Report by a Non-Governmental Organization Accredited to Act in an Advisory Capacity to the Committee on its Contribution to the Implementation of the Convention

Deadline 15 January 2015

for examination in 2015

*File may be downloaded at:*

*http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/forms*

*Please provide only the information requested below. Annexes or other additional materials cannot be accepted.*

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| 1. **Identification of the organization**
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| **A.1. Name of the organization submitting this report** |
| A.1.a. *Provide the full official name of the organization in its original language, as it appears on the official documents.* |
| Heemkunde Vlaanderen vzw |
| A.1.b. *Name of the organization in English and/or French.* |
| Association for the Study of Local History in Flanders |
| A.1.c. *Accreditation number of the organization (as indicated on all previous correspondence: NGO-90XXX)* |
| NGO\_90033 |
| **A.2. Address of the organization** |
| *Provide the complete postal address of the organization, as well as additional contact information such as its telephone, e-mail address, website, etc. This should be the postal address where the organization carries out its business, regardless of where it may be legally domiciled. In case of internationally active organizations, please provide the address of the headquarters.* |
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| Organization: | Heemkunde Vlaanderen vzw |
| Address: | Zoutwerf 5, 2800 Mechelen, BELGIUM |
| Telephone number: | +32 15 20 51 74 |
| E-mail address: | consulenten@heemkunde-vlaanderen.be  |
| Website: | http://www.heemkunde-vlaanderen.be |
| Other relevant information: |   |

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| **A.3. Contact person for correspondence** |
| *Provide the complete name, address and other contact information of the person responsible for correspondence concerning this report.* |
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| Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): | Mrs |
| Family name: | Provoost |
| Given name: | Nele |
| Institution/position: | coordinator |
| Address: | Zoutwerf 5, 2800 Mechelen |
| Telephone number: | +32 15 20 51 74 |
| E-mail address: | nele.provoost@heemkunde-vlaanderen.be |
| Other relevant information: |   |

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| **B. Contribution of the organization to the implementation of the Convention at the national level (Chapter III of the Convention)**[[1]](#footnote-1) |
| *Distinguish completed activities and ongoing activities. If you have not contributed, so indicate. Also describe any obstacles or difficulties that your organization may have encountered in such participation.* |
| **B.1.** *Describe your organization’s participation in State efforts to develop and implement measures to strengthen institutional capacities for safeguarding ICH (Article 13 and OD 154), e.g. in the drafting of ICH related policies or legislation, in the establishment of national ICH committees or in other government-led processes.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| Heemkunde Vlaanderen is a cultural heritage organization subsidized by the Flemish Ministry of Culture under the terms of the Cultural Heritage Decree (2008, revised in 2012) to support the heritage community on ‘heemkunde’ in Flanders and the Brussels-Capital Region. This heritage community consists of local and regional voluntary organizations, local museums and archives, as well as individuals interested in and concerned with local history and local cultural heritage. One of our objectives is to help these local organizations develop methodologies for the safeguarding of their intangible cultural heritage. To do so, Heemkunde Vlaanderen actively participates in the Flemish intangible cultural heritage network (Heemkunde Vlaanderen’s policy plan of 2012-2016, p. 60). This network assists heritage organizations in drawing up applications for the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Flanders. Furthermore, Heemkunde Vlaanderen is part of the Flemish expert commission that cooperates with the Flemish Agency for Arts and Heritage to manage the inventory. Although the Flemish Ministry authorizes the incorporation in the inventory by listing the elements in the inventory, the inventory is compiled bottom up on the basis of suggestions by heritage communities. Heemkunde Vlaanderen plays a twofold role in this process, as an active partner in the Flemish ICH network and as a member of the expert commission.  |
| **B.2.** *Describe your organization’s cooperation with competent governmental bodies for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage (Article 13), including existing institutions for training and documentation of intangible cultural heritage (OD 154).**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| Heemkunde Vlaanderen cooperates with several governmental bodies for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. First of all, as a non-profit organization subsidized by the Flemish Community, Heemkunde Vlaanderen maintains strong links with the Flemish Agency for Arts and Heritage. This Agency evaluates the intangible cultural heritage policy of Heemkunde Vlaanderen on the basis of a policy plan (which is submitted every five years) and the yearly plans and reports. As mentioned above, Heemkunde Vlaanderen also participates in the Flemish expert commission which examines applications for the Inventory of Intangible Heritage in Flanders and thus collaborates with the Agency for Arts and Heritage in managing the inventory. As an active partner in the already mentioned ICH network, Heemkunde Vlaanderen collaborates not only with the Agency but also with all organizations and institutions (including those for training and documentation) in this network amongst which FARO, Flemish interface for cultural heritage, and Tapis Plein are the most important ones. One of the main aims of Heemkunde Vlaanderen is the training and supporting of local history associations to preserve (in)tangible heritage. Accordingly, Heemkunde Vlaanderen actively promotes the platform www.immaterieelerfgoed.be. That is why, in 2013 and 2014, Heemkunde Vlaanderen and Tapis Plein co-organized capacity building sessions all over Flanders to promote the platform as a useful instrument for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and to introduce communities, groups and individuals to safeguarding measures. |
| **B.3.** *Describe your organization’s involvement in or contribution to the drafting of the State’s Periodic Report (OD 152).**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| In 2012, Belgium submitted its Period Report (N°. 00812). This report was indirectly based on a thorough evaluation of the Flemish ICH-policy by an ad-hoc consulting commission ICH and by the more recently established Flemish expert commission, among others. As Heemkunde Vlaanderen was asked to join the Flemish expert commission only in the spring of 2013, we were not directly involved in the drafting of the Period Report. As a member of the expert commission, Heemkunde Vlaanderen can be expected to be involved in future Period Reports of Belgium, and it is eager to contribute in this way. |
| **B.4** *Describe your organization’s participation in the preparation of nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List or Representative List, requests for International Assistance or proposals of Best Safeguarding Practices.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| Heemkunde Vlaanderen was involved in preparing the nomination of Aalst carnival to the Representative List in 2010. In order to contribute to the safeguarding of this element, Heemkunde Vlaanderen dedicated its annual congress of 2007 to carnival (The world upside down. From 'vastenavond' to carnival). Fons Dierickx, the chairman of Heemkunde Vlaanderen, also gave his free, prior and informed consent to the nomination with a letter of endorsement. As a partner in the network of cultural heritage organizations assisting communities, groups and individuals to develop safeguarding measures, Heemkunde Vlaanderen is involved in the safeguarding activities for some of the elements on the Representative List (e.g. the blog project 'Markt van mij' with regard to the Houtem fair) and some of the elements on the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Flanders. The bottom-up input of heritage communities in conjunction with organizations such as Heemkunde Vlaanderen is crucial for the compilation of this inventory. Furthermore, Heemkunde Vlaanderen supports The Flemish Agency for Arts and Heritage in its management of the inventory through participation in the Flemish expert commission. This expert commission may not be directly involved in nominating for the Representative List, but it indirectly is through its examination and evaluation of the proposals for the Flemish Inventory, since inclusion in the latter is a conditio sine qua non for insertion in the former. |
| **B.5.** *Describe your organization’s participation in the identification, definition (Article 11.b) and inventorying of ICH (Article 12, OD 80 and OD 153). Explain in particular how your organization cooperates with communities, groups and, where relevant, individuals.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| Through its participation in the network of ICH organizations, Heemkunde Vlaanderen contributes to the identification, definition and inventorying of ICH in Flanders. This network of organizations consists of five domain consultation structures in which each domain group is organized by one or two centres of expertise. The domains are the domains mentioned in the UNESCO convention. Since Heemkunde Vlaanderen and its target group are actively engaged in all five domains, it signed up for all five domain consultation groups. By doing so, Heemkunde Vlaanderen can adequately represent and support its target group with regard to the identification and inventorying of ICH. In 2013 and 2014 Heemkunde Vlaanderen and Tapis Plein organized capacity building sessions (see also B2) in Wetteren, Roeselare, Sint-Truiden, Geel, Beersel and Eeklo to inform the target group of Heemkunde Vlaanderen about ICH and the ways of identifying, safeguarding and inventorying it. A second part of this formation taught participants to add their own ICH-element to the platform www.immaterieelerfgoed.be. In fact Heemkunde Vlaanderen wants to educate its target group so that its members will themselves be able to support their local tradition bearers. These training sessions were supported by other organizations that work throughout the Flemish Community assisting heritage communities to manage ICH and several local heritage units. |
| **B.6.** *Describe your organization’s participation in other safeguarding measures, including those referred to in Article 13 and OD 153, aimed at:*1. *promoting the function of intangible cultural heritage in society;*
2. *fostering scientific, technical and artistic studies with a view to effective safeguarding;*
3. *facilitating, to the extent possible, access to information relating to intangible cultural heritage while respecting customary practices governing access to specific aspects of it.*

*Explain in particular how your organization cooperates with communities, groups and, where relevant, individuals when participating in such measures.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| As a loyal partner in the network of ICH organizations promoted by the Flemish government, Heemkunde Vlaanderen is endorsing the Flemish policy with regard to ICH as outlined in the vision paper ‘A Policy for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Flanders'. In this paper the value of ICH for the economy, the tourist sector and society at large is clearly emphasized. At a local level, heritage organizations concerned with ‘heemkunde’ promote ICH and its function for the local economy, the tourist sector and local identity. This heritage community mainly consists of local historians carrying out historical research on local tangible and intangible heritage. Heemkunde Vlaanderen offers these local historians the opportunities for capacity building and stimulates and promotes local historical research as a vital safeguarding activity. Moreover, the academic journal published by Heemkunde Vlaanderen fosters scientific research on various themes including ICH. This journal, the editorial board of which consists of academic researchers, heritage professionals and volunteers, is one of the most important mediators between scientific (academic) research, local historical research and the broad public. Furthermore, Heemkunde Vlaanderen facilitates the access to information relating to intangible cultural heritage in Flanders, not only through various publications on ICH, but also through the promotion of the platform www.immaterieelerfgoed.be. Finally, Heemkunde Vlaanderen answers questions on ICH and refers people to other organizations and experts in the Flemish ICH network. |
| **B.7.** *Describe your organization’s involvement in measures to ensure greater recognition of, respect for and enhancement of intangible cultural heritage, in particular those referred to in Article 14 and ODs 105 to 109 and OD 155:*1. *educational, awareness-raising and information programmes aimed at the general public, in particular at young people;*
2. *educational and training programmes within the communities and groups concerned;*
3. *capacity-building activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage;*
4. *non-formal means of transmitting knowledge;*
5. *education for the protection of natural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing the intangible cultural heritage.*

*Explain in particular, how your organization cooperates with communities, groups and where relevant, individuals when participating in such measures.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| Heemkunde Vlaanderen has taken several steps to ensure greater recognition of, respect for and enhancement of ICH. First there are the capacity building sessions that are explained above (see B2 and B5). Secondly, local organizations can apply for support programmes, during which Heemkunde Vlaanderen assists the local organization and its partners in developing a project. Heemkunde Vlaanderen is currently supporting two local projects with an important ICH element. The first project concerns thirty years of migration and integration by Ghanaians in Ghent and East Flanders, with attention for Ghanaian family rituals and parties, among others. The second project assists the local heritage museum of Arendonk in presenting the ICH of the local tobacco industry. A third step consists of the publication of various articles in both our journals (see B6 en E2). Bladwijzer, for instance, featured an article consisting of the contents of the capacity building sessions. We have also published several articles on ICH on the website and in the newsletter. Finally, there is the contest for the most enjoyable youth movement tradition that Heemkunde Vlaanderen and Tapis Plein co-organized in 2014. Heemkunde Vlaanderen also supports the youth movements in Flanders when they have questions regarding their local heritage. With this contest we wanted to enhance awareness of the ICH of youth movements. The contest will be repeated during the following years; each year a specific tradition will be selected (e.g. cutest youth movement songs, stories, camp dishes, …). |
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| **C. Bilateral, sub-regional, regional and international cooperation** |
| *Report on activities carried out by your organization at the bilateral, sub-regional, regional or international levels for the implementation of the Convention, including initiatives such as the exchange of information and experience, and other joint initiatives, as referred to in Article 19 and OD 156. You may, for example, consider the following issues:*1. *sharing information and documentation concerning shared ICH (OD 87);*
2. *participating in regional cooperation activities including for example those of category 2 centres for intangible cultural heritage established under the auspices of UNESCO (OD 88);*
3. *developing networks of NGOs, communities, experts, centres of expertise and research institutes at sub-regional and regional levels to develop joint and interdisciplinary approaches concerning shared ICH (OD 86).*

*Not to exceed 250 words* |
| In Flanders, registration on the platform www.immaterieelerfgoed.be is the starting point for everyone desirous to exchange information and knowhow with regard to ICH. The platform mentions Heemkunde Vlaanderen as an organization providing information and support to local organizations. We also promote the platform among our target group. Furthermore, Heemkunde Vlaanderen actively participates in the domain consultation groups organized by the Flemish ICH-network, where information and experiences are shared and joint initiatives are developed. In February 2015, Heemkunde Vlaanderen will host the meeting of D3O (Domain 3 consultation group). During this meeting, Heemkunde Vlaanderen will share the tips and tricks and dos and don’ts picked up in the context of the Ghanaian migration project which we support.No category-2 ICH centres exist in Flanders, but there are plans for creating some, and if this happens, Heemkunde Vlaanderen will be glad to cooperate with them. |
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| **D. Participation in the work of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** |
| **D.1** *Has your organization participated in the Committee meetings or those of the General Assembly? If yes, please indicate which meetings you attended and describe the nature of your contribution to the Committee’s work.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| Heemkunde Vlaanderen has not yet participated in the Committee meetings or the meetings of the General Assembly. |
| **D.2** *Has your organization served as a member of the Consultative Body or Evaluation Body (OD 26), or was it appointed in 2009 or 2010 to evaluate a nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List or a request for International Assistance? If yes, please indicate the period.**Not to exceed 100 words* |
| Heemkunde Vlaanderen has not yet served as a member of the Consultative Body or Evaluation Body, nor has our organization ever been appointed to evaluate a nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List or a request for International Assistance.  |
| **D.3** *In what way(s) has your organization provided advisory services to the Committee (OD 96) or in what way(s) do you foresee that it might provide such services in the future?**Not to exceed 500 words* |
| So far, Heemkunde Vlaanderen has not yet provided advisory services to the Committee. Nevertheless, by stimulating the implementation of the Convention on a regional, subregional and even local level, Heemkunde Vlaanderen has these past few years been rendering service to the Committee and will continue to do so in the future, for instance by supporting and developing safeguarding practices, by mediating and translating between communities, groups and individuals on the one hand, and States Parties and UNESCO on the other, etc. In 2013 Heemkunde Vlaanderen also filled out the survey for accredited NGOs on the 2003 Convention. In the future, Heemkunde Vlaanderen may also provide advisory services by thinking about and discussing evolving practices concerning the implementation of the Convention (e.g. the evaluation of elements on the article 17 list). As an important mediator with strong ties to local (voluntary) heritage organizations and communities, Heemkunde Vlaanderen may be able to enrich debates by gathering civil society information, practical examples and experiences. This bottom-up approach might for instance help to develop alternative, more ‘light-touch’ ways of sharing safeguarding experiences to complement the register of best safeguarding practices. Heemkunde Vlaanderen may provide services by organizing capacity building on different levels. Finally, Heemkunde Vlaanderen may contribute to the development of ICH NGO networks and will, for that reason, participate (in person or virtually) on a more regular basis in meetings of the ICH NGO forum. |
| **E. Capacities of your organization for evaluation of nominations, proposals and requests (as described in OD 27 and OD 96):** |
| **E.1.** *Nominations, proposals and requests are available for evaluation only in English or French. Do members of your organization or your staff demonstrate a very good command of English or French? If yes, please indicate which language(s) and the number of those members or staff.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| The coordinator (Doctor of History) and the three consultants (all of them Master of History) demonstrate a good command of both English and French. The chairman of Heemkunde Vlaanderen is a former English teacher.  |
| **E.2.** *Does your organization have experience in working across several ICH domains? Please describe your experiences.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| Heemkunde Vlaanderen is subsidized to support the heritage community on ‘heemkunde’. This community consists of voluntary organizations or individuals interested in and concerned with local history and heritage. One of our objectives is to help them in their efforts to safeguard their intangible cultural heritage. Because these safeguarding activities have a local focus and are thus not domain-specific, the support offered by Heemkunde Vlaanderen tends to extend across various ICH domains. In order to do so, Heemkunde Vlaanderen has not only developed internal expertise, but it also cooperates with several external experts and practitioners. Heemkunde Vlaanderen offers a forum to these experts to share experiences from and best practices of several ICH domains. For example, both Tijd-schrift (www.tijd-schrift.be) – the academic journal published by Heemkunde Vlaanderen – and Bladwijzer (bladwijzer.heemkunde-vlaanderen.be) – its methodological magazine – contain articles concerning the safeguarding of oral traditions and social practices, rituals and festive events. The thematic issue of Tijd-schrift, published in August 2014, was devoted entirely to ‘heritage and trees’ and contained several articles on the knowledge of and practices with regard to nature and the universe (e.g. articles on dealing with apparition trees, tree relics and ‘wondrous’ trees). As a last example, Heemkunde Vlaanderen worked on the ICH domain of the performing arts. In 2012, Heemkunde Vlaanderen supported the Sabbattini-project, in the context of which DSMG (Documentation Centre for Local History Dr. Maurits Gysseling) helped to safeguard the ICH of the Sabbattini theatre company, one of the oldest still existing mime companies in the world. |
| **E.3.** *Describe the experience of your organization in evaluating and analysing documents such as proposals or applications.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| As a member of the Flemish expert commission, one of the consultants of Heemkunde Vlaanderen examines the applications for the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Flanders against the relevant criteria. She also reviews the annual reports of the safeguarding initiatives concerning the elements listed in the inventory and co-evaluates in that way the viability of the element.More generally, Heemkunde Vlaanderen has gained experience in evaluating proposals and applications through its participation – in the past and nowadays - in several (sub)regional and local grant and advisory commissions (e.g. the Advisory Commission on Cultural Heritage, the Commission for Cultural Heritage Projects and Cultural Heritage Convenants, the Commission for Heritage Initiatives of West Flanders and East Flanders, etc.). |
| **E.4.** *Does your organization have experience in drafting synthetic texts in English or French? Please describe your experience and indicate in which language(s) and the number of those members or staff.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| Heemkunde Vlaanderen has experience in drafting synthetic texts in English. In 2005, for instance, Heemkunde Vlaanderen joined forces with two other NGOs (FARO and Forum voor Erfgoedverenigingen) to consider the roles, responsibilities, needs and opportunities of heritage organizations in the European context. This resulted in a research project, a survey (The Inventory of Heritage Organizations in Europe) and two conferences. For this project Heemkunde Vlaanderen obtained a grant from the European Commission (Europe for Citizens programme). The application and report were written in English. Also the final report of the conference and the reports of the workshops were drafted in English.Although the staff of Heemkunde Vlaanderen has changed over the years, all of the three consultants have experience in drafting synthetic texts in English.The coordinator, who has a PhD in History, has written several scholarly articles and abstracts in English and has presented papers at international conferences. During her doctoral training, she also took the English course 'Academic Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences'. |
| **E.5.** *Does your organization have experience in working at the international level or the capacity to extrapolate from local experience to apply it within an international context? Please describe such experience.**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| In March 2009 and July 2010 Heemkunde Vlaanderen co-organized two two-day conferences on heritage and citizenship. The first conference 'Heritage Care through Active Citizenship. European Conference on Civil Society Organizations Active in the Field of Heritage' was attended by 180 participants from all over Europe. The conference addressed the questions of active citizenship, civil society and volunteer organizations in the European heritage sector, and provided a platform for the exchange of relevant projects and experiences. In a varied programme, including several keynote lectures by well-known speakers, an info market and a debate, local cases were discussed and knowhow was exchanged. Afterwards, a report was drafted outlining some of the general conclusions drawn from the conference. The second conference, 'Civil Society and Heritage 2010', focused on the role of volunteers and voluntary organizations in the protection of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. During this conference there was again room for discussion and the exchange of local experiences as the participants were asked to present posters about their most inspiring projects. |
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| **F. Cooperation with UNESCO** |
| *Report on activities carried out by your organization in cooperation with UNESCO (both direct cooperation with UNESCO as well as activities carried out under the auspices of UNESCO or for which you have received the authorization to use the emblem of UNESCO/of the 2003 Convention, or financial support, such as e.g. funding from the Participation Program).**Not to exceed 250 words* |
| So far Heemkunde Vlaanderen has not yet carried out any activities in cooperation with UNESCO. |
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| **G. Signature** |
| *The report must include the name and signature of the person empowered to sign it on behalf of the organization.* |
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| Name: | Fons Dierickx |
| Title: | chairman  |
| Date: | 15 January 2015 |
| Signature: |   |

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1. . In case your organization operates in several States, please clearly indicate which State or States are concerned by your answers when filling in parts B, C and E. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)