval the elements of ICH selected from the regional nominations for inscription in the National Representative List of ICH.

## South-East European Experts Network on Intangible Cultural Heritage

In the summer of 2007, a seminar of the South-East European experts on ICH was held in Bulgaria, organised by the Institute of Folklore at BAS, the Ministry of Culture, and the National Commission for UNESCO – Bulgaria (Natsionalna komisiya za UNESCO – Balgaria), with the support of the UNESCO Office in Venice. The seminar was a fruitful forum for the further development of the methodology on realising the UNESCO ICH safeguarding programs, and for exchanging the experience and good practices from the particular works on drawing up the national inventory. Participants included representatives of nine countries from South-Eastern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and

<sup>2</sup> The full text of Article 12 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is as follows:

'Article 12 – Inventories

1. To ensure identification with a view to safeguarding, each State Party shall draw up, in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory. These inventories shall be regularly updated.  
2. When each State Party periodically submits its report to the Committee, in accordance with Article 29, it shall provide relevant information on such inventories.'

<sup>3</sup> *Konvencija za opazvane na nematerialното kulturno nasledstvo*, Darzhaven vestnik no. 61, 28 July 2006.





Bistritsa Babi at UNESCO, 2013, © Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO.

Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, and Turkey. The seminar ended in establishing a South-East European Experts Network on ICH (Ekspertna mreža po nematerialno kulturno nasledstvo ot Yugoiztochna Evropa) (Stanoeva 2007). The Network became a platform to reinforce cooperation, exchange knowledge, and share experiences on safeguarding ICH among the countries in the region. In 2016 in Brac, Croatia, Tenth Annual Meeting of the Network took place – the latest in a series of meetings held in the years since its founding (Arbanasi, Bulgaria, 2007; Safranbolu, Turkey, 2008; Zagreb, Croatia, 2009; Râmnicu-Vâlcea, Romania, 2010; Belgrade, Serbia, 2011; Athens, Greece, 2012; Sofia, Bulgaria, 2013; Limassol, Cyprus, 2014; Venice, Italy, 2015).

## Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria

The beginning of 2008 saw the start of the National System ‘Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria’. It is coordinated by the Ministry of Culture and the Institute of Folklore at BAS and realised in cooperation with the National Commission for UNESCO – Bulgaria. Its objective is to contribute to the presentation and safeguarding of traditional skills and knowledge of important historical and cultural significance for Bulgaria that can be passed to future generations. The team of academic experts developed the guidelines for the practical operation of the System, trying to envisage the possible problems, challenges, and the ways to approach them in the instructions. A preliminary seminar was organised in December 2007, with the aim of training the representatives of regional museums, the Regional Expert Consulting and Information Centres (Regionalno ekspertno-konsultantski i informacionni centreve), and some local *chitalishta* – those that were expected to be directly involved in the nomination process (Grancharova 2008). The System ‘Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria’ is carried out biennially and proceeds in two rounds – regional and national.

The first, pilot stage in 2008 indicated the goodwill of the state and the society as a whole for identifying, presenting and safeguarding its ICH, which consequently secures the safeguarding of its very cultural identity in the conditions of globalisation and unification. The Living Human Treasures of Bulgaria, inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Bulgaria (Natsionalna predstavitelna lista na nematerialnoto kulturno nasledstvo „Zhivi choveshki sakrovishta – Balgaria”) are as follows:





Project name	Nominating institution	Bearer
<b>2008</b>		
<b>TRADITIONAL RITES AND FEASTS</b>		
Nestinarstvo [firewalking ritual], messages from the past: the Panagyr [fair] of saints Constantine and Elena in the village of Bulgari	Regional Historic Museum (Regionalen istoricheski muzey), Burgas, District Burgas	A group from Bulgari (headed by Michail Michailov), Tzarevo Municipality, District Burgas
Kalusha – long-standing tradition kept for the generations to come	Chitalishte ‘Nicola Y. Vaptzarov’, Hurletz, Kozlodui Municipality, District Vratza	Group for authentic folklore ‘Kalushari’
Traditional Vasilitsa wedding	Chitalishte ‘Geo Milev’, town of Momin Prohod, Kostenetz Municipality, District Sofiya	Folklore ensemble ‘Momin Prohod’
<b>TRADITIONAL SINGING AND MUSIC PLAYING</b>		
Two-part singing in the town of Nedelino	Chitalishte ‘Svetlina’, town of Nedelino, District Smolyan	Group for authentic singing (headed by Aneta Emilova)
<b>TRADITIONAL CRAFTS AND TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION OF HOMEMADE OBJECTS OR PRODUCTS</b>		
Dyanko Dyankov – master of ancient weapons from the town of Apriltsi	Chitalishte ‘Prosveta’, town of Apriltsi, and Museum of Art Crafts and Applied Arts (Muzey na narodnite hudozhestveni zanayati i prilozhnite izkustva), town of Troyan, District Lovech	Dyanko Dyankov (master of weapons, knives and tinning copper utensils)
<b>2010</b>		
<b>TRADITIONAL RITES AND FEASTS</b>		
Two buenets met and started a dialog	Chitalishte ‘Napredak – Yuper’, town of Kubrat, Kubrat Municipality, District Razgrad	Group for source folklore and customs
Mask game ‘Djama!l’ (Koshov, Municipality of Ivanovo, District Ruse)	Regional Historic Museum (Regionalen istoricheski muzey), Ruse, District Ruse	Group for authentic folklore
<b>TRADITIONAL SINGING AND MUSIC PLAYING</b>		
The song – past, present and future	Chitalishte ‘Sts. Cyril and Methodius – 1926’, town of Satovcha, Satovcha Municipality, District Blagoevgrad	Women’s group for ‘high voice singing’, children’s group for ‘high voice singing’
<b>TRADITIONAL DANCING AND CHILDREN’S GAMES</b>		
Spring Folklore dancing on songs from the town of Banya, Karlovo Region	Chitalishte ‘Sts. Cyril and St. Methodius’, town of Banya, Karlovo Municipality, District Plovdiv	Group for source folklore
<b>TRADITIONAL NARRATION</b>		
Listen and you will know	Chitalishte ‘Minyor – 2005’, town of Pernik, Pernik Municipality, District Pernik	Lidia Evtimova Dobrevska, storyteller from the town of Breznik, Breznik Municipality, District Pernik
<b>2012</b>		
<b>TRADITIONAL RITES AND FEASTS</b>		
The national <i>Surova</i> [St. Basil’s Day] celebration in the region of Pernik	Regional Historic Museum (Regionalen istoricheski muzey), Pernik, District Pernik	Surova groups from 31 locations

Table 1. The Living Human Treasures of Bulgaria, inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Bulgaria.

TRADITIONAL SINGING AND MUSIC PLAYING		
Dobarsko babi [Grannies] – keepers of the Voditsi traditional rite	Chitalishte 'Prosveta – 1927', Dobarsko, Razlog Municipality, District Blagoevgrad	'Grannies from Dobarsko'
Let us preserve the Danube rhythms in Antimovo village	Chitalishte 'Razvitie – 1926', Antimovo, Vidin Municipality, District Vidin	Aerophonic music 'Danube rhythms'
TRADITIONAL CRAFTS AND TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION OF HOMEMADE OBJECTS OR PRODUCTS		
From the source today in order to continue existing tomorrow	Chitalishte 'Bratstvo – 1869', town of Kustendil, District Kustendil	Stefan Alexov Petrov from Lomnitsa village
Carpets from Chiprovtsi	Chitalishte 'Peter Bogdan – 1909', town of Chiprovtsi, Chiprovtsi Municipality, District Montana	Women's folklore group and youngsters (Ivanka Ivaylova and Zaharinka Ivaylova)
2014		
TRADITIONAL RITES AND FEASTS		
St. Lazarus's Day ritual in Staro Selo village – from centuries to centuries	Chitalishte 'Vazrazhdane – 1940', Staro Selo, Tutrakan Municipality, District Silistra	Ensemble for authentic folklore 'Staroseltsi'
Hidrellez – Alevi carnival games from Bisertsı village	Chitalishte 'Stefan Karadzhia – 1928', Bisertsı, Kubrat Municipality, District Razgrad	Group for source folklore
Dervish's Day in Lesichovo	Chitalishte 'Otets Paisii – 1890', Lesichovo, Lesichovo Municipality, District Pazardzhik	Mummers group
TRADITIONAL SINGING AND MUSIC PLAYING		
'Dobrudzha Thriad' – past, present and future	Chitalishte 'Yordan Yovkov – 1870', Dobrich, District Dobrich	Group 'Dobrudzha Thriad' – Stefan Georgiev Mitev, Atanas Stoyanov Mitev, Zhivko Georgiev Stoyanov
TRADITIONAL CRAFTS AND TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION OF HOMEMADE OBJECTS OR PRODUCTS		
Belts woven 'on barks'	Chitalishte 'Probuda – 1958', Shumen, District Shumen	Sofka Petrova Dimitrova
2016		
TRADITIONAL RITES AND FEASTS		
The Erkech ritual on St. Lazarus's Day: a living tradition	Chitalishte 'Prosveta – 1906', Kozichino, Pomorie Municipality, District Burgas	Group for authentic folklore
Mummers at Shrovetide	Chitalishte 'Probuda – 1927', BozvelisKO, Provadiya Municipality, District Varna	Group for authentic folklore
Painting eggs with wax	Chitalishte 'Prosveta – 1881', Kostenets, Kostenets Municipality, District Sofia	Ivanka Petrinina, Ivanka Tsvetanova, Lyubka Stamatova, Tsvetanka Nadzhakova, Yordanka Gerina, Mariana Dukova, Lyubka Katsarova, Nadezhda Petrinina, Lyudmila Chingova
TRADITIONAL SINGING AND MUSIC PLAYING		
Polyphonic women's / men's singing with tambura accompaniment	Chitalishte 'Sts. Cyril and Methodius – 1919', Dorkovo, Rakitovo Municipality, District Pazardzhik	Men's vocal folklore group at ensemble 'Ovcharska Pesen' [Shepard's song]



Project name	Nominating institution	Bearer
The Rhodope bagpipe – the magic of the mountain	Chitalishte ‘Rodopska Prosveta – 1923’, Devin, Devin Municipality, District Smolyan	Group of bagpipe players
TRADITIONAL SINGING AND MUSIC PLAYING / TRADITIONAL CRAFTS AND TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION OF HOMEMADE OBJECTS OR PRODUCTS		
Kostadin Ilchev – a distinctive continuer of the Rhodope bagpipe tradition	Regional Historic Museum (Regionalen istoricheski muzey) ‘Stoyu Shishkov’, Smolyan, District Smolyan	Kostadin Stefanov Ilchev
TRADITIONAL DANCING AND CHILDREN’S GAMES		
Traditional dances in Gamzovo village – tradition meets the future	Chitalishte ‘Prosveta – 1928’, Gamzovo, Bregovo Municipality, District Vidin	Gamza Ensemble for Source Folklore
With the dances of our ancestors	Chitalishte ‘Otets Paisii – 1956’, Pet mogili, Nikola Kozlevo Municipality, District Shumen	Youth dance group ‘On the Square’
TRADITIONAL DANCING AND CHILDREN’S GAMES / TRADITIONAL SINGING AND MUSIC PLAYING		
Songs and dances in the square of Kipra village	Chitalishte ‘Hristo Botev – 1927’, Kipra, Devnya Municipality, District Varna	Ensemble for authentic folklore ‘Kipra’
TRADITIONAL CRAFTS AND TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION OF HOMEMADE OBJECTS OR PRODUCTS		
Knitting of fishing tackles – pounds, fishing nets and hoop nets – a thousand-year old craft in the Burgas Bay	Regional Historic Museum (Regionalen istoricheski muzey), Burgas, District Burgas	Stalin Ivanov Iliev

**The Living Human Treasures of Bulgaria, inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Bulgaria; cont.**



The successful biennial realisation of the System ‘Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria’ proves that there are elements of ICH that are actively maintained in practically all of the country’s regions. It also demonstrates the readiness and the responsibility of all the community representatives and experts that take part in the nominations and the selections. In the framework of this program, an integral archive for all the documents and materials, connected with the programs for safeguarding the ICH is established at the National Centre for ICH (Natsionalen tsentar za nematerialno kulturno nasledstvo) at IEFSEM.

Beside the inscriptions in the Representative List of the ICH of the Republic of Bulgaria, the state realised four successful inscriptions in the UNESCO Representative List of ICH of Humanity: in 2008 – ‘Bistritsa Babi, archaic polyphony, dances and rituals from the Shoplounk region’ (Sofia District) (Shtarbanova 2006), a traditional female polyphonic voice ensemble, continued for three generations; in 2009 – ‘Nestinarstvo, messages from the past: the Panagyr of Saints Constantine and Helena in the village of Bulgari’ (Burgas District) [a firewalking ritual, anastenaria – editorial



note]; in 2014 – ‘The tradition of carpet-making in Chiprovtsi’ (Montana District); in 2015 – ‘Surova folk feast in Pernik region’ (Pernik District), wintertime New Year’s celebrations.

In addition, another two nominations submitted in 2013 for inscription in the Representative List of ICH of Humanity are awaiting evaluation: ‘High voice polyphonic singing from Dolen and Satovcha’ (Blagoevgrad District) and ‘Two-part singing from the town of Nedelino’ (Smolyan District).

Another two nominations were submitted in 2013 for inscription in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices: ‘The folklore fair in Koprivshtitsa’ (Sofia District) was inscribed in December 2016, while the ‘Bulgarian chitalishte (community cultural centre): practical experience in safeguarding the vitality of the intangible cultural heritage’ still awaits evaluation.

Furthermore, in 2014, Bulgaria took part in a multinational nomination – together with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, and Romania – for inscription in the Representative List of ICH of Humanity of ‘Cultural practices associated to the 1<sup>st</sup> of March’. During the first cycle of 2015, the UNESCO Committee requested additional information from the State Parties and invited them to resubmit the nomination for examination in the following cycle (2017).

## **The Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO**

The Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the ICH in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO (Regionalen tsentar za opazvane na nematerialното kulturno nasledstvo v Yugoiztochna Evropa pod egidata na UNESCO) was founded in 2008, registered as a non-profit organisation in accordance with the Bulgarian legislation. With the Resolution adopted at the 35<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO General Conference in October 2009, the Regional Centre was recognised as a regional centre (Category 2) under the auspices of UNESCO.

The agreement between UNESCO and the Bulgarian Government, which regards the establishment of the Regional Centre in Sofia, was signed on 25 October 2010 in Paris. On 16 March 2011, Bulgarian Parliament ratified the Agreement, entering it into force.

On 20 February 2012, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, together with the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikolay Mladenov, the former Minister of Culture Vezhdi Rashidov, and the former President of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Nikola Sabotinov officially inaugu-





International Folklore Festival 'Between Three Mountains', 2013, © Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO.

rated the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of ICH in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO in Sofia.

The co-founders of the Sofia Centre are: the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria (Ministerstvo na vashnite raboti), and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The necessary funds for the running costs of the Sofia Centre are provided by the Bulgarian Government. For this purpose, a specific article in the Bulgarian Cultural Heritage Act has been amended. Member States of the Sofia Centre are: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Turkey.

The mission of the Sofia Centre is to promote cooperation in the field of ICH on the national, regional, and international level, and to carry out initiatives for safeguarding and popularising ICH in the countries of South-Eastern Europe. As a Category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO, the Sofia Centre is expected to contribute directly to achieving the Strategic Programme Objectives or programme priorities and themes of the organisation.

The key objectives are:

- to promote the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and to contribute to its implementation;
- to increase the participation of communities, groups, and individuals in safeguarding the ICH in the region;
- to coordinate and exchange information related to ICH;
- to foster regional and international cooperation between the countries in the region and UNESCO;
- to support and participate in the activities that aim to enhance the capacity of experts in the field of ICH.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the specific functions of the Centre include:

- instigation and coordination of research into practices of safeguarding ICH elements present in the South-Eastern European countries, as referred to in Articles 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the 2003 Convention;
- organisation of training courses on subjects connected to the safeguarding of ICH;
- improvement of international and regional cooperation through networking with institutions active in the domain of ICH, notably those established under the auspices of UNESCO (Category 2), in order to coordinate activities and exchange information and knowledge concerning the safeguarding of ICH, and to promote good practices.





Surova folk feast in Pernik region, 2013, © Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO.

Since its beginning, the Sofia Centre has been realising three key types of activity: capacity building, networking, and raising awareness.

### **Capacity building**

One of the main goals of the Regional Centre is to support and encourage the countries of the region in strengthening their capacity for safeguarding ICH at the national level. In this regard, the Centre organises a series of training seminars in the framework of UNESCO's global capacity-building strategy in the field of ICH. Until now, eight seminars have been successfully delivered in five countries in the region (Bulgaria, Albania, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, and Croatia).

### **Networking**

The Regional Centre focuses its efforts on enhancing the regional and international cooperation in the field of ICH through networking and forming active partnerships. Pursuing this goal, the Centre realises activities aiming at the exchange of information and knowledge about the safeguarding of ICH and the promotion of best practices in related policies, including the organisation of annual meetings of the South-East European Experts Network on ICH, meetings of related Category 2 centres, workshops and seminars. These are, among others: the Conference on 'Intellectual Property, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Medicine' in the Context of Policies for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe (2015); Round table on '70 Years UNESCO: Peace through Education, Science and Culture' (2015); The Contribution of UNESCO Member States in South-Eastern Europe to the Dissemination and Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2015, see Ivanova 2016).

### **Raising awareness**

Through various actions and events, the Regional Centre endeavours to raise awareness about the ICH in the region, to inform the wide public about the dangers that threaten this heritage as well as about the initiatives undertaken for the implementation of the 2003 Convention. Fulfilling this objective, the Regional Centre supports and organises international representative events such as film festivals, exhibitions, concerts, and promotion materials. The Centre has updated its official website (<http://www.unesco-centerbg.org>) with a new layout, new design, and new administration, all intended to facilitate its use and its way of posting information.



In the future, the Regional Centre is planning to intensify its cooperation with the countries of South-Eastern Europe, and to expand the network of experts in order to increase the capacity for the safeguarding of ICH and for implementing the 2003 Convention at the national level; it strives to be the platform for disseminating and exchanging information in the field of ICH.

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# Documentation as a form of safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in China: practice and experience



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*At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China launched a nationwide survey on intangible cultural heritage. The survey, spanning from June 2005 to December 2009, captured a collection of 290,000 precious objects and materials, producing two-billion-word documents, 4.77 million pictures, and a large number of audio-video materials, which resulted in 870,000 ICH elements in total.*

The past fifteen years have witnessed the great importance Chinese government attaches to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. In line with its different domains and survival conditions, four approaches have been established over this time: productive safeguarding, integrated safeguarding, prioritised rescue safeguarding, and legislative safeguarding. What is more, these four approaches, respectively supported by actions and solutions, have been practically proved to play a positive role in the safeguarding efforts. China has accumulated rich experience in the successful establishment and improvement of the Chinese national list system of intangible cultural heritage, the recognition and nomination of bearers, the publicity and exhibition of intangible cultural heritage, and the first national survey of intangible cultural heritage; furthermore, a great amount of intangible cultural heritage has been safeguarded effectively. Documentation, as a primary and essential way of prioritised rescue safeguarding, proved to be a useful solution, especially in the current information and technology-oriented society. As such, it provides a significant contribution to the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding.

In fact, China enjoys a long history of studying, documenting, and preserving national and folk cultures. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Government has been making great efforts to preserve its intangible cultural heritage. Many experts and scholars visited remote regions inhabited by national minorities, conducted surveys, and collected vast amounts of data on their national and folk cultures. For example, two professors: Yang Yinliu and Cao Anhe, who worked at the Institute of Music of Chinese National Academy of Arts (中国艺术研究院音乐研究所), recorded the famous Erhu musical piece *Er Quan Ying Yue* (The Moon reflected on the





Deng Xuechen during the discussion at the Forum, October 2016. Photo by Paweł Kobek, © National Heritage Board of Poland.

Er-quan Spring) with a wire recorder in 1950. This was, in fact, the last recording piece of the Erhu performer A Bing, who passed away shortly after. Similar music and sound recordings of over 7000 hours in total, made in the 1950s and 1960s by the Institute of Music, are now one of the most invaluable national legacies – considering that most performers passed away over time. In December 1997, UNESCO proclaimed the traditional music and audio data collected by the Institute of Music as the first inscription on the register of the Memory of the World Programme, which demonstrates effective efforts made by the Chinese government to preserve a large amount of ICH in danger of extinction.

In 1979, Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国文化部), State Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国国家民族事务委员会), and China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (CFLAC, 中国文学艺术界联合会) jointly launched a general survey which focused on ten fields in five artistic genres, including folk literature, folk music, folk dance, folk opera and drama, which resulted in the composition and publication of a series of ten volumes known as the modern 'Great Wall of Chinese culture' (Leilei 2010).

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China launched a nationwide survey on intangible cultural heritage. The survey, spanning from June 2005 to December 2009, captured a collection of 290,000 precious objects and materials, producing two-billion-word documents, 4.77 million pictures, and a large number of audio-video materials, which resulted in 870,000 ICH elements in total.

In the globalised world today, our political, economic and cultural structures as a whole are undergoing revolutionary changes. A large amount of intangible cultural heritage is on the verge of extinction. The rapid technological development in recent years has brought advances in digital technology to our attention for the improvement of ICH documentation. It is thus our duty to undertake the responsibility to document and transmit outstanding traditional Chinese culture by using scientific technology without any delay. At the beginning of 2006, China National Center for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage of Chinese National Academy of Arts started constructing the database and a digital application in compliance with the requirements of the Ministry of Culture. In 2010, the Ministry put forward the construction of the Digitized Safeguarding Project of Chinese ICH in the Twelfth Five-year Plan (2011–2015), authorising China National Center for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage of Chinese National Academy of Arts to undertake this project. Subsequently, we have conducted research and exploration over the past five years mainly in the three aspects of defining standards and specifications, establishing a database of digital resources and developing pilot projects. Out of these tasks, defining standards and specifications



is the primary one, as it forms the foundation for the establishment of a standardised system for digitised safeguarding of ICH. Once completed, the standards and specifications will provide guidance for the implementation, management, and application of digitised safeguarding of ICH at both technical level and professional level, enabling the orderly conduct of digitised safeguarding throughout the nation with all unified standards to ensure the quality of digitised resource collection. By the end of 2014, we had accomplished 非物质文化遗产数字化保护专业标准 (Professional standards on digitised safeguarding of ICH),<sup>1</sup> a series of three books which cover all the characteristics of ten categories of ICH in China. The three books are titled: 数字资源采集方案编制规范 (Specifications for the compilation of digital resources collection plan), 数字资源采集实施规范 (Specifications for the implementation of digital resources collection), and 数字资源著录规则 (Rules for digital resources description). The standards are now applied in twenty-six regions in China. By using such professional standards, recorders can learn the whole process of intangible cultural heritage collection, including how to collect information, how to make plans, and how to implement them. Besides, the professional standards can also provide specific requirements on the environment and the process of collection.

Based on the Chinese practice and experience over the past years, I believe that four decisive factors are essential to ensure the success of ICH documentation. The first factor is qualified manpower, which should be equipped with rich knowledge of ICH, and be capable to document its elements in line with required standards. What is more, ICH experts or professionals must be the leading members of that manpower. However, in reality, the shortage of ICH professionals is the biggest concern we are facing. The second factor is documentation standards, which should define how to document and what to document. As mentioned earlier, China has made tremendous endeavours to set such standards, since the ten ICH categories differ from each other in details, and therefore require specific standards for documentation of each respective category. The third factor is devices and equipment, including, but not limited to cameras, scanners, and recorder pens. Sometimes, advanced equipment such as high-speed cameras is required when documenting details of various performing arts or moving processes. The fourth factor is time. It refers to specific moments, such as festivals or ceremonies that only occur at exact times. Knowing when these events occur is crucial to their documentation. This factor also refers to the duration and the process of documentation, as it is usually an enduring task.

<sup>1</sup> A research achievement of cultural industry standard formulation project undertaken by Chinese National Academy of Arts.



China National Center for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage of Chinese National Academy of Arts plays an important role in collecting, documenting, archiving and conserving data on intangible cultural heritage, as well as in providing information and raising awareness on the importance of ICH. Furthermore, as the internet is widespread today, it is the best channel to introduce and disseminate the Chinese ICH, as well as to practice information sharing. In line with the requirement regarding the national safeguarding of ICH, China National Center for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage of Chinese National Academy of Arts started constructing the website at the beginning of 2006, which was completed and opened to the public as China's official ICH website ([www.ihchina.cn](http://www.ihchina.cn)) in September 2006. The Website is used to introduce and popularise ICH elements among the public, both in China and other parts of the world; reflecting the richness and variety of Chinese traditional culture as a contribution to the safeguarding, scientific research, academic exchanges and popularisation of ICH in China. The major columns are as follows: Homepage, Organisations, Normative Instruments, UNESCO Lists, National Lists, ICH Bearers, Nomination Directives, News, Protection Forum, Exhibition and Performance. Under the Protection Forum, a large number of essays and interviews with ICH masters are provided. Under the Features, there are reports on ICH activities, detailed introduction to ICH elements and safeguarding experience. Beside these columns, there are more: Repository, Master, ICH Memory, and others. As a convenient platform to demonstrate and popularise information on Chinese ICH, the Website plays an important role in ICH information sharing.



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