

**Hrvatska bratovština**  
**„Bokeljska mornarica 809” Rijeka**  
**Rijeka, Nikole Tesle 9**  
[www.bokeljska-mornarica.hr](http://www.bokeljska-mornarica.hr)

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Rijeka, 28.11.2018.g.

Mr. Tim Curtis,  
 Secretary of the 2003 Convention

UNESCO - Section of  
 Intangible Cultural Heritage 7,  
 place de Fontenoy  
 75352 Paris 07  
 France

Reply to be  
 drafted 07/11  
 for Martin

SUBJECT: - Contesting the nomination of Boka Navy to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity submitted by the Republic of Montenegro

I The Festivity of St Tryphon's and St Tripun's *kolo* – chain dance are registered as an intangible cultural heritage in the Register of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia, which bearers are Croatian Confraternity of the Boka Navy 809 with their headquarters in Zagreb, Rijeka, Split, Pula and Dubrovnik.

The Republic of Croatia has submitted a nomination of this element to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, within the period time of application, until 31 March 2018.

As the bearers, we have repeatedly required and appealed to the bearers in Kotor through the Ministry of Culture and other Croatian institutions, directly with the Boka Navy as well, in order to nominate this intangible cultural heritage to the Representative List of the UNESCO Convention (2003), on behalf of the two countries, Member States.

Although there were promises and contacts from Kotor, the Ministry of Republic of Montenegro decided to submit the nomination independently, even though we as the bearers and the Ministry of Republic of Croatia as well, have appealed and sought until the last moment, to get a joint application.

Due to such conduct, we considered it necessary to submit nomination on the same way, as the Republic of Croatia, in order to realise it as a joint application.

II Upon the analysis of the Boka Navy's nomination submitted by the Republic of Montenegro (MNE), we consider that this application essentially deviates from character of property in the meaning of:

- identification,
- content,
- bearers,
- prevalence of this element.

Accordingly, the purpose of this contesting notice is to point out complains and shortcomings of nomination submitted by Republic of Montenegro, as follows.

Ad.1. Firstly, The Boka Navy is confraternity of the religious type that existed in medieval Mediterranean cities. One of the important roles of confraternity, dominant in the submitted nomination, is to guard the St Tryphon's relicts, to participate in the process by transmitting the relicts and specially to celebrate the "glorious head" and marking the patron holiday by St Tryphon's *Kolo* chain dance as an integral part of the liturgy, meaning the entire celebration.

Therefore, it's about the confraternity of the religious character, which fact in the submitted nomination is merely quoted by neglecting the content.

The content of this phenomenon is about the worshiping of St Tryphon, and all the activities and the dance as well are parts of the celebration that is annually repeated.

Montenegrin nomination refers to several authors, such as Msgr. dr. Pavao Butorac, Bishop of Kotor and Dubrovnik, dr. Miloš Milošević and others who in the mentioned book<sup>1</sup> pointed the content of the phenomenon that we have just briefly described, and which is missed and is not scattered by the allegations and claims in the Montenegrin nomination.

Although the literature is mentioned in the nomination's content, the basic features and character of the property which are related to the essence of the nomination, are ignored.

In this contesting notice, quoting the abovementioned authors, we're pointing out the shortcomings of Montenegrin nomination of the Boka Navy.

The Bishop of Kotor and Dubrovnik Monsignor dr. Pavao Butorac dealt with the phenomenon of the Tryphon's dance in the eponymous book describing the content of the St Tryphon's celebration with the participation of the Boka Navy giving the confraternity the achievement that represents the old Boka people. The dance is described as a synthesis of faith, culture, and social class reciprocity.

St Tryphon's kolo dance performed in the cathedral around the relicts long time ago, was an integral part of the holly service, while today it is considered as an integral part of the whole celebration. Therefore, the emphasis is on the fact that the dance is performed only at the St Tryphon's day and at very significant and other important occasions in which the ceremony and deep meaning are reflected.<sup>2</sup>

In that regard as Croats from Boka, – Bay of Kotor, we consider that the Tryphon's dance neither

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<sup>1</sup> Pavao Butorac, *Tripunjdansko kolo*, Kotor, 1941. Naklada Plemenitog tijela Bokeljske mornarice, Bokoška štamparija Kotor.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

have simple meaning as the folk dance only nor the Boka Navy is a folklore association that performs as cultural-artistic society at festivals and parades<sup>3</sup>:

“It is immediately apparent that such dance is not a simple folklore, but it carries some traces of ancient symbolism and history within, that deserves special interest... The analysis have led to strangely interesting results according to which, apart from the clear and later elements of the life of the Boka Navy's sailors, one very old ritual core can also be distinguished...”

The character of dance and its religious element are denied by the Montenegrin nomination that does not even enter in the essence of this phenomenon but offers the Boka Navy only as a touristic sensation, quoting that the various institutions (including the tourist association) are going to be involved in safeguarding measures, omitting at the same time the Kotor Diocese as the bearer.

Preserving the content through the ages, the great ones of the Boka Navy have retained the significance of the Boka Navy. After World War II, Boka Navy's Admiral Rudolf Giunio resigned from that duty due to the fact that he did not want to accept that the Boka Navy would appear as a folklore club in Zagreb in 1946. Therefore, not so long ago from the moment of the communist regime's development, in which period this organization was not acceptable because of its religious elements, the core and significance of the Boka Navy and the *Kolo* chain dance of St Tryphon have been presented through his gesture.

Ad.2. The Nomination of the Boka Navy submitted by Republic of Montenegro does not mention by a single word that this phenomenon from its origins until today can not be observed without the Kotor's Bishop. The worship of St Tryphon is related to the Catholic Church, the Bishop allows the participation of the Boka Navy in the procession, and the *Kolo* dance of St Tryphon can not begin without the blessing of the Kotor's Bishop. Therefore, Montenegrin nomination is incomplete without reference to the Kotor Diocese as the bearer of this property, according to which fact, there is no consent letter of the Bishop.

Ad.3. The nomination of the Boka Navy submitted by Montenegro is incomplete, particularly because there is no reference to the fact that the *Kolo* dance and the phenomenon of St Tryphon's celebration have become widely spread throughout Republic of Croatia and have been established as a phenomenon for 150 years.

The Tryphon's ceremonies with the St Tryphon's dance were disseminated by the arrival of Croats of Boka into the territory of the Republic of Croatia and more than a century they were held in the communities of the Boka Croats which were gathered around the Croatian Fraternities of the Boka Navy 809 in Zagreb, Rijeka, Split, Pula and Dubrovnik.

First celebrations were recorded in Split in 1873 when a large number of Boka people relocated in that town and then arranged St Tryphon's celebration.

Celebrations are faithfully held in order to keep this traditions. As a result of dedication of the Croatian Fraternities of the Boka Navy 809 who have gathered Boka people born in Boka or their descendants, they have celebrated the Holy Mass on St Tryphon's Day (3<sup>rd</sup> of February) in the local churches where St Tryphon's *Kolo* dance has been performed. It is the biggest holiday of Boka people who expanded it. Before the Mass, the Little Admiral (8-10 years old boy) pronounces *lode* (praises) to St Tryphon as a symbol of their faith and tradition's transfer to a new Boka people

<sup>3</sup> Miloš Milošević, *Kolo Bokeljske mornarice, Dvanaest vjekova Bokeljske mornarice*, Kotor 2013, str.106

generation. The dance is performed by the members of the Boka Navy in traditional uniforms and it starts with the blessing given by the Bishop or the present priest.

After the celebration, the community usually gets together in the dining room, serving traditional dishes.

Therefore, all the evidences indicate that the phenomenon of St Tryphon's ceremony and dance have been transferred from the area of Boka – Bay of Kotor to the Republic of Croatia, with the transmission of tradition by participating the Little Admiral and the Unit (of the Confraternity).

III The number of the Boka people communities in Croatia, the continuity of the maintenance of this phenomenon (for over 150 years) and the faithful manner of support and transmission of the tradition, militate in favour of this phenomenon, which is noticed outside the boundaries of the original place, and it should be perceived as integral tradition of Boka people and the Kotor Diocese in the Bay of Kotor in the Republic of Montenegro and in the Republic of Croatia as well, in all cities where that tradition has been spread and it is existing today thanks to abundance of Boka people and pride on their cultural, national and religious identity which is transmitted from generation to generation as a living tradition.

Ignoring abovementioned facts in the Montenegrin nomination, is about the fact that this kind of nomination can not be accepted or at least it can not be evaluated as an independent one, without taking in account the nomination of the Republic of Croatia on the incentive of the Croatian Confraternities of the Boka Navy 809 and our intention to make it as the joint one.

The Croatian Confraternity of the Bokelj Navy 809 consider that the only correct approach is to provide adequate treatment and protection of the phenomenon of the St. Tripun's ceremony and dance by a joint nomination by the Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Croatia.

The opposite of that, it would be contesting the existence of 10,000 Bokelj who habitate in Republic of Croatia, contesting their tradition that has been transferred from the old homeland (Boka Kotorska), preventing the community from practicing their tradition together with Bokeljs in Boka and documenting adequately and transmitting it to the future generations. It is pointlessly that our brothers and relatives in Boka Kotorska, who cherish the same tradition as we do in Croatia, are acknowledged as the bearers of the tradition of the Bokelj Navy and St. Tripuna dance, and we are deprived of that right.

IV We are at opinion that the transfer of this tradition outside of the homeland is significant advantage for protection and better visibility of this phenomenon, and also that the fact of its transfer and protection in wider scope, in two countries where the beares live, makes the basic principle for listing this heritage on UNESCO's representative list of non-material cultural heritage in order to showing cooperation and better visibility on an international scale.

Sincerely yours,



Fides et honor

Hrvatska bratovština Bokeljska mornarica 809 Rijeka

Albert Petrović, gastald

