

## FORM ICH-10

# REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND ON THE STATUS OF ELEMENTS INSCRIBED ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

<b>A. COVER SHEET</b>
<b>A.1. State submitting this report</b> <i>States non party to the Convention reporting on an element incorporated on the Representative List should indicate the name of the State and mention 'State non party to the Convention'.</i>
Republic of Estonia
<b>A.2. Date of deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession</b> <i>This information is available online at <a href="http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich">www.unesco.org/culture/ich</a>.</i>
20 January 2006
<b>A.3. Elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, if any</b> <i>Please list all the elements from your country inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, together with the year of inscription; for multinational elements, please indicate the other States concerned.</i>
Not applicable
<b>A.4. Elements inscribed on the Representative List, if any</b> <i>Please list all the elements from your country inscribed on the Representative List, together with the year of inscription; for multinational elements, please indicate the other States concerned.</i>
Kihnu Cultural Space (2008) Baltic Song and Dance Celebrations (2008) (multinational element shared by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) Seto Leelo, Seto Polyphonic Singing Tradition (2009)
<b>A.5. Programmes, projects or activities selected as best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention, if any</b> <i>Please list all the programmes, projects or activities from your country selected by the Committee for promotion under Article 18, together with the year of selection; for multinational programmes, please indicate the other States concerned.</i>
Not applicable
<b>A.6. Executive summary of the report</b> <i>Please provide an executive summary of the report that will allow general readers to understand the overall status of measures taken at the national level to implement the Convention.</i> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Not to exceed 500 words.</i></p>
Safeguarding of ICH in Estonia is fostered by the state through awareness-raising activities such as the

Year of Cultural Heritage in 2013. The state also supports academic research and documentation, formal education, including integrating ICH in school curricula and a broad range of non-formal education activities. The state seeks to secure equal opportunities for all communities living in Estonia, including language and cultural minorities, so that they can safeguard their culture and express their creativity. Community-based safeguarding activities are supported through the established financial support programmes. The involvement of NGOs and civil society through the representative bodies of tradition bearers in the decision-making process on the implementation of cultural policy is an important principle that guides the implementation of the Convention.

The Ministry of Culture has designated the Estonian Folk Culture Centre as the main body responsible for the implementation of the Convention and set up a new advisory body - Estonian Council for the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Currently, the guiding principles for Estonian cultural policy until 2020 are being developed as a bottom-up process coordinated by the Ministry of Culture. In every field of culture, including ICH, several working groups presented their proposals. The final document will include general ideas and guidelines based on these grassroots' discussions that helped each respective field to set out specific goals and priorities.

Since 2006 the Ministry of Culture has established a number of new regional ICH support programmes that have created framework and conditions for safeguarding ICH. In six years the number of programmes has grown from two to seven. These programmes are not firmly structured in their elements and strategies in order to take into account the changing nature of ICH and to give the communities a chance to decide which elements of their heritage need support and how to best safeguard them. As communities are not just the bearers of ICH entitled to assistance, but also the primary responsible parties for safeguarding their own ICH, it is up to them to develop projects according to their needs and ideas and to apply for funding. This approach has proved to be an effective means for activating communities and a valuable safeguarding tool. It has been proposed to further widen the scope of this measure.

Another useful tool for activating the communities has been the work on the national ICH inventory. This new inventory does not directly build on existing databases in order to ensure that the inventory focuses on ICH as living heritage and also to ensure community participation. The purpose of the inventory is to serve the interests of local communities. Therefore it is based on the initiative of the communities themselves and it takes time to evolve.

Accession to the Convention has also resulted in a growing number of international cooperation initiatives involving communities as well as academic and research institutions and state institutions responsible for the implementation of the Convention. Estonia has also used the international mechanisms of the Convention, such as the Representative List to raise awareness at local level on the importance of the ICH for the practitioner and bearer communities as well as for the society at large.

## **B. MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION**

*Throughout part B below, 'measures' refers to the appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures undertaken by the State, or fostered by the State and undertaken by civil society, including communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals. The State should describe, wherever relevant, its efforts to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage, and to involve them actively in its management (Article 15 of the Convention).*

### **B.1. Institutional capacities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage**

*Report on the measures to strengthen institutional capacities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, as described in Article 13 of the Convention and paragraph 99 of the Operational Directives.*

#### **B.1a Competent bodies for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage**

*Each State shall 'designate or establish one or more competent bodies for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory' (Article 13). Please identify such a body or bodies and provide complete contact information.*

The safeguarding of the ICH in Estonia is part of the competency of several institutions at national and local level in co-operation with the communities concerned.

Following the accession to the ICH Convention in 2006, the Ministry of Culture designated the Estonian Folk Culture Centre as the main body responsible for the implementation of the Convention. The Centre participates in the process of developing and carrying out the cultural policy and supports the safeguarding and development of ICH in Estonia by organizing various training courses, administering seven support programmes for specific cultural regions of Estonia and other activities. In the framework of the Centre, a department of Intangible Heritage was set up with two new professional posts. This department acts as the national focal point of implementing the Convention, organizes awareness-raising and training activities, works with the communities in an advisory capacity and administers the national inventory of ICH. The intangible heritage specialists work in close collaboration with other staff members of the Centre and its regional network of 15 folk culture specialists (one in each county of Estonia) as well as other relevant national and local institutions, NGOs and communities.

In 2009 the Minister of Culture of Estonia established a new advisory body - Estonian Council for the Intangible Cultural Heritage - that brings together some 20 experts. The main task of the council is to give strategic orientations for safeguarding, development and promotion of the intangible heritage in society. The Council also approves the entries to national inventory of ICH. The Intangible Heritage Department of the Folk Culture Centre functions as the secretariat of the Council.

Contact information:

Department of Intangible Heritage  
Estonian Folk Culture Centre  
Vilmsi 55, 10147 Tallinn, Estonia  
Phone: +372 600 9177  
vkp@rahvakultuur.ee; [www.rahvakultuur.ee](http://www.rahvakultuur.ee)

Estonian National Commission for UNESCO fulfils a support role in the work of the state institutions directly involved in the matters of safeguarding ICH.

#### **B.1b Institutions for training in intangible cultural heritage management**

*Identify any such institutions created, fostered or strengthened by the State and provide complete contact information.*

There are no institutions established for the sole purpose of training in intangible cultural heritage management. However, some universities offer study programmes at BA, MA and PhD level that are related to the intangible cultural heritage.

**Estonian Academy of Arts**

Estonia pst. 7, 10143 Tallinn, Estonia

Phone +372 626 7301

artun@artun.ee; [www.artun.ee](http://www.artun.ee)

*Cultural Heritage and Conservation (Ba, MA, PhD), Folk Art and Cultural Anthropology(MA)*

**Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre**

Rävala 16, 10143 Tallinn, Estonia

Phone +372 667 5700;

[ema@ema.edu.ee](mailto:ema@ema.edu.ee); [www.ema.edu.ee](http://www.ema.edu.ee)

*Traditional music (BA, MA), cultural management (MA)*

**Estonian University of Life Sciences**

Kreutzwaldi 1a, 51014 Tartu, Estonia

Phone +372 731 3001

[info@emu.ee](mailto:info@emu.ee), [www.emu.ee](http://www.emu.ee)

*The University prepares specialists in many ICH related fields such as biodiversity and landscape management, grassland cultivation and feed production, forest and wood processing technology, water management etc.*

**Tallinn University**

Narva mnt 25, 10120 Tallinn, Estonia

Phone +372 640 9101

[tlu@tlu.ee](mailto:tlu@tlu.ee); [www.tlu.ee](http://www.tlu.ee)

*Anthropology (BA), cultural theory (MA), studies of cultures (Phd), choreography with specializing on Estonian traditional dance (BA), handicraft technology and design in Haapsalu College (applied higher education)*

**University of Tartu**

Ülikooli 18, 50090 Tartu, Estonia

Phone + 372 737 5100

[info@ut.ee](mailto:info@ut.ee); [www.ut.ee](http://www.ut.ee)

*Literature and cultural research (BA, MA, PhD), ethnology and folklore (MA, PhD), cultural management (MA)*

**Viljandi Culture Academy** (one of the four colleges of the University of Tartu)

Posti 1, 71004 Viljandi, Estonia

Phone: + 372 435 5254;

[kool@kultuur.edu.ee](mailto:kool@kultuur.edu.ee); [www.kultuur.edu.ee](http://www.kultuur.edu.ee)

*Viljandi Culture Academy is one of the hubs of ICH-related culture and creative arts education. It offers mainly applied higher education in traditional music, dance art, theatrical studies, cultural management, traditional textile, traditional construction, and traditional metal work. The teaching and instruction are based on the continuity and sustainability of Estonian traditional culture enriched by new impulses which widen the notion of tradition. The creative and new approach of the student community helps to keep the traditions alive. The academy also attaches great emphasis on the life-long learning. In 2011 the Academy offered 110 courses for more than 1500 people from all over Estonia. The courses are at different study levels and aimed at various age and interest groups. The main target groups are people*

working in the cultural and educational sphere.

### **Folk Culture Centre**

Vilmsi 55, 10147 Tallinn, Estonia

Phone: +372 600 9177

vkp@rahvakultuur.ee; [www.rahvakultuur.ee](http://www.rahvakultuur.ee)

*Another important player in the field of ICH training is the national Folk Culture Centre that offers various courses mainly to people working at local level in the field of traditional and amateur culture. They include in-service courses for the staff of community centres, for teachers of various ICH-related hobby groups like folk dancers and amateur theatres. For librarians, teachers, pre-school teachers and others who work with children storytelling courses are organised. At the same time storytelling amongst adults is also encouraged. Many of the courses are organised in cooperation with relevant non-profit umbrella organisations mentioned below.*

*Since 2010 the Centre organises special ICH courses for people who work with different aspects of culture at local level. The aim is to encourage the participants to pay attention to their ICH, to safeguard it and to start an ICH related discussion and activities in their respective communities; and also to encourage them to compile entries for the Estonian Intangible Heritage Inventory. This is mainly done by introducing the concept of ICH and good safeguarding practices from different parts of Estonia. These trainings have created a wider interest in the subject and thus in 2012 a first training of trainers was organised. The aim was to find and train people who could perform at local and regional ICH trainings. At the same time it's a means of raising awareness among a different target group – local experts and opinion leaders.*

In Estonia there are several NPOs and NGOs who offer practical ICH training and are in some way or another fostered or supported by the state. The report does not attempt to give a full overview of the situation, as it would be too detailed, but we provide some illustrative examples.

### **Estonian Traditional Music Center**

Tasuja pst 6, 71011 Viljandi, Estonia

Phone: +372 434 2050

folk@folk.ee; [www.folk.ee](http://www.folk.ee)

*Estonian Traditional Music Centre is a non-profit association which organizes folk music teacher training and hobby education. It also promotes live folk music through live performances and by encouraging active participation. The centre also operates as a partner and an information centre for all the Estonian music schools, associations, folk bands, folk groups, solo artists, and folk music enthusiasts.*

*In the framework of the centre operates also **August Pulst School**, a non-formal education centre that offers instrument lessons for beginners and advanced players of all ages; in-service training courses for teachers; workshops, courses, hobby groups and seminars and school concerts and study camps for youngsters e.g. Estonian ETHNO, School for Young Musicians.*

The non-profit umbrella-organizations of traditional culture offer also various trainings to their member organizations and practitioners with considerable support from the state. These trainings are often organized in cooperation with the Estonian Folk Culture Centre. These organizations include

**Estonian Choral Association** is the central organization for all choirs and wind orchestras in Estonia.

[www.kooriyhing.ee](http://www.kooriyhing.ee)

**Estonian Folk Dance and Folk Music Association** is the central association in the area of folk dance and folk music that unites teachers and practitioners. [www.errs.ee](http://www.errs.ee)

**Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union** brings together regional folk art and craft organisations as well as individual craftsmen and craftswomen. [www.folkart.ee](http://www.folkart.ee)

**Estonian National Folklore Council** is set up on an interdisciplinary basis and unites institutions, which share the aims of the Council - to safeguard, transmit and disseminate traditional culture. The Council has its own training centre that offers non-formal and professional courses for adults as well as hobby educational courses for children and youth. [www.folkloorinoukogu.ee](http://www.folkloorinoukogu.ee)

**Estonian Amateur Theatre Association** unites amateur theatre groups. [www.harrastusteatriid.org](http://www.harrastusteatriid.org)

### **B.1c Documentation institutions for intangible cultural heritage**

*Identify any such institutions established by the State and provide complete contact information; describe any measures taken by the State to facilitate access to them.*

#### **Estonian National Museum**

Veski 32, 51014 Tartu, Estonia

Phone: +372 735 0400

erm@erm.ee; [www.erm.ee](http://www.erm.ee)

The museum collects, preserves, researches and introduces the culture and history of the Estonian people, other Finno-Ugric nations, and other ethnic groups residing in Estonia. Estonian National Museum is the most important ethnological centre in Estonia. The museum organizes collection campaigns and provides participatory opportunities to various kinds of audiences.

#### **Estonian Literary Museum**

Vanemuise 42, 50002 Tartu

Phone: +372 377 700

kirmus@kirmus.ee; [www.kirmus.ee](http://www.kirmus.ee)

The Estonian Literary Museum is a national scientific and research institution, which also acts as a literary central museum. According to its charter, the museum is the central archive of Estonian literature and folklore. It consists of the following departments: the Archival Library, the Estonian Cultural History Archives, the Department of Ethnomusicology, the Department of Folklore and the Estonian Folklore Archives (EFA).

#### **Estonian Open-Air Museum**

Vabaõhumuuseumi tee 12, 13521 Tallinn

Phone: +372 654 9100

evm@evm.ee; [www.evm.ee](http://www.evm.ee)

Estonian Open Air Museum collects and studies traditional Estonian vernacular architecture and way of life from the 18th to the 20th century. The museum displays 73 original buildings on 80 ha and has a large collection of photos and negatives on vernacular architecture. The museum studies also how the new ways of living and production bring along the modification of material environment. At the beginning of 2007 an extensive state programme for the study and maintenance of rural architecture and rural landscapes was launched. The aim of the programme is to increase people's consciousness, teach traditional building methods and to study the processes which determine the changes occurring due to human activity or inactivity.

#### **Estonian Public Broadcasting**

Gonsiori 27, 15029 Tallinn, Estonia

Phone +372 628 4100

err@err.ee; [www.err.ee](http://www.err.ee)

Estonian Public Broadcasting records, introduces and preserves Estonian culture, including ICH, taking also into consideration the interests of minority groups. Its ICH-related mission is twofold. Firstly, to continue building up an archive covering the different programmes and recordings of ICH. Secondly, to use the possibilities of modern media to raise awareness about ICH in general through introducing ICH events and specific regional cultures in their diversity. In radio there are also some news programmes in local dialects, reflecting the linguistic diversity.

### **Estonian National Library**

Tõnismägi 2, 15189 Tallinn, Estonia

Phone +372 630 7611

[nlib@nlib.ee](mailto:nlib@nlib.ee); [www.nlib.ee](http://www.nlib.ee)

Pursuant to the Legal Deposit Act, the library collects, stores and makes available all publications, audiovisuals, electronic items and web publications issued in Estonia. The strategic goal of the National Library is to preserve and to make available the national cultural heritage of the collections for the current and future generations. As cultural heritage the Library considers rare books and archival collections, the archival documents of personal archives, and art works. To provide for the integrity, storage and accessibility of collections, the reproduction of items on the basis of the annual reproduction programme is carried out. The digitised publications are available through the archive DIGAR.

On the issue of **accessibility** we can say that all state funded research and memory institutions, their collections and archives are accessible to public. In addition to the possibility of studying them in these institutions, it is also possible to order copies of items in public funds, such as sheet music, recordings or text documents. To facilitate access an electronic information system of Estonian museums (MUIS) has been developed and the digitisation of museum and archive collections is well underway to make them broadly available through the Internet. Lots of information that is stored in the numerous museums and archives is already available online for researchers and communities alike. There is a need to pay more attention to the compatibility of the different systems and formats in use and to develop better search systems. These and other questions are addressed in the development plan of digital cultural heritage for the years 2011-2016. Also more traditional means of interacting with the general public through publications, catalogues, and information letters are relevant for the information purposes that are closely connected with accessibility.

The media also plays an important role in facilitating access to the information about ICH. The Estonian Public Broadcasting produces a number of TV and radio programmes that deal with ICH or touch upon the subject. In addition to the ICH in Estonia also the ICH of other countries and cultural diversity of the world are a part of some programmes. On the weekly radio programme there are news presented in regional dialects about the respective regions. There are also several programmes about traditional music. On TV several nature programmes also deal with the ICH connected to the nature – for example traditional as well as modern skills and knowledge of fishermen.

Local institutions that are involved in ICH documentation are the **local institutes** in different regions of Estonia (Võru, Seto, Kihnu, Mulgimaa). These institutes operate with the state support as focal points for safeguarding the regional diversity, local language and culture. An important principle of research and documentation is to share all study results with the community concerned through publications, webpage as well as through direct interaction with the community leaders and other interested members.

For instance, the institute with the longest history is Võro Institute. Supporting the initiative of local activists in the South-Estonian region of Võromaa the state created in 1995 the Võro Institute dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the Võro language and culture. The Institute is a local research institution where everything is done with the aim to preserve the Võro ICH and to support its transmission with a special focus on Võro language. The overall objective is the continuous sustainable development of the region. Research subjects are chosen according to surveys regularly conducted among the population. Their work helps the people to stay in touch with their past and heritage.

Regional and local museums are also valuable memory and documentation institutions for the region and local communities as they are well placed to reach the grassroots' level. In addition to documenting activities a number of local museums are also actively engaged in developing ICH safeguarding measures in collaboration with the communities concerned. For instance, Hiiumaa Museum regularly conducts small-scale research projects with a practical outcome that are first and foremost meant to help and to encourage the community preserve a certain element of their ICH.

## B.2. Inventories

*Please report on the inventory or inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in your State's territory, as referred to in Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention and paragraph 98 of the Operational Directives. You may include information on:*

- a. the name of each inventory and the entity responsible for it;*
- b. the ordering principles used for structuring your inventory(ies). For example: according to communities/groups of tradition bearers; domains of intangible cultural heritage; territorial principles (national, regional, local), etc.;*
- c. the criteria used for inclusion of intangible cultural heritage elements in your inventory(ies);*
- d. whether your inventory(ies) take(s) into account the viability of intangible cultural heritage (for example, intangible cultural heritage threatened by disappearance, in need of urgent safeguarding, etc.);*
- e. the format/approach of your inventory(ies);*
- f. the method and frequency for updating inventory(ies);*
- g. the ways in which communities are involved in identifying and defining intangible cultural heritage to be included in the inventory(ies), and in their preparation and updating;*
- h. the participation of relevant non-governmental organizations in identifying and defining intangible cultural heritage.*

The Estonian Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage is administered by the Estonian Folk Culture Centre. The work on the online inventory ([www.rahvakultuur.ee/vkpnimistu](http://www.rahvakultuur.ee/vkpnimistu)) began in 2007 and it was opened to the public in 2010.

It is a new inventory that does not directly build on existing databases in order to ensure that the inventory focuses on ICH as living heritage and also to ensure community participation. The purpose of the inventory is to serve the interests of local communities. This means a bottom-up approach. Communities themselves compile entries for the inventory. However, they are not obliged to do so. It is up to them to decide if they want their ICH to be included in the inventory, which elements should be there and how they want to present them. Relevant community NGOs also participate in identifying and defining ICH. The task of Estonian Folk Culture Centre is to help and to encourage them.

An inventory that is based on the initiative of communities needs time to evolve. The circle widens step by step. The work began in cooperation with two communities who were already actively safeguarding and promoting their ICH and interested in working with the inventory. These communities and their first entries have served as a positive role model for others who have started to initiate various safeguarding activities and to compile entries for the inventory. Thus the scope of the inventory widens step by step both regionally and in terms of encompassing different fields of ICH.

The inventory is a part of the broader process of encouraging communities to pay more attention to their ICH, of raising awareness about ICH and about the different ways of safeguarding it. It is one of the means of activating the communities.

The inventory is structured in a twofold way. On the one hand there are four types of entries: elements of ICH, individual practitioners, organisations that work with this element and places or regions that are important for this element. Other entries are subordinated to the entry of an element. Every entry includes short texts and audiovisual materials. The texts focus on current social and cultural functions of the element, and on the current activities of practitioners and organisations giving an overview of the essence of every element and of the place it has in peoples' lives at present. They also include historical background information and information on the sustainability of the element.

On the other hand the entries are arranged according to the domains of ICH that they represent. A three-level list of domains and sub-domains was developed with the help of a scientist from Tartu University. Since an element of ICH is often related to more than one domain the inventory also includes links to as many domains as necessary.

In Estonia there is no special inventory for ICH that is threatened by disappearance or in need of urgent

safeguarding. However, every entry concerning an ICH element has to include information on its sustainability: on the ways of transmission, on the threats it faces (if any), and on safeguarding measures and their impact. Communities can share their good safeguarding practices.

The main criterion for an element to be included on the inventory is that the community wants to include it. Nevertheless it has to correspond to the definition of ICH, be an element of living heritage that is important for the community at present and has been passed on from generation to generation. The age of the element is not relevant, neither is its uniqueness. The ethnic background and size of the community is not relevant either. All communities from Estonia can contribute to the inventory.

All entries will be updated every five years by the people who compiled them. They will be sent a request to do so. Since there are not yet entries that have been on the inventory for five years the details of the process of updating still have to be developed.

### **B.3. Other safeguarding measures**

*Describe other safeguarding measures, including those referred to in Article 13 of the Convention and paragraph 98 of the Operational Directives, aimed at:*

- a. promoting the function of intangible cultural heritage in society and integrating its safeguarding into planning programmes;*
- b. fostering scientific, technical and artistic studies with a view to effective safeguarding;*
- c. facilitating, to the extent possible, access to information relating to intangible cultural heritage while respecting customary practices governing access to specific aspects of it.*

#### **Planning programmes**

One of the means for safeguarding ICH and promoting its function in society is including it in planning programmes. In Estonia safeguarding ICH is integrated into several state level as well as local planning programmes. Some of the most relevant state-level planning programmes are described below.

At the moment the guiding principles for **Estonian cultural policy until 2020** are being developed. This is the planning programme that is most directly related to ICH. The work in progress is coordinated by the Ministry of Culture. It is a bottom-up process: in every field of culture several working groups presented their proposals. It has been a meaningful process. The final document is going to include general ideas and guidelines based on these grassroots' discussions that helped each respective field to set out their specific goals and priorities for the years to come. For example in the field of ICH, traditional and amateur culture more than a hundred people participated in 8 working groups. Among others the input came from members of the Estonian Council for ICH, from community organisations and institutions that work in this field. The draft of the document states that the strength of Estonian culture lies in regional cultures, identities and communities. To that end the state shall support community initiative, community organisations and umbrella organisations, events where ICH is transmitted and promoted and shall be responsible for developing the relevant infrastructure. ICH and regional culture are also seen as an important basis for related cultural industries.

The development plan of the Ministry of Culture underlines the need to safeguard ICH. More specifically the aim is to create the necessary conditions for the viability of ICH of different cultural regions.

There is a separate development plan for the **Estonian language and its regional forms**. The Estonian as well as its regional forms are a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage and form an important cornerstone of the cultural identity of the people who speak those languages. Estonian is a relatively small language spoken by approximately one million people. The aim of the development plan is to ensure its continuous use in all fields of life, its safeguarding and research.

Other state-level planning programmes that include safeguarding ICH are the **Estonian Rural Development Plan** and the national strategy on Sustainable Development – „**Sustainable Estonia 21**“.

Several non-governmental state-level umbrella organisations working in different fields of ICH have their own development plans or development plans that concentrate on their specific field of activity e.g. handicrafts, traditional music and dancing, amateur theatre, amateur choirs and folklore. They all include safeguarding ICH by supporting and encouraging practitioners, creating and maintaining the necessary framework etc. For example, the Estonian National Folklore Council has compiled the development plan of the folklore movement which emphasises the need to create the conditions that allow regional and

community identities to grow stronger, to value cultural diversity in Estonia and in the whole world, to allow different age groups and target groups to participate in folklore related activities all over Estonia, to train specialists and to develop international cooperation.

Besides the state local governments play an important role in supporting the safeguarding of ICH. This is crucial since their goal is to create favourable conditions for cultural activities at local level. Many local authorities have included safeguarding ICH in their development plans in one way or another. For example they contribute to supporting and preserving local culture, to strengthening local identity and they take care of the infrastructure.

Several village communities also have their own development plans that often include safeguarding local culture and traditions. This is a sign and a result of a general process that has occurred in Estonia during the past decade – the society has rapidly become aware of different aspects of local culture and the need to promote and to safeguard them is being stressed. In this process the NGO Estonian Village Movement *Kodukant* that unites village associations from all over Estonia has played an important role. By supporting rural development and strengthening village communities the network helps to safeguard ICH in Estonian villages.

### **Financing**

Estonia believes that the main role of the state in safeguarding ICH located on its territory is to create favourable conditions for the creators and bearers of the ICH to safeguard and to transmit the different manifestations of such heritage. When it comes to fostering scientific research the state respects the academic liberty and does not directly coordinate this field. It rather supports the initiative of people and institutions. Several possibilities of financing have been created to support ICH-related research and activities that communities and relevant institutions consider important for maintaining the viability of ICH.

The main mechanisms of financing the safeguarding ICH are described below.

In cooperation with local communities the Ministry of Culture has so far established seven support programmes, each of them for a specific cultural region. With these regional programmes the state has created a framework and conditions for safeguarding ICH. They give the local community a chance to apply for funding for projects that concern local culture. These are the main tool for supporting ICH-related activities in Estonia. Since 2006 the number of programmes has grown from two to seven and they have proved to be an effective means of safeguarding ICH. For example in 2012 all in all 268 projects were funded with the total sum of 550 469 euro. However, these programmes do not cover the whole country at the moment. In the ongoing process of developing the guiding principles for Estonian cultural policies until 2020 the proposal has been made to further widen the scope of this measure.

In general, all seven regional programmes have the same aims of safeguarding intangible and preserving tangible heritage, revitalising ICH, increasing the number of people who participate in local culture and strengthening the ties between young people and their ancestors' language and cultural heritage. An important principle of the programmes is that it is the community members themselves who decide which elements of their heritage need attention and support and how to safeguard them. It is up to them to develop projects according to their needs and ideas. The programmes are also a good means of activating communities. The possibility to apply for financial support motivates and encourages people to pay more attention to their ICH, to strengthen, to promote and to safeguard it. Furthermore, the programmes have an influence on other regions inspiring them to safeguard their ICH and to strive towards more support.

**The Cultural Endowment of Estonia** supports different fields of culture by granting support to project applications. It's made up of eight foundations: art, music, drama, film, sports, literature, architecture and the traditional culture foundation most of which also support ICH-related projects to a certain extent. Nevertheless the traditional culture foundation is the one that is most closely related to ICH, among other things it supports the organisation of various events related to traditional culture, publications, groups of practitioners like musicians, dancers or craftsmen. In the years 2006–2011 this foundation granted support for a total of 8 015 071 euro (1 384 756 euro in 2011). The money comes directly from taxes, with the rate set by the government.

As a result of the general economic situation the state doesn't have as many possibilities to finance different programmes as before and some of the projects, that were previously directly supported from the state budget, are now supported by the Endowment. The support of the private sector has also reduced. Thus the amount of the money that is asked from the Endowment has increased, whereas the

sum allocated each year has not increased that much.

**The Ministry of Culture** also finances the safeguarding of ICH from its own budget. In 2012 the budget of the domain of folk culture which includes ICH was 3.25 million euro. In addition to above mentioned seven regional support programmes it includes support for the Estonian Folk Culture Centre, for the local institutes mentioned in B.1.c and for the umbrella-organisations mentioned in B.1.b. There is a special budget line of 670 000 euro for general activities for the purpose of implementing the Convention. The ministry also supports the process of the Estonian Song and Dance Celebration that is included in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In addition to the organisation of the celebration the participating amateur groups enjoy state support. These measures are further described in part C of the present report.

Furthermore the Council of Gambling Tax, the Ministry of Education and the Integration and Migration Foundation run programmes which support different kinds of cultural projects including ICH. There is also the Foundation of National Culture, supported by private capital and donations. The EU LEADER programme is quite popular in the countryside. A number of LEADER programme regions have set out supporting local traditions and traditional culture as their priorities. That has allowed them to grant support to many ICH-related project applications.

When it comes to supporting and financing cultural activities local authorities also have an important role to play. For example, they take care of the infrastructure and co-finance project applications of local and community organisations.

### **Scientific studies and safeguarding ICH**

As stated above the state also finances research in the field of ICH – not only the research with the direct aim of contributing to effective safeguarding of ICH but also academic research for example on the relationship that communities have to their heritage. It's not always the primary interest of researchers that the results of their work reach the communities, because they have other aims. On the other hand there are projects that are more directly connected to the community and laid out to benefit them.

State-owned and financed cultural research institutions and universities work on various fields of ICH. Many of their projects are related to communities and also are designed to benefit the communities. Researchers who do field work and work with communities often see it as their duty to share the results with the community and allow them to benefit. Communities actively use published research materials as well as materials compiled by students. To some extent scientific research is also eligible for support in the above mentioned regional support programmes. The programmes are thus a means of fostering scientific research in and about those communities and regions.

In the following some examples of research that serves the needs of the communities will be described. The Estonian Native Crafts Department of the state-owned University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy is a centre for practice based research of ICH in the field of traditional crafts. They run several projects which among other things aim to develop sustainable heritage-based livelihoods: finding ways of developing regional-level entrepreneurship based on traditional handicrafts and thus supporting and training the craftsmen. Not only when it comes to entrepreneurship but also to their professional skills. They focus on professional craftsmen as well as on those who would like to start working in this field. Inspired by the Convention a MA programme in Inherited Crafts has been opened. The aim of the programme is to do practice based research into traditional crafts and to enhance the use of those skills in the present day society e.g. in enterprise and by developing new products.

The Estonian National Museum is in the process of preparing a new permanent exhibition for their new spacious building which will finally allow the museum to thoroughly present various facets of their work to Estonian people. This state-financed and ambitious project is an important means of raising awareness about ICH among all Estonians, inspiring them to transmit and safeguard their own ICH thus allowing them to benefit from the research done at the museum. In 2010 the National Museum gave communities the opportunity to propose an exhibition to be realised at the museum according their ideas. Two of them were carried out.

Often the initiative for this kind of research comes from the community. For example the Estonian Folklore Archives, a subdivision of the Estonian Literary Museum does research into different fields of

oral ICH, including, for instance, urban legends. For more than ten years they have been collecting, researching and publishing place-related oral traditions of different regions of Estonia. Their work helps to revitalise this heritage and raise its importance in the eyes of community members. The initiative always comes from the community. Local authorities and officials have also become more aware of the importance of place-related oral traditions as one of the cornerstones of the local identity.

A good example is the cooperation between the Võro community and researchers from the University of Tartu. In recent years the community has started to actively safeguard the cultural heritage related to smoke sauna, a traditional form of bathing. At the same time researchers and students have been doing field work with the consent of and in cooperation with the community on the subject while respecting customary practices governing access to aspects of this ICH. The results have been important for the community because they help to gain an overview of the present situation of the element thus helping to find out which safeguarding measures are needed most. The community is also in the process of preparing a nomination file for the Representative List and the work of the researchers as part of the *ad hoc* task group has been of great help for them.

#### **Accessibility of the information about ICH**

The Estonian inventory of ICH described in B.2 is also a means of facilitating access to information about ICH. The information is online and easily accessible. At the same time it does respect the interests of communities, since it's up to them to decide which elements of ICH they want to present on the inventory and how they want to describe them to the public. This approach guarantees that the secret or private aspects of their ICH and customary practices governing access to those practices are respected. The inventory also includes entries on practitioners of ICH. To all these people the aims and essence of the inventory have been explained and their written consent is a precondition of putting their personal data online.

Many customs and practices that are intimate in their nature are only practiced in families or communities where custodians themselves govern access to them. In most cases this is sufficient. It is something that cannot be controlled with legal measures. It's rather a matter of respect and intuition. Various measures of raising awareness of ICH and its importance discussed in B.4 serve this cause. When people are taught from a young age to understand the nature of different elements of ICH and what they mean to their communities and practitioners they know to respect them.

#### **B.4. Measures to ensure recognition of, respect for and enhancement of intangible cultural heritage**

*Describe measures to ensure greater recognition of, respect for and enhancement of intangible cultural heritage, in particular those referred to in Article 14 of the Convention and paragraph 101 of the Operational Directives:*

- d. educational, awareness-raising and information programmes aimed at the general public, in particular to young people (you may for example specify whether intangible cultural heritage is integrated, and how, in school curricula);*
- e. educational and training programmes within the communities and groups concerned;*
- f. capacity-building activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage;*
- g. non-formal means of transmitting knowledge (you may address, for example, how non-formal ways of transmission are perceived and recognized by the general public and at national level);*
- h. education for the protection of natural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing the intangible cultural heritage.*

The state supports a wide range of activities that aim at ensuring recognition of, respect for and enhancement of ICH. The state supports formal as well as non-formal means of transmitting knowledge about ICH.

## **Formal education**

In general education curricula cultural identity is one of the integrated themes that should be dealt with in various subjects and throughout all levels of general education. Knowledge about Estonian culture and other cultures of the world is transmitted among others in history, citizenship, music, art, literature, religion and language lessons. The aim is to increase the pupils' interest in and knowledge about cultures: to create a framework that allows them to learn about traditional culture and ICH in order to be able to understand, cherish and respect all kinds of cultural practices. The aim is also to promote and enhance respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. Pupils should be encouraged to see themselves as bearers, practitioners and transmitters of culture. As they get to know and learn to appreciate their own culture and heritage as well as other cultures and their heritage, pupils come to value intercultural communication and cooperation and to understand the essence and importance of ICH. Often there is a special focus on the local cultural environment, on getting to know local customs and participating in those practises (e.g. regional recipes are used in cooking lessons).

In some regions, especially in Southern Estonia schools use special elective programmes on local traditional culture. Curricula initiated by community members and put together with their help ensure that local culture and identity are passed on to the next generation. Local NPOs help schools to arrange and to carry out these courses that are mainly financed by local governments.

There are also many professional schools where ICH like traditional craftsmanship and performing arts is taught. For example at the Luua Forestry School knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe are taught. In higher education knowledge about ICH is also transmitted, see B.1b.

## **Non-formal education and awareness-raising**

Non-formal education plays an important role in both raising awareness about ICH in general as well as in transmitting the knowledge and skills that are part of the ICH of a community. At the same time the latter also helps to ensure recognition of and respect for ICH. Learning about ICH is an effective way of learning to cherish and understand it.

Training courses and other awareness raising initiatives are run by NGOs and NPOs, specialised training institutions, museums and small enterprises, such as tourist farms and companies that use traditional skills to create their products. Many of those activities enjoy state support for example from the regional support programmes (see B.3).

There are courses for grown-ups as well as for young people in nearly every field of ICH. They range from theoretical lectures (e.g. how to wear folk costumes or what are the customs related to certain calendar festivities) and museum programmes (e.g. how to use traditional tools) to summer camps (e.g. traditional music camps that take place all over Estonia), summer and winter schools (e.g. Kaika Summer School, which includes lectures, excursion and workshops concerning local ICH and history in the region of Võromaa), workshops (e.g. getting to know plants and how they can be used, handicrafts like ceramics, making soap or constructing a house in a traditional way), courses or study-groups of local language for the children in a playful way (e.g. in the kindergartens of Võro region), thematic seminars, study days, story-telling events etc.

In many communities the most active members have created NPOs that organise various events including training courses that help to transmit and to broaden the knowledge about their ICH. This is an effective safeguarding measure. This is the case for both – regional communities and communities that are based on a field of interest or activity, e.g. traditional ways of constructing ships or other handicrafts, beekeeping, gardening, music. See also B.1b.

Some hobby schools also have special curricula for ICH education. This is best organised at music schools where children can get to know and learn to play traditional music and instruments like bagpipe or *kannel*. Hobby groups of adults raise the awareness of general public about ICH by presenting their activities.

The trainings courses offered by the Estonian Folk Culture Centre also aim at raising awareness of ICH and its functions in the society as well as passing on certain knowledge and skills (e.g. storytelling, making traditional costumes, arranging funerals). For more details see B.1b.

In general Estonians still have quite strong ties to the nature. If there are natural spaces or places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing ICH the trainings and awareness raising initiatives mostly take this into account. The communities attach importance to the transmission of this knowledge. In addition there are more general means of raising awareness of and promoting respect for these

places.

For example the State Forest Management Centre (SFMC) offers various short courses and excursions that transmit knowledge about nature as well as those customs and practices that are closely related to nature. The SFMC also coordinated a project aiming at mapping the traces of the activities of previous generations in the landscape. In the course of this project people all around Estonia also became more aware of places that are strongly connected to their and their ancestors' ICH.

### **Other examples of awareness-raising**

In 2012 the Estonian version of the UNESCO **ICH infokit** was published by the Estonian Folk Culture Centre and the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO. It is an important tool for raising awareness of ICH in Estonia. A new brochure „Intangible Cultural Heritage in Estonia” was compiled and added to the publication. Its purpose is to bring this subject yet closer to Estonian people by drawing upon local examples throughout the text and illustrations. It includes a summary of the key concepts of ICH and its safeguarding with a view to the Estonian culture and situation, introducing the system of contributing to the Estonian ICH inventory as well as eight examples of best practices of safeguarding ICH in Estonia. Also the role of the key institutions in the process of safeguarding is outlined: educational institutions and Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Culture, and the Estonian Folk Culture Centre. The publication has proven to be a success – communities, schools, universities, NGOs and training institutions alike find it helpful.

**Awards** for transmitting and safeguarding ICH also increase the awareness of ICH and respect for it. On the one hand this kind of recognition encourages community members to pursue their activities. On the other hand the opinions and views of the general public can be influenced. These include the Award of Heritage Custodian awarded annually by the Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union and by the Estonian Folk Culture Centre to individuals or organisations who have notably contributed to safeguarding and developing traditional arts and crafts. The Estonian National Folklore Council annually awards one or more scholarships to individuals or organisations that play a major role in teaching, transmitting and/or promoting traditional culture. The scholarship was inspired by the UNESCO Living Human Treasures programme.

In 2012 community institutions in the regions of Kihnu, Mulgimaa, Setomaa and Võromaa in cooperation with the relevant county governments created a new award. In each of the communities it is going to be annually awarded to a local cultural or educational institution or association who significantly contributes to safeguarding local culture and language.

In 2013 Estonia is celebrating the **Year of Cultural Heritage**. The aim is to raise awareness of and respect for all aspects of cultural heritage as well as to emphasise that there are no strict borders between the various fields of cultural heritage. The aim is also to point out every individual's role in safeguarding cultural heritage and the role cultural heritage plays in every individual's life. The slogan of the year is “No heritage without heir”. The close ties of cultural heritage with economy and sustainable development are also going to be in the focus. The event was initiated and is coordinated by the Ministry of Culture. All institutions and organisations that are active in the field of cultural heritage are involved in the preparations and organise events.

### **Ethnic minorities**

Through the Integration and Migration Foundation and the Ministry of Culture the state supports ethnic minorities in the process of safeguarding their native languages and culture. Representatives of about 190 ethnic groups live in Estonia and they often form national culture societies and associations. These culture societies have been receiving public baseline funding since 1991. They organise various projects e.g. folk culture festivals, educational activities, seminars, workshops and other events related to culture and ICH. To make these initiatives more visible and spread best practices the state supports the website [www.etnoweb.ee](http://www.etnoweb.ee). The state also supports Sunday school courses and study trips to countries of origin, cooperation between national culture societies and the organisation of joint events.

Since 2008, the Council for Ethnic Nationalities has been run by the Ministry of Culture, the aim of which is to make proposals for the development of and assistance in promoting the cultural life and activity of ethnic minorities in Estonia in compliance with the legislation of the Republic of Estonia.

The Integration and Migration Foundation publishes information materials that introduce the different nationalities living in Estonia and thus promote cultural diversity. The Foundation also organises

activities that encourage intercultural dialogue between young people. The activities are mainly aimed at young people living in Estonia, but there are also summer camps for Estonian children living abroad where they can improve their Estonian language skills and learn about Estonian culture.

### **B.5. Bilateral, sub-regional, regional and international cooperation**

*Report on measures taken at the bilateral, subregional, regional and international levels for the implementation of the Convention, including measures of international cooperation such as the exchange of information and experience, and other joint initiatives, as referred to in Article 19 of the Convention and paragraph 102 of the Operational Directives. You may, for example, consider the following issues:*

- a. sharing documentation concerning an element of intangible cultural heritage present on the territory of another State Party (paragraph 84 of the Operational Directives);*
- b. participating in activities pertaining to regional cooperation including for example those of category 2 centres for intangible cultural heritage that are or will be established under the auspices of UNESCO (paragraph 85 of the Operational Directives);*
- c. development of networks of communities, experts, centres of expertise and research institutes at sub-regional and regional levels to develop joint and interdisciplinary approaches concerning the elements of intangible cultural heritage they have in common (paragraph 83 of the Operational Directives).*

As to international cooperation, Estonia values the experience gained as a member of the **Intergovernmental Committee** for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 2006 to 2010. Estonia participated also in the work of the **Subsidiary Body** commissioned for evaluating the nominations to the Representative List in 2009 and 2010. Contributing to the discussions which led to the adoption of Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention has been also useful for the work at the national level.

Professor Kristin Kuutma, the former representative of Estonia in the ICH Committee, has also contributed to the **Forum of ICH Researchers**. The first event took place in 3 June 2012 in Paris at the initiative of Japan. The aim is to create a biannual forum where experts present their views, analyze the implementation of the ICH Convention and engage in discussion on topics that may further the development of the Convention.

Estonia organized in co-operation with UNESCO a capacity-building workshop **“The role of NGOs in implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH”** that took place in Tallinn, 1-4 September 2010. The workshop provided up-to-date information on the Convention to NGOs and governmental counterparts in order to strengthen their capacities to contribute to its implementation and to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. The participating countries were Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Serbia, in addition to trainers and UNESCO representatives.

Following the accession to the Convention, Estonia has also participated in several **expert meetings** with a view to exchange information and practical experience on national implementation of the Convention. As the Convention is still young these meetings have been of great importance to shape national policies and strategies. Estonian experience has been introduced in different regions of the world. For instance, in Eritrea, Republic of South-Africa, Republic of Korea, United Arab Emirates, Hungary, Germany, Netherlands, Croatia, Belgium, Romania, Czech Republic, Latvia and Lithuania.

Estonia has entered into **partnerships** and signed **co-operation agreements** in the field of culture with the governments of several countries. Some of these agreements and co-operation programmes also address specific questions related to safeguarding of ICH, others offer more general platform for the joint initiatives under UNESCO cultural conventions. To give some recent examples, more general co-operation agreements have been concluded with Hungary and with Israel for the years 2012-2015. Another example of a more specific nature is the co-operation programme of Estonia and Flanders for the years 2011-2014. As stipulated by the article 8.2.2 “both Parties are willing to improve and to stimulate the networking of the heritage institutions of their countries for the purpose of exchange of practices, experts and competences related to movable and intangible heritage. In the framework of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 17 October 2003, both Parties will study the possibilities to develop joint projects regarding the methods of registration and preservation of the intangible heritage of Estonia and Flanders. During the first phase, the responsible

units of the Flemish and Estonian Ministry of Culture can exchange experience and know-how.”

UNESCO Intangible Heritage Lists have also provided a platform for **the practitioners and custodians of ICH** to develop **regional cooperation**. In July 2008 a 30-member Suiti delegation from Latvia visited Kihnu community and Seto community in Estonia to discuss ICH safeguarding measures, the current situation on ICH transmission to the younger generation, the role of schools, local government and state in safeguarding local identity, co-operation with UNESCO, community involvement in preparing nomination files to the UNESCO ICH lists, etc. *Leelo* singers representing Seto community, Estonia, and folklore group Suiti Women of Alsunga representing Suiti community from Latvia also performed together in a joint concert.

The close **regional cooperation** in the field of culture between the neighboring countries of **Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania** is based on our historic and cultural similarities. The existing good cooperation was further strengthened by the preparatory process of a multinational nomination file on the Song and Dance Celebrations in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that was included in the list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2003 and transferred to the Representative List in 2008. The Baltic States have been involved in regular joint efforts to ensure the sustainability of the shared tradition that has its own distinctive features in all three countries. In order to study and discuss the recent developments, the delegations of all three states consisting of specialists, artistic leaders and organizers participate in the Celebrations in the neighboring countries as observers. Series of joint conferences have been organized to analyze various aspects related to the common element (“Tradition of Song and Dance Celebrations – Ideals or Reality?”, Tallinn, 2005; “Cultural Traditions in the System of Arts Education of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania”, Vilnius, 2006; “Continuity of the Tradition of Song and Dance Celebration in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, Riga, 2007). The preparations for the next conference “The Touch of Time” that will take place in Tallinn in October 2013 are underway.

Another example of the regional cooperation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is the **international folklore festival “Baltica”** under the aegis of CIOFF that is held annually in one of the Baltic States since 1987. These festivals introduce folk dance, folk music, customs, handicraft and other fields of folk art. The activities of the festival include the opening and closing ceremonies, concerts, parades, meetings, workshops and festival clubs. The performances will take place in concert halls, open-air stages and streets both in capitals, smaller towns and in countryside in the frame of the so-called Country and Capital Days. Some 2000 participants of the folklore movement take part in the festival, including groups representing national minorities. Additionally there are some 200 guests from outside the Baltic States who also join the Festival. The next festival will be held in Estonia from 3 to 7 July 2013, organized by Estonian National Folklore Council.

Concerning the **networks of centres of expertise and research institutes** there is an existing good cooperation on Finno-Ugric culture and language related research. The enclaves of Finno-Ugric peoples can be found across a vast area stretching from Norway in the West to the Siberian Ob River region in the East, comprising of around 25 million people of 24 different nations with rich intangible cultural heritage. The Estonian Academy of Art, the University of Tartu and the Estonian National Museum enjoy good cooperation with their respective counterparts in Finland, Norway, Hungary and Russian Federation on the research issues of mutual concern.

Many Estonian ICH-related institutions and organizations value the **membership of international organizations** that opens new possibilities for joint initiatives. For instance, Estonian National Folklore Council functions also as the Estonian national section of CIOFF. Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union is a member of European Folk Art and Craft Federation since 1994 and Nordic Folk Art and Craft Association since 1995. Estonian Choral Association is a member of the European Choral Association - Europa Cantat, and of the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM). Estonian Traditional Music Centre is a member of Jeunesses Musicales International since 2005 etc. Estonian scholars value also the possibility to participate in expert organizations, such as the SIEF (Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore).

## C. STATUS OF ELEMENTS INSCRIBED ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST

Please complete all points below for each element of intangible cultural heritage present in the State's territory that has been inscribed on the Representative List. Refer to the nomination file as the basis for reporting on the **current** status of the element and report only on relevant changes since the date of inscription on the List or since the last report. Nomination files and earlier reports are available at [www.unesco.org/culture/ich](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich) or on request at the Secretariat.

The State Party shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals concerned during the process of preparation of each report, and is asked in point C.7 below to describe how it has done so.

**Name of element:** Seto Leelo, Seto polyphonic singing tradition

**Inscribed in :** 2009

### C.1. Social and cultural functions

*Explain the social and cultural functions and meanings of the element today, within and for its community, the characteristics of the bearers and practitioners, and any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities towards the element, among others. Attention should be given to any relevant changes related to inscription criterion R.1 ('the element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention').*

In general the social and cultural functions of Seto *leelo* within and for the Seto community have remained the same as they were in 2008 when the nomination file was compiled. The characteristics of *leelo* singing have not changed either.

*Leelo* that continues to be transmitted from generation to generation marks the continuity and essence of the Seto culture. As a cornerstone of contemporary Seto identity *leelo* transmits lifestyle, language and traditions. It unites the Seto people and others who are interested in Seto culture. Bearers of this heritage live in and outside Setomaa. A number of people who have recently moved to Setomaa also have become attached to *leelo*. There is reason to hope that their offspring will also grow up as bearers of Seto culture.

The nomination process and the nomination itself had a considerable influence on the community as well as on the general perception of *leelo*. The Seto have more actively than before started to strengthen the role of *leelo* in their daily lives. People in Setomaa have become more interested in their ancestors and their culture.

*Leelo* is increasingly becoming a good reason for the community to get together. Singing strengthens the ties between the people. While family and rural community have largely ceased to act as teachers and coaches of Seto culture, *leelo* choirs have adopted this function. They are the essential bearers of the Seto identity and consolidate the community. The choirs have become kind of centres of Seto culture. In addition to singing they do handicrafts and cook traditional food together. They also discuss various issues related to the culture and the community.

Sustainability of the community in turn forms the basis of *leelo* tradition. According to the census carried out in 1924 and 1934 in the Republic of Estonia 15 000 people called themselves Seto. According to the Estonian population and housing census of 2012 there are 12 549 people who understand the Seto language – all those people feel connected to the cultural space of the Seto.

The roles of bearers and practitioners of Seto *leelo* have remained the same as described in the nomination file presented to UNESCO in 2008. They still follow the commitments made in the nomination file.

## C.2. Assessment of its viability and current risks

*Describe the current level of viability of the element, particularly the frequency and extent of its practice, the strength of traditional modes of transmission, the demographics of practitioners and audiences and its sustainability. Please also identify and describe the threats, if any, to the element's continued transmission and enactment and describe the severity and immediacy of such threats.*

As stated in C.1. Seto *leelo* is viable and the community is taking good care of maintaining and raising its viability. However, it is difficult to say exactly how viable *leelo* is. There are many outside influences that are difficult to change – for example the global entertainment business via television and the Internet. *Leelo* is transmitted in families, inside the community and also with the help of old and new recordings and books. However, the community feels that *leelo* is not transmitted enough inside families, it is definitely important to pay attention to teaching *leelo* at schools, kindergartens and *leelo* choirs. The sound of *leelo* differs from the modern and classical music and the younger generation still needs to acquire their musical mother tongue by listening to it.

On the one hand the interest of young people is increasing. In fact during the last couple of years the number of *leelo* choirs uniting younger women, children and men has increased. Some years ago only one men's choir was active, now there are two more. People who did not sing before have joined in. Almost all age groups have taken up *leelo* singing. Choir members have started to take along their children and grandchildren. This has certainly increased the viability of *leelo*. Most of the choirs meet once a week, some once or twice a month. All together there are 24 *leelo* choirs and other groups who are connected to *leelo*. With an average of 10-12 members. At family or village get-togethers also other people sing *leelo*. Every year there are three or four major Seto cultural events and also several smaller ones, e.g. *kirmas* – the traditional Seto village feast. *Leelo* plays a major role in all those events.

On the other hand the number of master singers and older acknowledged tradition bearers is decreasing. And younger people are moving away from Setomaa. Nevertheless it does not necessarily mean that they lose their connection to the Seto culture as in all bigger towns there are small Seto communities who also actively live and transmit the Seto culture. Nowadays the Internet also helps to stay in touch with the community.

On the contrary living in Setomaa does not always mean living the Seto culture. There are many people in Setomaa who think that the importance of Seto culture is over emphasised and that in everyday life it has little use. Now still less than half of the people who live in Setomaa participate in Seto culture. It is first and foremost the culturally active who find it important to live the Seto culture and to continue the traditions. Should the Seto cultural space cease to exist in the historic region of Setomaa, *leelo* would be in a grave danger. The groups who are active in the towns need a strong traditional cultural space to back them. The Seto culture has to stay alive in Setomaa.

The community is aware that the practice of *leelo* can only continue if Seto language stays viable. At the moment the decrease in the knowledge of Seto language is perceived as the gravest threat to *leelo*. *Leelo* that always carries a message is closely connected to the language. Especially for *sõnolinõ* – the lead singer who is talented in composing verse-lines – it is essential to know the language very well. There are not many people who use the language every day. But the awareness of the necessity of speaking and teaching it has risen. There are also more people who dare to express themselves in Seto. However their language skills need to be improved. Various publications are a big help to that end. In addition to the literary Estonian language English in the mass media has become a problem. It is popular to speak English despite of limited language skills. The community finds it dangerous if people get used to using any language in a simplistic way without giving attention to its nuances.

After the inscription *leelo* choirs now more often get a chance to perform which is an opportunity and a danger at once. This can urge them to get together more often which in its turn can increase their joy in singing together and living the Seto culture. On the other hand singing together only for the sake of performances is superficial and prevents the *leelo* choirs from functioning as transmitters of culture.

The inscription has increased the awareness of Setos and their culture in the general public in Estonia. Entrepreneurs have started to use this in their advertising. Advertising can have a positive effect on Seto culture raising the self-esteem of the community. But it can also be insulting and thus have a negative and humiliating effect. The community is aware of the problem but has not yet found a solution.

### **C.3. Contribution to the goals of the List**

*Describe how the inscription of the element has contributed to ensuring visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and raising awareness at the local, national and international levels of its importance. Explain how its inscription has contributed to promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity, and mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals.*

The Seto community and *leelo* choirs play a remarkable role in raising the general public's awareness of the need to value and safeguard the intangible cultural heritage. They show a high respect towards their culture within the community, but are also willing to present it to interested outsiders. By actively drawing political and media attention to their culture, they increase recognition of the significance of intangible cultural heritage as an integral and valuable part of modern society and enhance awareness of cultural diversity.

The inscription on the Representative List has created new possibilities to draw the attention of the wider public to Seto *leelo*, Seto community and their efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. People in Estonia, but also in Europe and throughout the world have thus had the possibility to learn about the diversity and essence of intangible cultural heritage as well as about the different ways of safeguarding it. What is even more important, it has powered the self-confidence of the members of the Seto community themselves.

Once inscribed on the Representative List the Seto community and their activities to safeguard their intangible cultural heritage have had a chance to serve as a recognised role model for other communities in and outside Estonia, increasing thus awareness of the effectiveness and usefulness of various community initiatives. In Estonia the activities of the Seto and the inscription have increased the awareness of intangible cultural heritage in general and encouraged other communities to safeguard their heritage. One after another local communities have started to pay consciously attention to safeguarding and promoting their ICH. As a result of the inscription the Seto have also started to communicate and exchange experience more intensively with other communities, uniting their voices to speak out for the intangible cultural heritage.

### **C.4. Efforts to promote or reinforce the element**

*Describe the measures that have been implemented to promote and reinforce the element, particularly detailing any measures that might have been necessary as a consequence of its inscription.*

For Seto *leelo* to remain viable it is crucial that the Seto want to live and transmit the Seto culture. A large part of the community is committed to that goal. Their efforts which will be dealt with more precisely in C.5. are supported by the state, by local authorities and non-governmental organisations.

For the state the main instrument of supporting Seto culture is the Setomaa Cultural Programme launched in 2003 and administered by the Ministry of Culture. The overall objective of the programme is to safeguard the distinct cultural and linguistic features of the Seto. It also aims at increasing the number of participants in cultural activities and, in particular, to involve children in their linguistic and cultural heritage.

The programme is open for all applications that help to fulfil these goals. Most of the applications come from the community itself, e.g. various small non-profit organisations, local schools, museums and cultural centres. *Leelo* choirs receive funding for their operational costs and actively apply for project funding to release CDs, arrange and participate in various events, and so on. A large number of the community events where *leelo* is an integral part, have received financing. The programme assists the preservation and viability of not only *leelo* traditions but the entire Seto culture.

However, as a result of the economic downturn the sum allocated to the programme has notably decreased. The community feels that this has prevented many smaller projects based on local initiative from being carried out because people themselves don't have enough finances. Unfortunately one of the things that still remain to be done is collecting information from the older generation – people fear that some of their skills and knowledge might be lost forever. The community also feels that there isn't enough money for trainings and training materials that *leelo* choirs would need.

More widely the viability of Seto culture also depends on the sustainability of the community and the whole region. To that end The Ministry of Internal Affairs launched the Setomaa Development

Programme. Since 2006 investments have been and continue to be made in the entrepreneurial environment and human capital.

A good example of cooperation between different stakeholders to facilitate and encourage the transmission of Seto ICH was recently initiated. With the support of the Ministry of Education and Research the Estonian Centre for Traditional Music gives scholarships to masters who teach traditional skills in a traditional way. In addition to musicians and dancers 4 masters in *leelo* participate in this programme. They transmit their knowledge to *leelo* choirs, and at schools and kindergartens.

Local governments in Setomaa also continue to support the various activities of the community, *leelo* and Seto culture in general. It is also a part of their planning programmes. The four rural municipalities of Setomaa have even formed a union to take better care of questions concerning Seto culture.

### **C.5. Community participation**

*Describe the participation of communities, groups and individuals in safeguarding the element and their commitment to its further safeguarding.*

As is the case with any element of ICH safeguarding *leelo* is in the hands of the community. Seto people are eager to participate in Seto culture. They cherish *leelo* choirs and community celebrations that bring them together. Not only in the rural area of Setomaa but also in towns.

The most important bearers and transmitters of *leelo* are the *leelo* choirs. They meet regularly enjoying singing together and improving their skills. Sometimes choir members also bring their families to choir events widening the circle of people participating in Seto culture.

Choirs have grown more active and new people have joined in. Choirs work on their repertoires. They have started to look for songs and background information in archives and museums and are not so much copying each other's repertoire any more. They especially look for songs from their place of origin or sung by their ancestors. Choirs also train singers to improve their skills and confidence as *killõ* singers or *sõnolinõ*.

There is more communication between the individual choirs. They are paying more attention to each other's activities and music and comparing it. For example they all participate at different events in Setomaa. An important part of their activity is introducing Seto culture to a wider public, raising awareness of their ICH and thus of ICH in general. All choirs are planning to go on with their activities, new choirs have been founded and there are plans for further choirs to be created.

A conference on Seto *leelo* and another one on the traditional Seto wedding were organised by and for the community. Both conferences included discussions on the singing tradition. In 2012 for the third time the Seto Week was organised – during one week in the whole of Setomaa extra attention is paid and drawn to Seto language, culture, traditional costumes, traditional food etc.

Parents and grandparents more consciously teach children and involve them in the activities connected to Seto culture. At schools and kindergartens in Setomaa children are taught Seto language, culture and singing. Värskä Secondary School has a whole study programme dedicated to traditional culture and at Värskä Music School traditional music is taught. Systematic tuition of Seto language and culture for children has also started in two towns outside Setomaa.

For a long time Seto culture was based on oral tradition. Now people are getting used to preserving the present-day cultural expressions in a written or recorded form. And they increasingly use the materials that have been collected earlier on. Books, CDs and web pages on various subjects like handicrafts, customs, singing and food are being published – among them a special web page for *leelo* <http://laul.setomaa.ee/>. A Seto language primer and reader have been published. The first Seto language movie and cartoons have been made, several plays have been staged. Seto Institute is preparing a series of Seto language books to be published in 2013. The newspaper "Setomaa" is now published only in Seto. There have been exhibitions and other events promoting Seto culture. The community wants to continue all these activities; nevertheless it also depends on the availability of financial resources. Many of the activities mentioned are financed by the Setomaa Cultural Programme.

## C.6. Institutional context

Report on the institutional context for the element inscribed on the Representative List, including:

- a. *the competent body(ies) involved in its management and/or safeguarding;*
- b. *the organization(s) of the community or group concerned with the element and its safeguarding.*

As laid out in the nomination file there are several community organisations that are concerned with safeguarding Seto culture and *leelo* as a part of it. *Leelo* choirs are the most important stakeholders, many of them have also created a non-profit organisation to better organise their activities. The Assembly of Seto Leelo Masters unites all the choirs. Other community organisations participate in a more indirect way.

At the local level the Seto Institute constitutes a new stakeholder with the mission to research and safeguard the Seto culture. As stated above the support of local governments and institutions subordinated to them (e.g. schools) is important for the whole of Seto culture and also *leelo*. On the regional level the Union of Rural Municipalities of Setomaa plays a vital role.

At the national level the Estonian Folk Culture Centre administrates the Setomaa Cultural Programme. The centre also consults the Seto in questions concerning the Estonian inventory of ICH. There are several national level research institutions that collect, preserve, study and exhibit heritage related to *leelo* tradition. The Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Internal Affairs also play a role in supporting Seto culture.

Most of the organisations named in the safeguarding plan laid out in the nomination file have fulfilled the obligations that they committed to in 2008. Even though the community is not satisfied with all the results and feels that not all of the stakeholders have done as much as they could or should have done, a lot has been done since 2008.

### **C.7. Participation of communities in preparing this report**

*Describe the measures taken to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals concerned during the process of preparation of this report for each concerned element.*

In order to ensure community participation the report form was translated into Estonian and sent to the Seto community in the summer of 2012. At a meeting in September the aims of the report were discussed with community representatives. Following the meeting The Union of Rural Municipalities of Setomaa and The Assembly of Seto Leelo Masters conducted a small survey among community members. In addition since 2010 the Union of Rural Municipalities of Setomaa has been collecting data on safeguarding activities for Seto *leelo* set forth in the nomination file. This data as well as the observations of community leaders served as basis of this report. On 9 October 2012 the report was discussed, improved and approved at a community round table. The intangible heritage specialists of the Folk Culture Centre then translated the report and added some keywords.

### **C. STATUS OF ELEMENTS INSCRIBED ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST**

*Please complete all points below for each element of intangible cultural heritage present in the State's territory that has been inscribed on the Representative List. Refer to the nomination file as the basis for reporting on the **current** status of the element and report only on relevant changes since the date of inscription on the List or since the last report. Nomination files and earlier reports are available at [www.unesco.org/culture/ich](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich) or on request at the Secretariat.*

*The State Party shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals concerned during the process of preparation of each report, and is asked in point C.7 below to describe how it has done so.*

**Name of element:** Kihnu Cultural Space

**Inscribed in:** 2008

#### **C.1. Social and cultural functions**

*Explain the social and cultural functions and meanings of the element today, within and for its community, the characteristics of the bearers and practitioners, and any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities towards the element, among others. Attention should be given to any relevant changes related to inscription criterion R.1 ('the element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention').*

The social and cultural functions have not changed considerably since Kihnu Cultural Space was added to the former list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2003 and consequently inscribed on the Representative List in 2008.

Lying off Estonia's Baltic coast, the small islands of Kihnu and Manija are home to a community who continue to practice their traditional way of living, using and transmitting the ICH closely related to their home islands. The Kihnu Cultural Space continues to be distinguished by the interrelation of its rich cultural and natural heritage. The islanders are very much attached to their traditional livelihood practices and particular calendar festivities that are and have been passed on from generation to generation. Identity expressions such as traditional dress are daily phenomena. The Kihnu wedding tradition brings together various elements of cultural heritage that have persisted through the course of time, including customs, poetic and musical expression, and traditional crafts. For the community it is important to get married according to those traditions and the number of traditional weddings has increased in the course of the last ten years. Kihnu people who have moved away from the island also continue to practice their culture and feel the need to return to Kihnu at least for the holidays. The Kihnu dialect, Kihnu language as the islanders call it, continues to be one of the most important

components of Kihnu culture supporting the identity of the islanders.

## **C.2. Assessment of its viability and current risks**

*Describe the current level of viability of the element, particularly the frequency and extent of its practice, the strength of traditional modes of transmission, the demographics of practitioners and audiences and its sustainability. Please also identify and describe the threats, if any, to the element's continued transmission and enactment and describe the severity and immediacy of such threats.*

Kihnu Cultural Space and its ICH are viable because they form a consistent part of the everyday life of the Kihnu community. Unfortunately this is not true for the smaller island of Manija where the population is growing older. The social, demographic as well as economical aspects inevitably influence individual decisions on the commitment to cultural traditions. Young people leave the island because there is no suitable work for them and no school. This island is likely to become a place with only some permanent habitants, predominated by summer cottages. On Kihnu island the demographic situation is relatively stable. However there is a slight tendency towards leaving Kihnu and Estonia in search of employment.

Since the acknowledgement by UNESCO the community members themselves have become more aware of their ICH and its significance. This has contributed to the viability of the skills and knowledge characteristic to the community, such as speaking Kihnu language, doing handicrafts in a traditional way, preparing and eating traditional food, singing, dancing and playing music, wearing traditional clothing, celebrating weddings and folk calendar holidays in a traditional way. The community is consciously making an effort to safeguard these elements that form the core of their culture. These skills and knowledge are primarily transmitted in traditional way supported by new ways of transmission including school lessons and extracurricular activities, museum lessons and performances.

The number of people who earn their livelihood by doing traditional handicrafts or by introducing them has increased as well as the number of people employed in cultural sphere and dealing with safeguarding the Kihnu culture. It's important that locals can find work that is related to their culture – as school teachers, employed by the Foundation Kihnu Cultural Space or by the museum.

For Kihnu men it has become problematic to earn their livelihood in the traditional way, because their right to fish is limited and hunting seals is forbidden. The community feels that indigenous people should be given a special status when it comes to those two traditional ways of earning the livelihood. However they find it difficult to cooperate with the Ministry of the Environment on those issues. Fishermen cannot fish enough to support their families. Since 2008 the Foundation Kihnu Cultural Space and the local government have been trying to achieve the legalisation of seal hunting but they have not succeeded yet.

Small scale farming for the family's own needs is decreasing.

The viability of the traditional three-day Kihnu wedding has improved significantly. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century four weddings have been held according to the tradition. The preparations for the wedding almost last a whole year and include all key elements of Kihnu culture. Thus this has also strengthened other aspects of the local culture. In addition the whole process was recorded and two documentaries made. On the one hand the films raise awareness about Kihnu Cultural Space in Estonia as well as in other countries. On the other hand they are also important for the self-esteem of the community.

St Catherine's day is an important holiday in the folk calendar of Kihnu people. The tradition of celebrating it in villages had weakened over the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Community members are proud to have brought it back to villages.

Some ten years ago the community was faced with the serious problem of tourists who were not conscious of Kihnu culture and only came to the island to party not respecting the local people and their way of life. The community is happy that cultural tourism has gained ground in Kihnu. They welcome tourists who respect their culture and want to get to know it. The islanders, especially Kihnu Museum have contributed to this end by introducing Kihnu culture. Now tourism agencies offer various trips that include guided visits to Kihnu Museum, to the new farm museum, to a handicrafts' farm etc.

## **C.3. Contribution to the goals of the List**

*Describe how the inscription of the element has contributed to ensuring visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and raising awareness at the local, national and international*

*levels of its importance. Explain how its inscription has contributed to promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity, and mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals.*

The acknowledgment of Kihnu cultural space by UNESCO has significantly contributed to raising awareness in Kihnu and in Estonia at large of ICH and of its importance as a cultural backbone of every community and society. The visibility of ICH worldwide will be strengthened by each and every ICH element added to the list as it introduces the richness of the living cultures.

The community is consciously paying more attention to transmitting and safeguarding their ICH. Outside support and recognition have raised the self-esteem of the community and given them additional means to practice and safeguard their ICH.

In many ways Kihnu serves as a role model for other communities, primarily in Estonia. Several seminars on teaching local language and traditional culture have been held in Kihnu for school teachers. Kihnu teachers have plenty of experience to share with their colleagues.

The Kihnu community also cooperates with other Estonian communities, for example the Seto whose singing tradition Seto *leelo* was inscribed on the Representative List in 2009. The two communities share best practices of safeguarding ICH, young people meet up to get to know each other's culture. Together they can more effectively influence politics and the public opinion to be in favour of ICH. The two have encouraged other Estonian communities to pay more attention to their ICH.

The annual festival called the Kihnu Sea Celebration was launched in 2010. Its main goal is to introduce Kihnu culture and way of life to outsiders. The festival has been a success. By introducing ICH of a small community the respect for cultural diversity and creativity will be enhanced.

Kihnu people have participated at numerous folklore festivals worldwide, introducing their ICH and thus inspiring other people to do the same. These kinds of gatherings contribute to enhancing mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals. For instance, in 2010 a folklore group from Kihnu participated in the folklore festival in Japan. The contacts were established due to the information included in the Representative List.

#### **C.4. Efforts to promote or reinforce the element**

*Describe the measures that have been implemented to promote and reinforce the element, particularly detailing any measures that might have been necessary as a consequence of its inscription.*

Resulting from the community's strong wish to safeguard their culture and living environment two state level support programmes have been launched for Kihnu. The Foundation Kihnu Cultural Space initiated the Kihnu Regional Programme that was launched in 2007 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This programme aimed at supporting traditional means of subsistence and at vitalising the economy on the island. In 2010 the programme was turned into a more general programme for small Estonian islands. Community representatives stress that Kihnu needs a separate programme. While it existed it was a big help for maintaining the viability of Kihnu Cultural Space.

In 2008 the Ministry of Culture launched the Kihnu Cultural Programme for the support of projects concerning Kihnu culture. The programme helps the community to safeguard their ICH in a way best suited for them. Many of the activities described here were financed by this programme.

Furthermore, other foundations in Estonia have supported Kihnu culture as well as community initiatives. In 2009 the Kihnu Museum was renovated with the support of the Estonian state and the European Union. The museum continues documenting and introducing Kihnu culture but also serves as a community centre. The renovated community centre on the smaller Manija island also functions well. For instance, the tradition of Manija Days has been initiated by the Manija Culture Society and it has become a popular reunion of the people who were born or have lived on the island. The community finds that the support by the Ministry of Education and Research has not been sufficient and therefore the objectives of the safeguarding plan laid out in the nomination file have not been fully achieved.

The necessary safeguarding measures concern not only the immediate safeguarding of the culture and the traditional way of life, but also the creation of a more favourable economic environment, contemporary infrastructure and transport connections as this will help to prevent younger generations from leaving the region. The rural municipality has done a lot improving the infrastructure. Roads have been repaired, a hovercraft was acquired, the harbour is going to be reconstructed and a new ferry

purchased. Due to the changed housing policy indigenous people have decided to stay on the island. Their interest in selling the land of their ancestors has decreased notably.

Research on Kihnu culture is being carried on. The research topics include singing and dancing culture, traditional costumes and their meaning. During the past ten years various books concerning Kihnu Cultural Space have been published and become popular among community members as well as among Estonians in general. The topics include Kihnu handicrafts and handicraft masters, the nature and history of the Kihnu Cultural Space. A Kihnu language cookbook, brochures containing songs and scores for instrumental music, a CD and a DVD with dances and dance music have been published. Estonian broadcasting companies have made several documentaries in Kihnu and twice a week there is a news programme in Kihnu dialect on the national radio.

Since the Kihnu Cultural Space is formed by its distinct cultural and natural environment attention has also been paid to preserving the environment and the characteristic landscapes.

### **C.5. Community participation**

*Describe the participation of communities, groups and individuals in safeguarding the element and their commitment to its further safeguarding.*

The community's awareness and appreciation of their culture has been continuously growing. Kihnu people actively participate in community events.

Several institutions (see C.6.) have been founded to support the Kihnu Cultural Space. For example the Foundation Kihnu Cultural Space was founded in 2002, the Kihnu Culture Institute in 2005. These institutions are supported by the state, but they are community-led institutions that function as representative bodies of tradition bearers. They deal with different aspects of Kihnu culture and ICH and have initiated various safeguarding activities. Among other things they encourage the community to discuss subjects related to their culture. The Foundation and the Institute have published several books and teaching materials in Kihnu language. The newspaper Kyne published in local language has also played an important role. The local school and museum are important cooperation partners of these institutions. At Kihnu school traditional culture forms an important part of the curriculum including Kihnu language, handicrafts, singing, dancing, instrumental music, and Kihnu history. In 2004 a Kihnu language reader and in 2009 a Kihnu language primer were published. The latter was granted the title of "Estonian Language Deed of the Year" by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. Soon a student's book on local culture, nature and history is going to be published. The school is supported by the Foundation Kihnu Cultural Space, by Kihnu Culture Institute, by the local museum and cultural centre. Among other things they provide Kihnu language learning materials and facilitate extracurricular activities. For five years extremely popular camps have been organised where children get to know traditional culture and music. This gave the impetus to start regular traditional music courses. When it comes to extracurricular activities based on traditional culture instrumental music, singing, dancing and women's handicrafts play a significant role. Unfortunately there is a lack of men's handicrafts. However to a certain extent children acquire these skills and knowledge at home. The community feels the need for a school where local traditional music and handicrafts would be taught. Traditional music camps paved the way for the annual Kihnu Violin Festival, first held in 2011.

At the moment the work is going on to open a farm museum. However this is not merely an open air museum. While the buildings are still being reconstructed the farm already serves as a centre for community celebrations and traditional music camps.

In 2011 The Kihnu Handicrafts Council was summoned to stand up against the unfair use of Kihnu ICH in the field of handicrafts. As a measure to support local craftspeople and artisans a quality mark for Kihnu handicrafts was elaborated to prevent the sale of fake items and a web store for Kihnu handicrafts was opened. Kihnu handicrafts are beloved and appreciated in Estonia. So the web store helps Kihnu women to earn their living and to sell their work more easily.

### **C.6. Institutional context**

Report on the institutional context for the element inscribed on the Representative List, including:

*a. the competent body(ies) involved in its management and/or safeguarding;*

*b. the organization(s) of the community or group concerned with the element and its*

## *safeguarding.*

The following institutions help to maintain the viability of Kihnu Cultural Space.

**Foundation Kihnu Cultural Space** was founded in 2002 with the goal to implement the safeguarding plan submitted to UNESCO in 2003 as a part of the the nomination file.

**Foundation Kihnu Cultural Institute** was founded in 2005. Main lines of activity include producing Kihnu language news clips for a national radio station, publishing Kihnu language learning materials and other books. The Institute also unites Kihnu people living on the mainland.

**Kihnu Museum** has been safeguarding Kihnu culture for decades. Its activities include documenting and introducing Kihnu culture, collecting related items and materials and publishing related materials, organising expositions, workshops and other events. The renovated museum was reopened in 2009 and now functions as one of the cultural centres of the community.

**Kihnu Cultural Centre** organises events where traditional culture plays a major role like St John's Day's celebrations and the Day of Kihnu Dance.

**Kihnu School:** transmitting Kihnu culture and language to children, giving them the possibility to actively participate in safeguarding the culture.

**Kihnu Sea Society** does research in sea-related history and is constructing a historical boat.

**Folklore group Kihnumua** introduces Kihnu wedding traditions and other elements of ICH for visitors as well as at international festivals.

**Kihnu Music Society** unites all musicians and children who learn to play an instrument. They introduce Kihnu music, songs and dances in Kihnu and beyond.

### **C.7. Participation of communities in preparing this report**

*Describe the measures taken to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals concerned during the process of preparation of this report for each concerned element.*

In order to ensure community participation the report form was translated into Estonian and sent to representatives of Kihnu community, to the Foundation Kihnu Cultural Space in the summer of 2012. The report was discussed at the meeting of the Council of the Foundation in October. The Council as well as the Board of the Foundation, members of Kihnu Institute, the director of Kihnu Museum and the rural municipality mayor contributed to the report. This report was finalised in the Estonian Folk Culture Centre based on the information sent by the Kihnu community.

### **C. STATUS OF ELEMENTS INSCRIBED ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST**

*Please complete all points below for each element of intangible cultural heritage present in the State's territory that has been inscribed on the Representative List. Refer to the nomination file as the basis for reporting on the **current** status of the element and report only on relevant changes since the date of inscription on the List or since the last report. Nomination files and earlier reports are available at [www.unesco.org/culture/ich](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich) or on request at the Secretariat.*

*The State Party shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals concerned during the process of preparation of each report, and is asked in point C.7 below to describe how it has done so.*

**Name of element:** Baltic Song and Dance Celebrations (multinational element shared by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania)

**Inscribed in:** 2008

### **C.1. Social and cultural functions**

*Explain the social and cultural functions and meanings of the element today, within and*

*for its community, the characteristics of the bearers and practitioners, and any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities towards the element, among others. Attention should be given to any relevant changes related to inscription criterion R.1 ('the element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention').*

The social and cultural function of the Song and Dance Celebration Process in Estonia has not undergone any significant changes from the time of its proclamation as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (2003) and consequent inscription to the Representative List (2008). It continues to be the most massive and inclusive cultural expression, a ritual that unites the whole country while celebrating cultural and creative diversity. It is a happy marriage of traditional and contemporary culture as well as amateur art and professional art, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. The repertoire features and enhances the music and dance tradition of Estonia, focusing on its expressions from the most ancient styles to recent arrangements and creative works of art that have been created specifically for these celebrations. The process reaches across all social and age groups in its inclusive character and therefore contributes to the social cohesion. Often several generations of one family participate in the Song and Dance Celebration events. The celebrations are cyclical culminations of a much wider process that consists of regular choir and dance practices of hundreds of individual groups (sustaining the grass-root level), performative events such as concerts, recurrent local community or district or regional reviews and festivals, choir and music groups' reunions and joint events of practice (sustaining the community level: local, national and multi-national).

This ICH element holds great traditional value and symbolic significance in building and reaffirming the communities that sustain it. Those communities include voluntary practitioners of song and dance who participate in amateur choirs, dance groups, brass bands as well as more professional performative groups. The tradition bearers cherish the creative forms of self-expression and various participatory activities that constitute a part of the process. The actual number of performers at a celebration is about 40 000, but the number of people participating in the process and preparing for the celebration is much bigger. Due to the stage capacities there are certain limits for the number of participants and only those who have mastered the repertoire well can join in, including all minority groups living in Estonia as well as groups from abroad. The Song and Dance Celebrations are widely recognized as the backbone of the intangible cultural heritage of Estonia, uniting various expressions and elements of the ICH. They are meaningful also for the people who do not actually perform at the celebrations, because there is no firm borderline between the performers and the huge audience. Everyone can enjoy the special atmosphere, can sing along and cheer for hours for the festive parade of performers who march through the city of Tallinn. This festive parade is a cultural representation of each region in Estonia, manifesting the diversity of rich heritage and traditional costumes. The regular celebrations (four celebrations during the period of every ten years) give people also impetus to make and wear traditional costumes, and to preserve particular handicraft skills.

This cultural heritage expression that was born in 1869 continues to be transmitted from generation to generation and is constantly recreated by communities and groups. No two celebrations are exactly alike, because there are always new people with fresh ideas. The strength of this tradition lies in its capability to change and to develop alongside with the modern trends, at the same time maintaining its core values, such as polyphonic singing a capella. This claim of cultural strength can be illustrated by the theme and title chosen for the next nationwide celebration that takes place in Tallinn from 4 to 6 July 2014. Behind the title "Touched by Time. The Touching Time" is a story of time manifesting itself in our ancestors' heritage and us shaping our time by our own touches.

## **C.2. Assessment of its viability and current risks**

*Describe the current level of viability of the element, particularly the frequency and extent of its practice, the strength of traditional modes of transmission, the demographics of practitioners and audiences and its sustainability. Please also identify and describe the threats, if any, to the element's continued transmission and enactment and describe the*

### *severity and immediacy of such threats.*

The frequency and extent of the Song and Dance Celebrations is well established and has not changed since the inscription. There are four nationwide celebrations in the period of every ten years. The cornerstones of the tradition are general nationwide celebrations in every 4th and 9th year of the decade where all age groups participate, the sustainability of the tradition is strengthened by celebrations for children and youth that are held at every 2nd and 7th year of the decade. It is a continuous process given that the preparations for the next celebration start as soon as the previous one has ended. The sustainability of the tradition is greatly enhanced by the continuous and systematic organizational work and the purposeful development of the process. As described in C.1 the celebrations are only a culmination of a much wider process that consists of regular artistic groups' rehearsals and concerts, district and regional reviews, local and regional Song and Dance Days. This process forms the real foundation of the Song and Dance Celebration pyramid and is essential for maintaining the viability of the tradition.

The current level of viability of the element is considered to be high for the following reasons:

#### **1. The number of active participants in the process has grown since the inscription although the population of Estonia has decreased.**

As of October 2012, there are 2814 groups directly involved in the Song and Dance Celebration process with 60 718 participants. Concerning the demographics of practitioners, there are 1911 children and youth groups with 42792 participants (70% of the total number of practitioners). There are 903 adult and senior groups with 17026 participants (30% of practitioners). Concerning the different segments of the tradition, there are 1275 choirs with 36742 singers (61% of the total number of practitioners). 1342 dance groups bring together 20108 practitioners (33% of the total number of practitioners). There are also 197 instrumental music groups with 3868 musicians (6% of the total number of practitioners).

To illustrate the growing trend the statistics shows that during the last ten years the number of dance groups who are interested in participating in the celebrations has grown by 25%.

#### **2. The audience and general public continue to show great interest to the tradition**

- The number of performers and organizers is about 40 000.
- The audience at the Song and Dance Celebrations is about 150 000 people (12% of the population of Estonia).
- Thanks to the rich broadcasting programme the majority of events are accessible for a wide TV audience of about 600 000 people (46% of the population of Estonia use this opportunity). This is especially important for people who have not been able to come to Tallinn and to enjoy the events in person.

#### **3. The broad-based educational process supports the transmission of the tradition**

The educational process constitutes a mode of transmission that includes formal and non-formal education and training that involves young schoolchildren as well as their grandmothers who participate in an artistic group. The participants all over Estonia can usually find such an artistic group near their home and their activities and performances enrich the local cultural life. Many universities, companies and other organizations support their own adult amateur artistic groups that consist of their staff members. Participation in the Song and Dance Celebration process provides the groups with new repertoire, relevant teaching materials and trainings on an ongoing basis and the possibility for the group leaders to learn from mentors. The mentor programme will be described in more detail under C.4. Estonian Music Academy provides higher education to the choir conductors; dance instructors are educated at Tallinn University and Viljandi Culture Academy. Choir singing and folk dance are part of a school curriculum and in most schools there are one or more active choirs and dance groups.

#### **4. The organizational and support system is well established**

The state guarantees the necessary financial support for the Song and Dance Celebration Foundation who is responsible for the organization of celebrations as well as for safeguarding and development of the whole process. The state also supports two umbrella NGOs who are the main cooperation partners of the foundation and take responsibility for the safeguarding and development of their own field. These are Estonian Choral Association that unites all choirs and wind orchestras in Estonia and Estonian Folk Dance and Folk Music Association that unites teachers and practitioners of folk dance and folk music.

The children and youth celebrations are financed by the Ministry of Education and Research, nationwide general celebrations are financed by the Ministry of Culture. Valuable support to the process is also provided by local and regional authorities who provide necessary premises for the artistic groups and offer other support mechanisms, both financial and in-kind. In the recent economic downturn this has not been easy for the local governments and also the tradition bearers have had more difficulties with finding the time and money to support their own participation in the process as well as that of their children.

The possible **threats** to the element's continued transmission and enactment can be grouped into three. The first set of threats is linked to the context of globalization. There is a multitude of alternative things to do that all compete for the limited financial and time resources that people have. The orientation to consumerism and economic success has also become more evident in times of economic downturn.

The second group of threats is linked to the fact that the Song and Dance Celebration Process is a long-term cultural process. Therefore any abrupt changes motivated by the current daily politics can be detrimental for the process as a whole. Although the Song and Dance Celebration process is based on the interest and motivation of its tradition bearers, the viability of such a nationwide process requires also purposeful and systematic long-term development and stable financial support. The lack of qualified choir conductors and dance leaders, especially in some rural areas, will inevitably result in a weakened tradition.

The third issue can be argued to be a threat as well as an evolution that shows cultural strength of the element. Namely there has been a recent tendency to organize alternative public events such as Punk Song Celebrations or Beer Song Celebrations that use the well known expression of "Song Celebration" as a sales argument to increase the number of participants and to enhance the image of the event. Some experts perceive it as a threat to the element's identity and see it as a distortion. Others are of the opinion that it shows the strength of the element and its value in society at large and there is no need to see it as an attempt to decontextualize the ICH element. These events are simply too different to be associated in any meaningful way.

Although the threats always need to be considered, the current situation does not give proof of any immediate threats to the element's continued transmission and enactment.

#### **C.3. Contribution to the goals of the List**

*Describe how the inscription of the element has contributed to ensuring visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and raising awareness at the local, national and international levels of its importance. Explain how its inscription has contributed to promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity, and mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals.*

The Baltic Song and Dance Celebrations were incorporated into the Representative List through the transfer from the former Proclamation of Masterpieces programme according to Article 31 of the Convention. Although that programme has been acknowledged as a stepping stone for the development of the 2003 Convention, these systems are not directly interconnected. However, this difference has not been understood by the general public or media in Estonia and we believe that our country is not an isolated case in this regard.

This introduction has been made with the purpose to explain why the inscription to the Representative List was not accompanied by extensive newspaper, TV and radio coverage in Estonia that in our understanding is usually the case in the world and which in turn helps to raise the visibility of ICH more broadly. This was not the case in Estonia for the simple reason that this had already happened in 2003.

Anyway, the acknowledgement by UNESCO has definitely brought positive results for the ICH element in question both at national and regional level. The communities concerned feel more pride in their heritage, new safeguarding measures have been put into place and the good co-operation established between Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia concerning the safeguarding of the multinational ICH element still continues in a meaningful and practical way. The language of music and song helps to celebrate one's own cultural heritage as well as to bring different communities together in mutual understanding to share the exaltation of cultural expression that reaches across boundaries, bringing peoples and communities closer together. Through the unique manifestation of expressive cultural identity, the Song and Dance Celebration phenomenon simultaneously enhances cultural diversity. It can be argued that the UNESCO values concerning the respect for cultural diversity and human creativity have influenced the process itself, because these principles have come into play while debating on the eternal question of how much a tradition can change to still remain a tradition.

On the issue of promoting mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals the acknowledgement by UNESCO has helped the three countries to learn more about the differences of these celebrations in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and to respect and appreciate the diversity in unity. There are good reasons why this tradition has took somewhat different paths in all three countries and we believe that these nuances will continue to enrich the element in question.

At the international level we believe our joint inscription to be useful for disseminating the message that multinational nominations should be encouraged. The intangible cultural heritage does not stop at borders and the multinational nominations reflect the very spirit of the Convention that promotes international cooperation.

#### **C.4. Efforts to promote or reinforce the element**

*Describe the measures that have been implemented to promote and reinforce the element, particularly detailing any measures that might have been necessary as a consequence of its inscription.*

Following the acknowledgement by UNESCO two important safeguarding measures have been put into place with the state support. These safeguarding measures have stemmed from the proposals put forward during the discussions on the action plan aimed to reinforce the element.

##### **1. Mentor programme for the artistic group leaders' involved in the Song and Dance Celebration process**

With the view to support the artistic group leaders and to guarantee the viability of the Song and Dance Celebration process through training of trainers a state-financed mentor programme was set up in 2005. This programme contributes to the in-service training of relevant teachers and instructors and raises their level of proficiency. In the framework of the mentor programme training seminars are held in all 15 counties of Estonia led by the top specialists or mentors in the field. Estonian Folk Dance and Folk Music Association coordinates the part of the programme that concerns folk dance and folk music mentors and the Estonian Choral Association coordinates the other part of the programme that concerns choir and orchestra mentors. As of 2012 there are 21 folk dance mentors, 11 folk music mentors and 17 choir and orchestra mentors.

To give an example, the necessary requirements for becoming a choir mentor are the following:

- relevant higher education

- 5 year work experience as a choir conductor
- experience of conducting performances of joint choirs at Song Celebration, Children and Youth Song Celebration or regional Song Days
- experience of participating in the jury of choir competitions or leading a project choir
- experience as a trainer

The mentor works with at least one artistic group, develops his/her practical and theoretical skills, organizes model lessons and helps to raise awareness of the relevant artistic field. Mentor provides inspiration, courage and new knowledge for the conductors and dance group instructors. Mentor works in co-operation with the relevant umbrella NGOs and regional folk culture specialists, helps the trainers to acquire the repertoire of Song and Dance Celebrations and provides necessary consultations.

## 2. State financed support-programme for the choirs, folk music groups, orchestras and dance groups involved in the Song and Dance Celebration process

The aim of the programme is to support the artistic groups involved in the Song and Dance Celebration process through providing support to the qualified group leaders and offering stable organizational support for the groups. The programme is administered by the Song and Dance Celebration Foundation through the Estonian Folk Dance and Folk Music Association as well as the Estonian Choral Association. The new programme also enhances the capacity of these two umbrella NGOs as they collect and administer relevant information, influence the development of the relevant artistic field and act as a strong and trustworthy partner for their member institutions and custodian communities.

The programme is divided into two sub-programmes:

- **Direct support programme** for the artistic groups is awarded for one year period and may be renewed. The aim is to cover part of the overall budget of the groups and to support the different initiatives that are attractive, visible, of high quality and help to develop the relevant artistic field.
- **Development programme** provides scholarships for the group leaders for developing their teaching performance and proficiency in mastering the repertoire of the celebrations. Also the artistic groups can apply for the development scholarship for the period between the celebrations if they have bright ideas and clear vision of how to develop their own skills as well as the artistic field in question.

### Other processes that may support the element

During the current process of developing the **cultural policy of Estonia until 2020** there was a separate working group on the Song and Dance Celebrations. The group made several proposals on safeguarding and development of the celebration process.

In 2013 a **sociological survey** will be conducted on the impact of Song and Dance Celebration in Estonia in cooperation of the University of Tartu, Tallinn University, Song and Dance Celebration Foundation, Estonian Choral Association and Estonian Folk Dance and Folk Music Association. The results of the study will be presented at the conference on 24-26 October 2013 in Tallinn with the participation of the Latvian and Lithuanian delegations.

The **regional cooperation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania** to reinforce the element has been detailed under B.5.

The practical work of organizing the celebrations has been greatly enhanced by an **electronic database** [www.register.laulupidu.ee](http://www.register.laulupidu.ee) that was launched in 2010. This database includes the information on all artistic groups participating in the process of Song and Dance Celebrations and is a valuable tool for information exchange, registering the groups who wish to take part in the celebrations and for data analysis. The webpage of the Song and Dance Celebration [www.laulupidu.ee](http://www.laulupidu.ee) has also been renewed to fulfil the function of the main communication channel for the participants of the process, guests as well as for the media.

### C.5. Community participation

*Describe the participation of communities, groups and individuals in safeguarding the element and their commitment to its further safeguarding.*

The Song and Dance Celebration process manifests the ICH of a large community of choirs, dance groups and brass bands all over Estonia. The more detailed description of this custodian community has been given under C.2. These artistic groups assume the ownership of their intangible cultural heritage and are involved in sharing and transmission of their skills and knowledge. The rehearsals, trainings, work on the repertoire, networking with other groups, gathering ideas for specific safeguarding needs, organization of and participation in various events can all be considered effective safeguarding measures. It is through these activities that the Song and Dance Celebration process continues to be a meaningful part of the daily lives of its tradition bearers. Some of the activities are more traditional, for example local and regional Song and Dance days; others are more innovative, such as the RelayDance event in 2011. More than 6000 Estonian folk dance enthusiasts participated in a relay dance about 1000 km with different groups dancing non-stop for eight days and nights, covering all 15 counties of Estonia.

The commitment of the tradition bearers to continue practicing and safeguarding this ICH element is evident through the growing numbers of participants in the course of the last ten years. The number of groups wishing to participate in the celebration process has grown although the total population of Estonia has decreased. This trend is especially visible in the segment of children and youth groups.

### C.6. Institutional context

Report on the institutional context for the element inscribed on the Representative List, including:

- c. the competent body(ies) involved in its management and/or safeguarding;*
- d. the organization(s) of the community or group concerned with the element and its safeguarding.*

(a) At state level **the Ministry of Culture** is responsible for the organisation and financing nationwide Song and Dance Celebrations where all age groups are involved. **The Ministry of Education and Research** is responsible for the organisation and financing Children and Youth Song and Dance Celebrations. **The Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Foundation** is the implementing agency that develops and safeguards the whole process and is also responsible for all organizational aspects of celebrations. **The Estonian Folk Culture Centre** with its regional network of folk culture specialists is instrumental in facilitating the Song and Dance Celebration process at regional level in co-operation with county governments (15) and local governments (226).

(b) The tradition bearers have set up several **representative bodies** at local, regional and national level that are concerned with the safeguarding of the element. In the context of the Song and Dance Celebration process the two non-profit umbrella organisations that stand out as the main coordinators and developers of their particular fields are **Estonian Choral Association** and the **Estonian Folk Dance and Folk Music Association**. These associations in turn consist of bigger and smaller units – different kinds of national associations, societies, unions of the same field, also county and regional associations. Therefore both of them are truly representative of the tradition bearers.

### C.7. Participation of communities in preparing this report

*Describe the measures taken to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals concerned during the process of preparation of this report for each concerned element.*

In order to ensure community participation the periodic report form was translated into Estonian with some extra explanatory notes added. The translated form was sent to Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Foundation in summer 2012 with the request to contact the representative bodies of the tradition bearers and to seek their opinion on the status of the element. The Estonian Choral Association and the Estonian Folk Dance and Folk Music Association conducted seminars with their members on 1 October and 16 October respectively to discuss the content of the report. On 1 November the representatives of these Associations, the Ministry of Culture, the Song and Dance Celebration Foundation and the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO met to discuss the received comments and contributions and to agree on the content of the report. The Song and Dance Celebration Foundation compiled the Estonian version of the text that was introduced in November to the boards of all involved parties, at two relevant conferences and to the Council of Estonian Regional Culture Policy. The Estonian version was translated and synthesized by the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO and the final English version was approved by the Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Foundation.

**D. SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF THE STATE**

*The report should conclude with the original signature of the official empowered to sign it on behalf of the State, together with his or her name, title and the date of submission.*

**Name:** Rein Lang

**Title:** Minister of Culture

**Date :** 13 December 2012

**Signature :**