



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Intangible  
Cultural  
Heritage

# Urgent Safeguarding List

Original: English

## CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Fifth session  
Kenya  
November 2010

#### REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION OF NOMINATION FILES NO. 00320 FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN NEED OF URGENT SAFEGUARDING IN 2010

Name of the examiner: <b>Association of the European Folklore Institute</b>
Name of the expert (if different): <b>Mihály Hoppál D. Sc. (ethnologist) and János Sipos (ethnomusicologist)</b>
Date of the examination: <b>(revised on) 3 August 2010</b>
<b>Nomination file No. 00320</b> <b>State Party: Croatia</b> <b>Name of element: Ojkanje singing</b>
<p><i>Note: Information in italics in boxes is provided for the examiner's reference; it includes excerpts from the Operational Directives or from the explanations given to submitting States Parties in the nomination form. The examiner shall rely upon the information provided within the nomination file, including any photos, video or additional information that is made available as part of the nomination. The examiner shall bring to bear his/her personal and professional knowledge in assessing the credibility and completeness of the information provided within the nomination, but his/her report shall primarily address whether or not the submitting State, within the nomination, has adequately demonstrated that the criteria for inscription are satisfied. The examiner shall neither be a national of the State(s) Party(ies) submitting the nomination nor have any conflict of interest that could influence unduly the results of the examination.</i></p>

### **Excerpts from the Operational Directives**

#### **Examination of nominations:**

5. *With a view to their evaluation by the Committee, nominations shall be examined by preferably more than one advisory organization accredited in conformity with Article 9.1 of the Convention. In conformity with Article 8.4, the Committee may invite public or private bodies and/or private persons with recognized competence in the field of intangible cultural heritage, in order to consult them on specific matters. No nomination will be examined by (a) national(s) of the State(s) Party(ies) submitting the nomination.*
6. *Examinations shall include assessment of the nomination's conformity with the inscription criteria.*
7. *Each examination shall include assessment of the viability of the element and of the feasibility and sufficiency of the safeguarding plan. It shall also include assessment of the risk of its disappearing, due, inter alia, to the lack of means for safeguarding and protecting it, or to processes of globalization and social or environmental transformation.*
8. *The reports of these examinations shall include a recommendation to the Committee to inscribe, or not to inscribe, the nominated element.*

#### **Brief textual description of the nominated element**

The examiner should provide a brief description of the nominated element, suitable for publication. This may draw upon item D of the Cover Sheet, but should also draw upon the nomination as a whole to provide a summary overview of the essential features of the element. The description should be prepared based on the information provided within the nomination file.

(175 to 225 words)

Ojkanje singing is a solo singing known to folklorists from the 19th century from the descriptions of the life of Dubrovnik region. The living practice of this type of singing has almost completely disappeared by now. However, in the past Ojkanje singing belonged to the very inner part of local folklore as a means of communication, and was transmitted from generation to generation. Those members of the community who were able to perform were highly respected in their villages. The best performers usually elaborated a specific individual style of their own that is characterised by a special voice shaking technique.

The element is a cultural practice which is clearly demonstrated in the nomination.

Communities really recognise Ojkanje singing as part of their cultural heritage, and provides a sense of identity for them.

The most significant features of the element are still existing at present and they have their cultural functions still. The bearers of the tradition have special role in their respective communities and their social activities, including the cultivation of this special singing style that can build mutual respect within and among communities.

#### **Criterion U.1 The element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention.**

#### **Excerpts from the nomination form**

##### **Description of the element** (Not to exceed 1,000 words)

*A clear and complete description is essential to demonstrate to the Committee that the nominated element meets the Convention's definition of intangible heritage. The*

*description should provide the Committee with sufficient information to determine:*

- *that the element is among the ‘practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith’;*
- *that ‘communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize [it] as part of their cultural heritage’;*
- *that it is being ‘transmitted from generation to generation, [and] is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history’;*
- *that it provides communities and groups involved ‘with a sense of identity and continuity’; and*
- *that it is not incompatible ‘with existing international human rights instruments as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development’.*

*The description should refer to all the significant features of the element as it exists at present, and should include discussion of its social and cultural functions at present, the characteristics of the bearers and practitioners, any special roles or categories of persons with specific responsibilities towards the element, among others. Nomination files need not address in detail the history of the element, or its origin or antiquity.*

**Nomination demonstrates that the element satisfies Criterion U.1:**

**Yes**

**No**

**Examiner’s comments regarding the element’s conformity with the definition of intangible cultural heritage in the Convention**

The examiner should address whether the submitting State has adequately demonstrated that the element satisfies the Convention’s definition of intangible cultural heritage.

*(250 to 500 words)*

Republic of Croatia has prepared a very well elaborated Nomination File, which satisfies the definition of ICH.

The population of the long Dalmatian coastline area are and will be emotionally involved in the project. The textual descriptions of the nominated element is satisfactory and understandable. Ojkanje is a style of singing with high tone and shaking the voice for quite a long time.

The social functions of Ojkanje singing have nowadays been completely transformed. Its main function these days is the presentation and performance instead of communication. The singers today perform their repertoires mostly in formal and semi-formal situations. This musical style remains an important factor in shaping recognisable cultural symbols of the local community, although the lack of a communication function has halted its transfer to new generations.

The influence of ‘Western’ or capitalist culture seems to prevent this musical tradition from living its full existence. Changes are obvious in the selection of musical styles. The concept of a structured musical piece adopted from the West has resulted in the disappearance of open-ended and improvisational genres, the weakening of the concept of organised group singing and the disappearance of the genres of solo singing. The basic way in which this musical genre is presented and explained is in the performance itself, i.e., what the singers have learned through listening to and by imitating their parents or relatives, and only partially in the description of the performance itself.

This special kind of performance is under threat – that is why Croatia submitted the Nomination File to be considered.

Recently this direct communication between generations are in danger, and it is a necessity to find some members from the younger generations to learn this style of singing. Fortunately there are still elderly member of some communities, villages, where Ojkanje singing is in use. However, this type of singing is quite unique and it is not easy to learn, therefore the younger generation will tend to forget it.

**Criterion U.2 The element is in urgent need of safeguarding because its viability is at risk despite the efforts of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals and State(s) Party(ies) concerned.**

***Excerpts from the nomination form***

***Viability assessment (Not to exceed 500 words)***

*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.*

***Threat and risk assessment (Not to exceed 500 words)***

*This section should identify and describe the threats to the element's continued transmission and enactment and describe the severity and immediacy of those threats.*

**Nomination demonstrates that the element satisfies Criterion U.2:**

**Yes**

**No**

**Examiner's comments regarding whether the nomination demonstrates that the element is in urgent need of safeguarding**

The examiner should address whether the submitting State has adequately demonstrated that the element's viability is at risk, that the community, group or, if applicable, individuals and State(s) Party(ies) concerned have made efforts to ensure its viability, and that it is consequently in urgent need of safeguarding.

*(250 to 500 words)*

So, this centuries-old tradition is worth to be safeguarded! Especially on those territories where the Ojkanje tradition has been kept up almost till now!

Urgent action is needed because this voice-shaking technique needs talented individuals who are dedicated to keep this tradition alive!

There is an eminent risk and constant pressure on the local groups that the whole tradition of okanje singing will be the subject of 'festivalization', which simply may destroy it. It is a great danger since the process of festivalization has already started in the 1930ies. Nowadays it is even more threatening because the mass media becomes even more powerful than anything in the past. Some widely televised singer can become the subject of imitations or misuses.

Urgent safeguarding is needed in these cases not only in Croatia but in other European countries as well. The local (or family) variants from which the richness of the traditional item can easily rejuvenate later. On local level (in family circles) imitation is the main tool for survival.

### **Examiner's assessment of the viability of the element**

The examiner should address whether the submitting State's assessment of the element's viability is accurate, realistic and complete.

*(150 to 300 words)*

As it was clearly stated in the Nomination File concerning the viability of the element: one of the main reason for proposing the urgent protection of this musical phenomenon is the current break in the continuity of transmitting this knowledge to new generations. In the past, Ojkanje was learned only through oral tradition. The younger generations, by listening and imitating their elders, adopted, performed and improved the tradition and then transmitted it to new generations. Today's tradition carriers are mostly older people who are the last to know the specific styles of singing. The globalised and standardised way of life in rural regions prevents the younger generations from learning this type of singing actively, as an integral part of their lives. The media (audio and video) and organised transmission within the activities of local folklore groups are becoming the methods today through which the contemporary generations have the chance of acquiring knowledge of this style of singing. Safeguarding it would involve the long-term education of the leaders, while organisers of folklore groups would contribute to the survival of this musical phenomenon.

The submitting State, Croatia adequately demonstrated the visibility of the element, this view is realistic and accurate.

According to the Examiner's opinion there is a great risk of the disappearance of the element and the Nomination File provided a detailed accurate and complete picture of the situation. So, I strongly recommend Ojkanje to put it on the urgent list.

The viability of the proposed cultural element for urgent safeguarding is clearly, accurately and realistically presented by Croatia. According to the present situation in the submitting State the okanje singing is still in practice and there are people in certain communities who are exceptional singers but this tradition must be kept alive, and the only way of this is if some young people continues it. The future of this musical system, which has limited number of tones, may survive only by the help of young practitioners, who may dedicate themselves to perform this traditional singing and moreover to develop new variants, local singing dialects. Earlier the best singer had had the feeling that singing in their own ways means their identity, which is not the case anymore.

### **Examiner's assessment of the risk of the element's disappearing, due, inter alia, to the lack of means for safeguarding and protecting it, or to processes of globalization and social or environmental transformation**

The examiner should address whether the submitting State's assessment of the risk of the element's disappearing is accurate, realistic and complete.

*(150 to 300 words)*

The submitting State gave a realistic and accurate picture of the risk of disappearance of the okanje singing.

The risk is even greater than one may think, since okanje singing had been in use earlier mostly in family events which were completely informal, however, nowadays these occasions are quite rare. Since recently on these family gatherings there is no spontaneous singing, there is a great risk that okanje singing will disappear. The members of the younger generation do not want to follow the old style of singing, so therefore it is willingness to support the survival of okanje. So the examiner consider okanje singing as an 'endangered phenomenon', therefore it is an urgent need to organise more performances, even in the form of cultural clubs where okanje will be performed.

**Criterion U.3 Safeguarding measures are elaborated that may enable the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned to continue the practice and transmission of the element.**

**Excerpts from the nomination form**

**Safeguarding measures**

*Items 4.a. to 4.c. request the elaboration of a coherent set of safeguarding measures as called for in Criterion U.3. The safeguarding measures, if effectively implemented, should be expected to contribute substantially to the safeguarding of the element within a time-frame of approximately four years. They should include measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the element by enabling the community to continue its practice and transmission.*

**4.a. Current and recent efforts to safeguard the element (not to exceed 500 words)**

*Describe the current and recent efforts of the concerned community, group or, if applicable individuals to ensure the viability of the element. Describe efforts of the concerned State(s) Party(ies) to safeguard the element, taking note of external or internal constraints such as limited resources.*

**4.b. Safeguarding measures proposed (not to exceed 2,000 words)**

*This section should identify and describe a coherent set of safeguarding measures that, within a time-frame of approximately four years, could substantially enhance the viability of the element, if implemented, and provide detailed information as follows:*

- a) What primary objective(s) will be addressed and what concrete results will be expected?*
- b) What are the key activities to be carried out in order to achieve these expected results? Please describe the activities in detail and in their best sequence, addressing their feasibility.*
- c) Management and implementation: describe the mechanisms for the full participation of communities, groups or, if appropriate, individuals in the proposed safeguarding measures. Describe the implementing organization or body (name, background, etc.) and the human resources available for implementing the project.*
- d) Timetable and budget: provide a timetable for the proposed activities and estimate the funds required for their implementation, identifying any available resources (governmental sources, in-kind community inputs, etc.).*

**4.c. Commitments of States and of communities, groups or individuals concerned (not to exceed 500 words)**

*The feasibility of safeguarding depends in large part on the aspirations and commitment of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and the support and cooperation of the State Party concerned. This section should demonstrate that the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned have the will and commitment to safeguard the element if conditions are favourable and that the State Party concerned has the commitment to support the safeguarding effort by creating favourable conditions for its implementation.*

**Nomination demonstrates that the element satisfies Criterion U.3:**

**Yes**

**No**

### Examiner's assessment of the feasibility and sufficiency of the safeguarding plan

The examiner should address whether the submitting State has elaborated a coherent set of safeguarding measures that can reasonably be expected to strengthen the viability of the element within the coming four years, and assess whether they reflect the priorities and aspirations of the communities concerned, whether the measures are feasible, and whether the communities and States are adequately committed to their implementation.

(250 to 500 words)

The submitting State has presented an elaborate plan for safeguarding the element. Croatia is one of the countries in Europe which is established a balanced practice towards traditions, especially local traditions. Festival are well planned and organised, and well attended, so the visibility and feasibility of safeguarding are satisfactory. More and more festivals promote this type of singing by different folkore groups coming from different villages. These groups of performers represent and demonstrate the differences in their traditional styles, and exactly these differences which must be safeguarded. Therefore it is an eminent task to make high quality recordings of the performances in order to ensure safeguarding.

The examiner has the opinion that the proposed safeguarding measures form a coherent set of actions, and they are appropriate for a four year period.

The feasibility of safeguarding measures depend largely on the commitment of the local communities. The government (and local authorities) must provide and allocate the necessary financial resources in order to help the local communities in their efforts to safeguard their traditions.

**Criterion U.4 The element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent.**

#### **Excerpts from the nomination form**

**a. Participation of communities, groups and individuals**

*Describe how the community, group and, if applicable, individuals concerned have participated in the nomination process at all stages, as required by Criterion R.4. States Parties are further encouraged to prepare nominations with the participation of a wide variety of other concerned parties, including where appropriate local and regional governments, neighbouring communities, NGOs, research institutes, centres of expertise and other interested parties.*

**b. Free, prior and informed consent**

*The free, prior and informed consent of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned may be demonstrated through written or recorded concurrence, or through other means, according to the legal regimens of the State Party and the infinite variety of communities and groups concerned. The Committee will welcome a broad range of demonstrations or attestations of community consent rather than specifying any single standard.*

**c. Respect for customary practices governing access**

*Demonstrate that inscription and implementation of the safeguarding measures fully respects customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage, if such practices exist (cf. Article 13). Describe any specific measures that might need to be taken to ensure such respect.*

**Nomination demonstrates that the element satisfies Criterion U.4:**

Yes

No

**Examiner's assessment of the participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned**

The examiner should assess whether the community, group or individuals concerned have participated fully in the nomination process at all stages and whether the nomination reflects their participation.

*(150 to 300 words)*

The submitting State party is fully responsible how and which communities (or individuals) will be included in the process of safeguarding. There is a list of possible local folkore-artistic groups to be involved whose activities will provide active participation in the safeguarding of the element. All those cultural clubs, and local communities will support it and are willing to execute all the plans which are interconnected to safeguarding measures.

Since I was not able to visit the local communities it is impossible to describe how the communities have participated in the nomination process. However, it is impossible to make any application without their written consent.

**Examiner's comments on their free, prior and informed consent**

The examiner should assess whether the submitting State has provided satisfactory evidence of the free, prior and informed consent of the community, group or individuals concerned.

*(150 to 300 words)*

All the letters were shown and translated for me in which the communities expressed their willingness to take part in the process of safeguarding of Ojkanje singing.

**Examiner's comments on respect for customary practices governing access to the element, if applicable**

The examiner should comment on whether the submitting State has adequately addressed the question of any customary practices that might govern access to the element.

*(not to exceed 300 words)*

Croatia is one of the countries where the State will provide a broad access to the safeguarded ICH elements in an exemplary manner.

As a foreign examiner, I am deeply sure that the members of the local communities want to participate in the whole process because they seem to really enjoy the performance of Ojkanje singing. Of course, I would like to visit those communities engaged in the safeguarding/maintaining process.

<p><b>Criterion U.5</b> The element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies) as defined in Articles 11 and 12.</p>	
<p><b>Excerpts from the nomination form</b></p>	
<p><i>The submitting State should identify the inventory in which the element has been included and the office, agency, organization or body responsible for maintaining that inventory. The description also should demonstrate that the inventory has been drawn up in conformity with Articles 11 and 12, in particular Article 11(b) that stipulates that intangible cultural heritage shall be identified and defined 'with the participation of communities, groups, and relevant non-governmental organizations' and Article 12 requiring that inventories be regularly updated.</i></p> <p><i>The nominated element's inclusion in an inventory should not in any way imply or require that the inventory(ies) should have been completed prior to nomination. Rather, a submitting State Party may be in the process of completing or updating one or more inventories, but has already duly included the nominated element on an inventory-in-progress.</i></p>	
<p><b>Nomination demonstrates that the element satisfies Criterion U.5:</b></p>	
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Examiner's comments on the nomination's conformity with Criterion U.5</b></p> <p>The examiner should comment on whether the submitting State has adequately demonstrated that the element is included within an inventory, and has shown that the inventory was drawn up in conformity with the Convention, especially Article 11(b) requiring the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(100 to 200 words)</i></p>	
<p>There is special law in Croatia which aims to protect and preserve cultural properties, including intangible cultural heritage items. There is a list which include Ojkanje singing (Z-4234) as an important element of the Croatian national intangible cultural heritage list. This above register can be found in the Ministry of Culture.</p> <p>The revised nomination form clearly and adequately demonstrates that the Croatian nomination is in absolute conformity with Criterion U. 5.</p> <p>Ojkanje singing is included in their inventory that was drawn up with conformity with the Convention.</p>	
<p><b>OVERALL RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p>The examination report shall include 'a recommendation to the Committee to inscribe, or not to inscribe, the nominated element'.</p>	
<p>Recommend to inscribe: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Recommend not to inscribe: <input type="checkbox"/></p>

**Examiner's comments on the overall recommendation**

To be inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, an element must satisfy all of the criteria. If the examiner concludes that any criterion is not satisfied, the overall recommendation cannot be to inscribe the element. The examiner may wish to offer further explanation of any such negative conclusions, or may wish to suggest to the Committee certain conditions it might consider attaching to a favourable decision to inscribe the element.

*(150 to 300 words)*

Since the nominated element has satisfied all the criteria this report may conclude with a recommendation to the Committee to inscribe Ojkanje singing on the Urgent Safeguarding List.

It is a well known fact that wars swept through this relatively small area in the past, leaving it depopulated and destroyed, but the local people have managed to revive the area, continuing the traditions of their forefathers. Belonging to various religions that were once present, and some of which are still present, in these regions (polytheism, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Islam) has not prevented the transmission of Ojkanje singing, because the music is not determined by ethnicity or religious identity, but is a unique characteristic.

This is the main reason for the urgent protection of this particular musical phenomenon. The local people want to preserve and revive the old repertoire and performing styles typical of their close community and encourage high-quality performers to perform more frequently in public with a view to motivating potential singers to learn this type of singing. This might be a way to raise interest, not only in the local community, but also in others who would be willing to accept the challenge of singing in ways that are nowadays considered to be extraordinary. In this way Ojkanje singing would be a perfect mean for interethnic understanding and peaceful cooperation.