



# The Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Moldova



The Ministry of  
Culture  
of the Republic of  
Moldova

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## Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Republic of Moldova

### **Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Moldova**

**The Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Moldova is one of the pillars on which the country's culture and identity are based on.** This heritage, called by anthropologists "traditional culture", was recognized as part of cultural heritage, at international level, and became the subject of cultural policies in the last decade. "The Intangible Cultural Heritage", is closely related to tangible heritage, according to UNESCO approach. The same time, on preserving traditional arts, knowledge, skills, social and cultural traditional institutions depends the maintenance of the national identity in the globalized world.

The Republic of Moldova is among 130 countries from the world to ratify the **UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** (Paris, 2003) and committed to "adopt a general policy aimed at promoting the function of the intangible cultural heritage" (art 13, a), to make an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage and to take measures the intangible cultural heritage to be transmitted to future generations.

The Republic of Moldova has developed a legislative framework in the field – **The Law on Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** (29 March 2012, 20/04/2012 in MO Nr. 76-80 Art. Nr: 255) and other regulations contained in this website to be adopted. Will be undertaken measures to safeguard this heritage by authorities and cultural managers, researchers and communities in the first place, in order to raise awareness and contribute to the documentation, promotion, transmission and use of the intangible cultural heritage in the welfare of society. **Safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage** means the recognition within society and assure its viability within communities. Communities

themselves must be the beneficiaries of safeguarding measures and active participants in the process of inventory making and other safeguarding measures.

In order to implement the new policies, the Ministry of Culture created in November 2009 an expert commission – the National Commission for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which coordinates the implementation of state policy in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (art. 13, 3 of the Law). Was initiated the reform of the National Center for Crafts, henceforth – The National Centre for Conservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which ensures the implementation of safeguarding measures in the territory (art. 13, 4 Law on protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Moldova).

In 2012 was approved by the Ministry of Culture and published “The National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of RM. Volume A”. The ICH Inventory is a list that takes under state evidence the intangible cultural heritage elements. It is one of the basic tools of safeguarding measures. The ICH Inventory will consist of two volumes, the second will be dedicated to different ethnic a communities inhabiting on the territory of Moldova. The first 50 items in the ICH Inventory were documented and included within the **Pilot Project on making up national inventory of the intangible cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova in accordance with the 2003 International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, with financial support from UNESCO Moscow Office.**

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## Chapter V



### V. FEASTS, CUSTOMS AND RITES

**Dr. Varvara BUZILĂ**

Feasts, customs and rites represent ensembles of behaviours and repetitive acts, codified, endowed with a rich symbolic charge, being practiced inside human communities in order to control and structure both the relationships among themselves, as well as with other ones. They take place in a determined time span and place, following a script known to the entire group, by adjoining musical, choreographic and literary folklore, as well as by using certain symbolic objects, a specific dress. The performance of the practice is coordinated by certain chiefs, having important roles (priest, godparents, midwife, "vătafii"/bailiffs), for the benefit of the persons subdued to this action (newlyweds, babies, those who are carolled), and of the participants (wedding guests, godfathers). These social practices provide the participants with the sentiment of belonging to a community, a group, an institution. In the mean time, they unite communities and provide the adhesion to the same system of values, fortify their sentiment of identity and enhance the social cohesion.

Feasts, customs and rituals were included in this list according to the following criteria:

1. the criterion of context (e.g. calendrical customs, family customs, rites of building, community feasts).
2. the criterion of syncretism (e.g. the social practice is perceived as a intermingled ensemble of verbal, musical, choreographic, object-symbolical manifestations, fulfilled by the system of representations about the world).
3. the criterion of functionality (performance in the limits of a community for certain beneficiaries, respecting the script consecrated by tradition, the qualities of time and space, with the help of performers, appealing to behaviours, stage props and symbolic dress).

The social practices were structured according to the following plan:

The cycle of calendrical customs

Winter customs

Spring-summer customs

Autumn customs

The cycle of familial customs

Birth customs

Last party before leaving for army ("Petrecerea în armată")

Wedding customs

Funeral customs and of remembrance for the dead ones

Customs of foundation

Labour customs

Community feasts

### **Cycle of winter calendrical customs**

V.1. St. Andrew – Beginning of winter, together with all the augural and premarital assigned practices (Guarding the garlic and so on).

V.2. "Ignatul", day of sacrificing the Christmas pig, together with all the practices assigned to it.

V.3. Children carolling on Christmas Eve or on Christmas, together with all the practices associated with it ("Bolindețul", "Chiti-Miti", "Cu Lichiul").

V.4. Carolling in male group on Christmas Eve or on Christmas night, together with all the practices assigned to it (dividing the village, selling/buying the village; "jocul/hora").

V.5. Christmas theatricalized representations ("Craii", "Crășorii", "Irozii", Irod's Band, "Malanca" and others), together with all the practices assigned to it.

V.6. Carolling in mixed group until Epiphany, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.7. Children's "urat" (well-wish) on New Year's Eve/St. Basil, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.8. "Plugul mic" (small plough) or children's "Plugușor" on New Year's Eve/St. Basil, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.9. "Uratul/hăitul" (well-wish) in male group on New Year's Eve/St. Basil, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it (dividing the village, selling/buying the village, "jocul/hora").

V.10. "Plugușorul, Plugul Mare" (little plough, big plough) in male group, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.11. "Cârceia", "Vălăretul" of male group, together with all the practices assigned to it.

V.12. New Year popular theatre ("Jienii", Jianu's wedding, "Haiducii", Wedding of the country, "Brâncovenii", Brâncoveanu's band), together with all the practices assigned to it.

V.13. Dances with anthropomorphic ("Malanca", "Baba și Mosneagul", "Babele", "Moșii", "Urâții" etc.) and zoomorphic masks (Goat, Goats, Bear, Horse, Ram, Horses, Deer, Cock, Stork etc.) on New Year/St. Basil, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.14. "Semănatul" (symbolic seeding) on New Year/St. Basil, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.15. Children "Sorcova" on New Year/St. Basil, custom specific for south-western communities, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.16. "Boboteaza" (Epiphany), together with all the practices assigned to it. ("Ajunul Bobotezei", "Boboteaza", "Chiraleisa").

V.17. "**Ziua Moșei/Ziua Babei**" (**Day of the Midwife/Old woman**) – feast of the woman who assists birth, together with all the practices assigned to it.

(see Traditions and expressions of verbal art, having language and word meaning as main vehicle for cultural expression; Traditions and expressions of the musical art or practice; Traditional musical instruments; Knowledge, practices, representations and symbols about man, nature and cosmos; Traditions and expressions of the choreographic art or practice; Knowledge regarding traditional alimentation; Techniques and knowledge concerning traditional craftsmanship; Traditional institutions, kinship, forms of association )

### **Spring-summer customs**

V.18. "Mărțișorul", together with all the practices assigned to it..

V.19. "Lăsata secului" (Shrove Tuesday) before Easter Lent, together with all the practices assigned to it (preparing ritual aliments: "babă", "moș"; sharing them as offerings; ritual feasts).

V.20. "Focurelul/Iertăciunea", specific for the south-western communities, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it ("Olăria", "Jujeul", "Uliulica").

V.21. "Sfinții/Mucenicii" (Saints/Martyrs), together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.22. *First ploughing.*

V.23. "Lăzărelul", custom specific for villages from the south-west of our territory, together with all the practices assigned to it ("Sălcioara", "Suratele").

V.24. "Floriile", together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.25. Easter, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it (Painting eggs and baking "pasca" during the Passion Week, "deniile" (vigils) on the Eve of Resurrection, Resurrection, Easter swing/wardrobe, Easter "hora/joc").

V.26. "Paștele Blajinilor" (Dead ones' Easter), together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.27. "Ispasul"/Ascension, together with all the practices assigned to it.

V.28. St. George – beginning of the pastoral calendrical year ("Prourul", hiring shepherds, taking floaks to the meadow), together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.29. "Duminica Mare" (Entrance into Jerusalem), together with all the practices assigned to it (decorating spaces with green branches; sharing offerings: pots with milk, ritual cakes and so on).

V.30. "Împrăștierea Rusaliilor" (Pentecost), together with all the practices and representations assigned to it (cleaning wells, streams, repairing bridges; Women feast: On the green grass /In the meadow; Green dishes; food communions; ritual whistling).

V.31. "Paparuda/Păpălugă" – custom practiced by groups of children invoking rain, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.32. "Caloianul"/"Scaloianul"/"Păpușica de gunoi" (Waste puppet) – custom practiced by groups of children invoking rain, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.34. "Sânzienele" (in the villages from north and centre)/ "Drăgaica" (in the villages from the south) – agrarian custom circumscribed to gathering cereals, together with all the practices assigned to it (First sheaf, "cununa", "barba popii"/"poama câmpului" etc.; Arranging the house, organised by girls).

V.35. "Sâmbetele morților/moșii de vară" (Dead ones Saturday), together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

## Autumn customs

V.36. "Sâmbetele morților/moșii de toamnă" (Dead ones Saturday), together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.37. Saint Demeter – end of the pastoral year, together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

(see Traditions and expressions of verbal art, having language and word meaning

as main vehicle for cultural expression; Traditions and expressions of the musical art or practice; Traditional musical instruments; Knowledge, practices, representations and symbols about man, nature and cosmos; Traditions and expressions of the choreographic art or practice; Knowledge regarding traditional alimentation; Techniques and knowledge concerning traditional craftsmanship; Traditional institutions, kinship, forms of association)

### **Cycle of family customs**

V.38. Customs related to human birth (Bathing, "Cumătria", one year anniversary, seven year anniversary), together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.39. Customs of socializing young lads (Entering the "joc/horă", participating at "clacă", participating in youngster's band), together with all the practices and representations assigned to it.

V.40. Bidding farewell to lads who leave for the army, together with all the practices assigned to it.

### **Marriage**

V.41. Prenuptial customs ("Pețitul", "Logodna", "Răspunsul", "Breadul", "Mărgelele" etc.) with all the afferent practices and representations.

V.42. Wedding customs – with all the afferent practices and representations.

V.43. Immediate postnuptial customs ("Colacul", "Calea", "La zeamă", "La tânără", "La fuioare", "Ostropățul") and others of the same kind, with all the afferent practices and representations.

V.44. Customs of ending the integration of the young family in community (Primary way, At the young wife, Bread and salt).

### **Burial**

V.45. Arranging and lamentation for the dead one, with all the afferent practices and representations (Bathing, dressing in new clothes, signs and signals for lamentation, vigil, the community's help).

V.46. Burial of the dead one according to his/her social statute: burial of babies, burial of bachelors, burial of midwives, burial of priests, burial of those dead through violent death, burial of suicides, together with all the associated practices and representations (tree of life, bridges, other alms offered for the dead one's soul; conducting on the last way, lamentation, installing a sign on the tomb, "comândarea" and others of the same kind).

V.47. **Reinhumation after 7 years after death**, with all the afferent practices and representations.

V.48. Reinhumation of the discovered bones, with all the afferent practices and representations.

### **System of customs of remembering the dead ones:**

V.49. Remembering on the 9th, 20th, 40th days; remembering after half a year, in each year and during the seven following years after death; remembering the dead ones on the eve of feasts or on feast days; "moșii" (ancestors) or "sâmbetele morților", with all the afferent practices and representations.

(see Traditions and expressions of verbal art, having language and word meaning as main vehicle for cultural expression; Traditions and expressions of the musical practice or art; Traditional musical instruments; Knowledge, practices, representations and symbols about man, nature and cosmos; Traditions and expressions of the choreographic art or practice; Knowledge regarding traditional alimentation; Techniques and knowledge concerning traditional craftsmanship)

### **Customs of founding**

V.50. **Customs of founding the village, with all the assigned practices.**

V.51. Customs of founding the sheepfold, with all the assigned practices.

V.52. Customs of founding the cemetery, with all the assigned practices and representations.

V.53. Customs of closing the cemetery, with all the assigned practices and representations.

### **Labour customs**

V.54. Rites of building a house, with all the assigned practices and representations.

V.55. Rites of building the church, with all the assigned practices and representations.

V.56. Rites of building the well, with all the assigned practices and representations.

V.57. Rites of building the bridge, with all the assigned practices and representations.

V.58. Rites of closing the wells, streams, with all the assigned practices and representations.

V.59. Rites of protecting the "prestol" (foundation) of the old church, with all the assigned practices and representations.

V.60. Rites of the first and last harvest, with all the assigned practices and representations.

### **Community feasts**

V.61. "Șezătoarea"/"La opaiț"/"La foc" (Traditional Asssembly/Near the lamp/Near the fire) (for whack or spinning wool, weaving, knitting the shirts and handkerchiefs for the wedding, weaving woollen clothes and ribbons for towels), together with all the assigned practices and social representations.



V.62. "Claca" (team work) at building a home (preparing the clay for the house, moulding clay bricks, installing houses' attic, greasing the walls) or some other building from the household.

V.63. "Claca" for building a church, together with all the assigned practices and representations.

V.64. Labour joint-ships for gathering cereals, collecting grapes, cleaning corn and other works of the same kind.

V.65. Village "hora/joc", as an institution for socializing youngsters and maintaining social communication, together with all the assigned practices and representations (Days dedicated to the assemblage of "hora/joc". The youngsters entering into "hora". Inviting girls to "hora" and joining them on their way home. Group of the musicians. Hiring/contracting musicians and other activities of the same kind).

V.66. The area for performing the village "joc/hora".

V.67. The "hramul" (day of the patron saint) of the church and of the village, together with all the assigned practices and representations (Divine Liturgy, common feast at the church, "hora/joc" in the afternoon; "Joc/hora" on the second and third days of the "hram").

V.68. Spaces dedicated for holding the "hram".

(see Traditions and expressions of verbal art, having language and word meaning as main vehicle for cultural expression; Traditions and expressions of the musical art or practice; Traditions and expressions of the choreographic art or practice; Traditional musical instruments; Knowledge, practices, representations and symbols about man, nature and cosmos; Knowledge regarding traditional alimentation; Techniques and knowledge concerning traditional craftsmanship; Traditional institutions, kinship, forms of association)

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