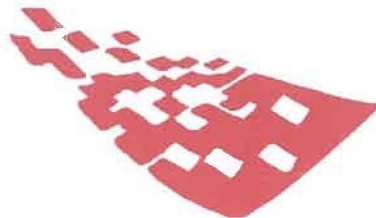


**HRVATSKO
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Reçu CLT / CIH / ITH

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Donja Lastva, November 13th 2018

**Mr. Tim Curtis,
Secretary of the 2003 Convention
UNESCO – Section of Intangible Cultural
Heritage (CLT/CRE/ITH)
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07
France**

Dear Mr Curtis,

we hereby submit an objection to the UNESCO regarding the unilateral nomination of the Bokelj Navy that Montenegro has submitted to the UNESCO despite the initiative launched in 2015 on inscribing a joint multinational nomination with Croatia on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of the Bokelj Navy and the Celebration of Saint Tryphon and the folk dance of Saint Tryphon, a tradition of Bokelj Croats.

We, as a community of Croats in Montenegro are aware that the Republic of Croatia has submitted a nomination dossier to UNESCO after Montenegro decided not to join multinational nomination.

The history of Kotor, Boka Kotorska (Bay of Kotor) and the Bokelj Navy is tied to our patron saint, Saint Tryphon. Tryphon Day (Tripundan) has been celebrated since 809 when, according to word of mouth, his powers came to Kotor from Asia Minor.

We wish to underline the extraordinary role of Bokelj Croats in creating and preserving this intangible cultural heritage good, since members of the Croatian people are most deserving for the Cult of Saint Tryphon and the festivities in his honour inextricably linked to the Bokelj Navy.

The Bokelj Navy is no longer a class seamen organization, but just our cultural association of Bokeljs caring for the preservation of an old tradition. We gather regularly on the Feast of St. Tryphon and offer the image of the former celebration, when the body of St. Tryphon was taken over from Kotor in a special ceremony including a procession, a feast and a solemn dance in front of the cathedral. The ceremony begins on 27 January, when exactly at noon, a boy of about ten years, dressed in a sailor suit bearing the rank of *little admiral*, announces the beginning of the Feast from the terrace of the church with "commendations" or "lauds" in honour of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Tryphon the martyr. When the *little admiral* says "glory" to Saint

Tryphon three times, church bells start ringing, the music plays the folk dance of Saint Tryphon and his flag is raised on a big mast on the terrace.

The aforesaid is our outstanding heritage, proving thousands of years of presence of Croats in the region of Boka Kotorska, which we wish to save from oblivion for future generations to pass on to their future generations.

Inadequate emphasis of St. Tryphon cult, from which the Bokelj Navy emerged, and of the Croatian people who have been predominantly creating and inheriting this important institution, weakens the nomination, puts into question its authenticity and denies an important element which can only contribute to the excellence and universal value of this phenomena.

Montenegro is multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state. This nomination dossier should reflect such Montenegro and should not deny the contribution of Croats the way it is now formulated in the dossier. If accepted as such it could provide new controversies while the aim of the Convention 2003 should be preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage.

We believe that in the spirit of friendly, good neighbourly relations and mutual respect, in the common interest of Montenegro and the Republic of Croatia, we should continue the dialogue during the process of evaluation of submitted nomination dossiers of Montenegro and Croatia to find a mutually acceptable solution in the form of multinational nomination, demonstrating that minorities and the position towards their identity, tradition and culture are the strongest links in building relations between the Republic of Croatia and Montenegro.

We kindly ask you to help us preserve and pass on our outstanding heritage and preserve the existence of a Croatian national minority in Montenegro.

We hope you will accept our remarks and suggestions as to merging the nominations in order to give Croats from Montenegro, as bearers of the good, the space and importance into a joint nomination by the Republic of Croatia and Montenegro, because the good Montenegro nominated and which it is extremely proud of, was created and preserved to this day mostly thanks to members of the Croatian people.

Zvonimir Deković, President of the Croatian National Council

