

# **DOCUMENTS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ICH INVENTORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN CONFORMITY WITH UNESCO PROVISIONS**

## **Preamble**

In order to fulfill the provisions of the Law for Ratification of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 126, promulgated by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on February 10, 2006, No. 12-XVI; Order of the Ministry of Culture No. 238 of 09.12.2009 on Establishment of the National Commission for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; with a view to ensuring necessary safeguarding instruments recommended by UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Paris, 2003) for the protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

### **I. Concept of Development of the ICH Inventory of the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter referred to as the ICH Inventory)**

**1. What is the ICH Inventory?** The ICH Inventory is an obligatory list for the registration of elements by the state that constitute the Intangible Cultural Heritage on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, for the purpose of its safeguarding. The Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter referred to as the ICH) covers the whole of traditional, oral, authentic creations transmitted from generation to generation, expressed in literary, musical, choreographic or theatrical forms, as well as the ensemble of practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts, specific clothing, accessories and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.

The ICH has as its basic unit elements of the heritage which are circumscribed by wide fields of traditional expressions. ICH elements are specific units perceived as cultural actions by heritage holding community and researchers, having all morphological components which provide them with functionality, identity, but also difference from such-like, specific of traditional culture. There are no strict boundaries between elements, they can be anytime integrated into a more representative group or can be divided into areas or local traditions. For instance, caroling in groups, as well as fellows' or children's caroling, or caroling in parts of the South; Hora, as well as Hora of the South, or Hora of Slobozia Mare; *Ciur* (sieve) dance, as well as *Ciur* in parts of the South of the country, or Itele of Riscani; hang, as well as hang of Coteala; decoration of Basarabian carpets, as well as decoration of Basarabian woven wool carpets, or woven wool carpets of the South-East of the Republic; patronal festival of the village, as well as patronal

festival of a certain village; Pentecost, as well as „Iarba verde” (green grass) in Sofia, Drochia District; Plugusor (little plough) custom or Martisor tradition etc.

ICH National Inventory consists in identification, documentation, definition and accumulation of its component elements which will stimulate research, preservation, transmission, promotion, enhancement of traditional expressions.

In order to obtain the status of elements protected by the State, the ICH Inventory must be published. In the event of its publication, this piece of work is conceived to be published in two volumes. The first volume will register elements of the ICH of Moldavians/Romanians of the Republic of Moldova, and the second one will include elements of other ethnic groups. Currently, electronic version of the first volume is being developed, following its publication. At the same time, the elaboration of the second volume has started.

The Inventory will be constantly completed, updated and extended thus, stirring up the interest and responsibility of heritage holding communities, organizations and institutions responsible for its safeguarding. The translation of the Inventory into international languages, into English first, its placement on the Website of the Intangible Cultural Heritage will contribute to the recognition of its values at local and national levels as well as for the international cooperation.

By the example of the ICH Inventory, it is also recommended to create regional ICH inventories held under custody of Regional Culture Sections or Directions and ICH inventories for each locality held under custody of local public authorities.

Essential documents regarding conception, structure and methodology of the ICH Inventory are developed by the ICH Commission for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter referred to as the ICH Commission). They will be put into practice after being approved by the Ministry of Culture.

## **2. What is the ICH Inventory based on?**

The ICH Inventory of the Republic of Moldova constitutes a mode of adaptation of national cultural policies to UNESCO strategies and standards in the field of ICH safeguarding. This ICH Inventory was drawn up in conformity with: the article 12, item 1 of UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Paris, October 17, 2003), ratified by the Republic of Moldova by the Law No. 12-XVI of 10.02.2006; provisions of the Draft Law on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Moldova being in the process of promotion in the Parliament; Order of the Ministry of Culture No. 238 of 09.12.2009. The ICH Inventory constitutes a mechanism of implementation of legal norms aimed at ICH safeguarding promoted by the Law on Culture No. 413-XIV of 27.05.1999, Law on Museums No. 1596 – XV of 27.12.2002, Law on folk art craftsmanship No. 135-XV of 20.03.2003.

**3. Which elements are inscribed?** In terms of the value and long-term resistance (durability) of cultural actions, the ICH Inventory covers:

a) representative elements of the intangible cultural heritage that eloquently express identical values of communities are recognized by them and by researchers of the field as an integrant part of the traditional culture;

b) elements of the intangible cultural heritage being in risk of disappearance, at the same time very valuable within identical strategies of communities, but which are in danger of irreversible loss.

In terms of factual contents and diversity, the intangible cultural heritage is constituted of traditional expressions and elements related to the following fields:

- a) traditions and expressions of the art of writing having language and word meaning as a main vehicle of cultural expression;
- b) traditions and expressions common to the art of writing and art or musical practice;
- c) traditions and expressions of the art or musical practice;
- d) traditions and expressions of the art or choreographic practice;
- e) social practices of representation, customs, rituals;
- f) knowledge, practices and symbols of man, nature and space;
- g) knowledge of nutrition;
- h) Christian and pre-Christian religions and practices, behavioral and legal norms;
- i) procedures and knowledge related to folk art and traditional craftsmanship;
- j) traditional musical instruments (traditional organology);
- k) spaces for the carrying-out and manifestation of elements of the intangible cultural heritage;
- l) institutions specific of traditional communities;
- m) any financial support on which they were printed and transmitted during the history of the intangible cultural heritage.

**4. How are heritage dossiers taken as a basis for element inscription on the ICH Inventory prepared?** There are two stages of preparing elements for the inscription. At the first stage, for each ICH element a heritage dossier shall be developed. Heritage dossier shall be drawn up according to the methodology developed by the ICH Commission and approved by the Ministry of Culture having a common structure which results from UNESCO documents (UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH, Paris, 2003; The form for the ICH element inscription on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding)The observance of this structure shall ensure the registration of the whole heritage according to standard requirements, shall give opportunities of comparing elements and shall facilitate the development of heritage dossiers for elements selected to be candidates for the inscription on corresponding UNESCO lists. Thematic structure of each dossier or each presentation of the ICH element shall include the following criteria:

1. Element identification.
2. Element characterization.
3. Description (presentation) of community, groups, individuals or institutions that provide (being holders of) the element.
4. Description of the current situation on the viability of the element.
5. Date (day, month, year), specialist (name, position, institution of which

he/she is a part, academic and/or didactic degree, depending on the situation).

6. References to literature, discography, audiovisual materials, manuscripts held in community, archive materials, different images.

The volume of information included in this dossier is not limited. It shall include all important data for complex description of the element. Descriptions shall be completed with various documentations, that exist or that can be drawn up being considered as basic sources. For example, in case of the Christmas carol, the description of the custom shall be made, different texts of carols, including variants, registered on different carriers (paper, audio and video records) shall be presented; in order to inventory knowledge and procedures applied within different crafts, descriptions shall be accompanied by images representing raw materials, tools, successive stages of processes of object manufacturing, finished objects, objects within customs, thus covering phenomenon wealth. Old original or scanned photos, prints and other art works shall complete the basic documentation.

These heritage dossiers constitute a database for the ICH Inventory development. Their completion is coordinated by the ICH Commission, on the basis of approved Methodology. These heritage dossiers are developed by specialists of research institutions within the Academy of Science authorized in the field (Institute for Cultural Heritage and Folklore Section of the Institute of Linguistics), specialized research and development institutions within the Ministry of Culture (National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, National Centre of Folk Art), regional and village museums, Cultural Regional Sections and Directions, individuals from communities, having corresponding training, non-governmental organizations authorized in the field, students of specialized departments under the auspices of didactic personnel or institution researchers. Dossiers shall be stored in archives or, in case of their lack, in museums, thus ensuring both their safety and access of individuals interested in learning archived documents. A copy of the dossier (developed beforehand or at the moment of the request) shall be transmitted to the National Archive of the ICH by the director of the institution on the basis of evidential documents.

This practice of element inventoring and heritage dossier development shall encourage more individuals to participate in the ICH safeguarding, at the same time encouraging the process of element registration in the ICH Inventory and UNESCO ICH Lists.

**5. Who is responsible for element inscription on the ICH Inventory?** The ICH Commission draws up component lists of the ICH Inventory with standard presentations according to the presented conception. After the ICH Commission finishes with descriptions the list of elements, the Minister of Culture approves these lists by means of obligatory orders to confer them legitimacy necessary for the conceptualization stage. Subsequently, the Ministry of Culture approves each volume of the ICH Inventory.

Thus, the ICH Commission is a basic structure that coordinates the development of intangible heritage dossiers, is responsible for element inscription on the ICH Inventory and inscription of certain elements on those two UNESCO ICH Lists. The ICH Commission is subordinated to the Ministry of Culture, is authorized to coordinate activities of the protection and promotion of the ICH, carried out on the basis of cultural policies of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova and UNESCO provisions in the field. The ICH Commission cooperates both with institutions authorized in the field to document/inventory, record, research, accumulate and enhance the ICH by inscribing its elements on the ICH Inventory and with representatives of heritage holding communities, local public authorities, non-governmental organizations in order to ensure preservation and timely transmission of elements to other generations.

#### **6. What is the procedure of element inscription on the ICH Inventory?**

On the basis of dossiers submitted to the ICH Commission by those who developed them, by heritage holding communities, local public administration, other organizations authorized in the field or exercising the right of initiative, it shall facilitate the process of the registration of the given element in the ICH Inventory. At the end of each year, the ICH Commission, Regional Culture Sections and Regional Culture Directions, institutions authorized to participate in the completion of the ICH Inventory shall inform superior hierarchical bodies about registered elements both by means of the development of heritage dossiers as well as their inscription on the ICH Inventory.

An important aspect of the element description is the condition and the place of preservation in the social practice. Maximum attention shall be given to the enhancement of the current situation of the element. Elements included in the Register shall be obligatorily marked as „representative element”, „living element” or „element in danger of disappearance” in order to monitor the current situation and within a longer period of time of elements. But they shall not be grouped according to these principles since in the cultural practice, representative elements can change their status for elements in danger of disappearance or vice versa and it will be necessary after a while to classify them changing one for another. Regardless these principle qualifiers, elements shall be inscribed on that structure of traditional culture within which they were developed and are functioning in order to more easily observe relations from within the structure. This example is closer to cultural realities being also accessible to other participants in the process of safeguarding ICH.

**7. How will be ensured the international visibility the ICH?** Out of elements inscribed in the ICH Commission, the ICH Commission suggests the representative elements and elements in danger of disappearance to the Ministry of Culture with a view to submitting them for their inscription on UNESCO ICH Lists.

ICH Commission develops, in conformity with the provisions of the legislation in force, together with institutions authorized in the field and with representatives of heritage holding communities, nomination dossiers for their

inscription on the Lists provided by the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Communities and groups that hold the ICH elements, that are to be inscribed on the UNESCO Lists of ICH shall give written consent regarding this decision and shall cooperate with the members of the ICH Commission both at the stage of element inscription on UNESCO ICH Lists and after that in order to ensure the most successful preservation of elements within social practices. The ICH Commission and other structures, authorized in the field, of the Ministry of Culture shall support communities in efforts to ensure preservation and transmission of the ICH elements to young generation, promotion of values in society as collective goods.

**8. Why elements are inscribed on the ICH Inventory?** The elements inscribed on the ICH Inventory obtain the status of elements protected by the State and are circumscribed by a special regime that ensures protection, transmission and development of this heritage. Registration of elements by the State is accompanied by actions in supporting the viability of elements initiated and carried out by local heritage holding communities, in cooperation with institutions authorized in the field, non-governmental organizations and other organisms interested in the preservation of the authenticity of traditional creation.

**9. Who manages the ICH Inventory?** The ICH Inventory is managed by the Ministry of Culture. Date support of the ICH Inventory is represented by dossiers: National Archives of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, institutional archives as well as those regional and village archives. With a view to ensuring correct registration and protection of heritage dossiers, the ICH Commission practices auditions or publications in magazines of the current situation in corresponding archives.