

Good morning, my dear colleagues, participants of the seminar. I am highly grateful to the organizers of this meeting in Estonia. Before starting my presentation I should admit that development of national Inventory of ICH in Lithuania is actually very slow. However, I would like to present you the basic concepts of the creation of the Lithuanian National Inventory.

Lithuanian National ICH Inventory

The compilation process of the National ICH Inventory (in Lithuania it is called the National Inventory of Traditional Cultural Properties) started in 2000 implementing the project supported by UNESCO/Japan Fund in Trust.

The Steering Committee for the Establishment of the National Inventory of Traditional Cultural Properties under the Ministry of Culture was set up. The committee involved specialists working in different areas of traditional culture, representing the main institutions engaged in accumulation, research and dissemination of the Lithuanian intangible cultural heritage.

The Steering Committee was responsible for adopting the methodology and formulating the concepts of the Inventory. Currently the supervision of the compilation of the Inventory and decisions to include various forms of ICH into the lists is to be undertaken by the Council for the Safeguarding of Ethnic Culture established by the Lithuanian Parliament. There is also a working group set for digitalization of the ICH and creation of the Inventory.

The initial objectives set up for the creation of Inventory were as following

- to collect data about yet existent unique objects of intangible culture throughout Lithuania having historic, cultural, ethnological, etc. value;
- to proclaim them as monuments protected by the state, to develop legal mechanisms for safeguarding and premises for preservation and development;
- to compile an inventory and to develop national and local digitalized databases of texts, images and sounds;
- to raise awareness of the society about the properties of intangible heritage in the media by the means of electronic networks, publications, etc.

Basics of the methodology lie on

- the methods of preparing candidatures for the List of Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, initiated and compiled by UNESCO
- the System of Living Human Treasures recommended by UNESCO
- the existing Register of Immovable and Movable Cultural Properties

We distinguish two levels of the Inventory

- the municipal or local level
- the national level

The lists of *local* importance are being compiled on the municipal level.

The *national* list includes only the most valuable local expressions as well as the expressions and objects characteristic to the whole country. ICH expressions characteristic to the *ethnographic regions* are also considered properties of the national value.

I would like to draw your attention on the separation of two categories of the national Inventory that are:

- the category of living objects (expressions of traditional culture or intangible heritage that are alive up to the present day)
- the category of historical objects (expressions of intangible heritage stored in archives and depositories, the natural development of which has already stopped).

There are many different aspects regarding the categorization.

The categories were defined considering constant developments of the intangible cultural heritage, variability of its expressions and the fact that some traditions degrade and fade, as many valuable expressions have already disappeared.

It has been decided that in the first stage the attention should be concentrated on the living expressions of traditional culture.

The Inventory will consist of 9 lists

1. The list of performers, masters and bearers (persons)
2. The list of performers and bearers (groups, communities)
3. The list of forms, genres, skills, techniques
4. The list of events (feasts, celebrations, rites, fairs, festivals etc.)
5. The list of spaces of traditional culture
6. The list of archives and depositories of traditional cultural heritage and folklore
7. The list of collections
8. The list of artifacts, works of traditional culture

9. The list of publications.

*It is the cultural tradition that is the essence of each list: its **domain, form, genre, skill of expressions** as such, with local or overall distribution (List no. 3): its manifestation in an event which reappears at certain intervals and in certain place (List no. 4); its transmission or representation by individuals or groups (Lists no.1 and 2), and finally its concentration in a certain space, rich in forms and aspects of traditional culture and with the unity of cultural, architectural and natural heritage (List no. 5).*

Lists no. 1-5 (theoretically also no. 8) may contain both living and historical objects, whereas objects on Lists 6-9 are depositories and collections of intangible heritage of outstanding value, works of oral and intangible heritage recorded in different ways, as well as publications of historic value.

The criteria

Here you can see the criteria applied for describing forms of ICH and including them on the lists. These are also very close to the criteria used by UNESCO for the selection of properties for the List of Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Human.

- 1 Uniqueness, particularity, sustainability
- 2 Value from historic, cultural, social, ethnological and other perspectives
- 3 Artistic value, excellence in the application of the ability, skills, performance techniques
- 4 Viability, preservation of the cultural, economic and social application as well as inherent function
- 5 Inherence, possession of characteristic local and regional features, historic and cultural tradition, etc.

Other criteria for inscription:

- 1 The extent of the tradition and application of the skill (the number of known pieces, articles created, the extent of practice), the entirety of expression or expressions (the number of preserved components and syncretic elements)
- 2 The method of succession of tradition, its communication and dissemination.
- 3 Higher risk of extinction.

- 4 The representation of the ICH elements in terms of the community as well as their active use.

The starting process of the elaboration of the Inventory succeeded involving municipalities, which activities in this area were financed by the Ministry of Culture, also various cultural, scientific institutions, national and regional parks. Nearly 900 objects were identified, some audio and video documents collected and several media publications released. UNESCO's support was crucial for the implementation of the process.

Why did the compilation process of the Inventory stop? To our minds, the successful continuation of the process requires one leading body, even a small one, which could systematically carry on the activity. It was planned last year that such body could be settled at the Lithuanian Folk Culture Centre, but it did not realized as there were no additional funds and human resources allocated. According to the Ministry of Culture programme resources for the establishment of the digital database, the elaboration of files, the evaluation of local Inventories are planned in the next year budget.

Finally, I'll try to answer some questions raised by the organizers in the Background paper. My answers mainly relate to the concept of the national Inventory concept and our own experience.

As regards „top-down“ or „bottom-up“ approaches, in my opinion, both methods should be used in parallel. The main responsibility should be taken by the government, which should establish the strategy and appropriate methodology. The authorized body should be settled to function as the centre for storing files, spreading the information about Intangible Cultural expressions in the society. Preliminary proposals for preparing local or national lists, relevant documentation and guarantying transmission of ICH to the further generations should be realized in a “bottom-up“ approach by involving communities, administrative bodies of various levels, municipalities and even individuals.

As regards the relation between national and local inventories, the issue I have already touched, it is essential to follow these principles: the methodological approach should be based on common principles, such as criteria, categories etc.

both Inventories should be connected by a common, unified and accessible informational system;

the most valuable local forms of ICH could be given national significance.

As regards the contradiction between particularities and universalities, my question would be: "Are there any results of human cultural, social, economic activity, which could be considered absolutely exceptional and have no reference to the universalities. On the other hand, even very universal expressions have some particularities and differences depending on their bearers (nations, ethnic groups, communities and even individuals). I would compare this correlation of universalities and particularities to warps and wefts in textile. When wefts and warps intertwine, they become a cloth. The variety, medley of weaves is measureless. As Lithuanians say: the world is even more spotted than the woodpecker. Isn't it a simple wonder? Thank you for attention.