



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Intangible  
Cultural  
Heritage

# Representative List

Original: English

## CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Sixteenth session  
2021

#### Nomination file No. 01681 for inscription in 2021 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

#### A. State(s) Party(ies)

*For multinational nominations, States Parties should be listed in the order on which they have mutually agreed.*

Malta

#### B. Name of the element

##### B.1. Name of the element in English or French

*Indicate the official name of the element that will appear in published material.*

*Not to exceed 200 characters*

L-Għana, a Maltese folksong tradition

##### B.2. Name of the element in the language and script of the community concerned, if applicable

*Indicate the official name of the element in the vernacular language corresponding to the official name in English or French (point B.1).*

*Not to exceed 200 characters*

L-Għana, leħen il-poplu Malti

##### B.3. Other name(s) of the element, if any

*In addition to the official name(s) of the element (point B.1), mention alternate name(s), if any, by which the element is known.*

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## C. Name of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned

Identify clearly one or several communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned with the nominated element.

Not to exceed 150 words

The Għana community includes guitarists and singers (Għannejja) who regularly perform in local bars or domestic environments and patrons and impresarios who organise such events. It also includes audiences, including enthusiasts who attend performances or sessions and actively engage in discussions concerning Għana and collect recordings and documents about it. Għana, originally predominantly practised in farming and fishing areas and the inner harbour region, has becoming more popular among the general public in Malta.

There are currently no formal organisations for community members and there is no formal register of performers, but informal estimates place the number at about 250. Men predominate among public performers and audience members today, although more women are beginning to perform again, especially in contemporary styles.

Maltese migrants abroad maintain a keen interest in practising the tradition. They participate in Għana events when they visit Malta and if they return to the country for good.

## D. Geographical location and range of the element

Provide information on the distribution of the element within the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s), indicating, if possible, the location(s) in which it is centred. Nominations should concentrate on the situation of the element within the territories of the submitting States, while acknowledging the existence of same or similar elements outside their territories. Submitting States should not refer to the viability of such intangible cultural heritage outside their territories or characterize the safeguarding efforts of other States.

Not to exceed 150 words

Għana is mostly performed in weekly sessions in bars or private venues across Malta and Gozo, the two inhabited islands of the Republic of Malta. The village of Żejtun, for instance, in the South of Malta is renowned for its Għana sessions. Għana is included in nation-wide celebrations such as I-Imnarja, held in the woods of Rabat (in the centre of Malta) and the national Folksong Festival 'Għanafest' (held annually since 1998 in the Argotti Gardens in Floriana on Malta). It is an integral part of religious and community festivals, such as the Feast of our Lady of Grace, the St. Mary Fair (on Gozo) or the feast of St. Gregory in Marsaxlokk (on Malta). Women usually perform Għana in domestic settings. Għana enthusiasts meet and keep collections of recordings of Għana performances in homes and domestic garages. Maltese people in the US, Canada and Australia also practice Għana.

## E. Contact person for correspondence

### E.1. Designated contact person

Provide the name, address and other contact information of a single person responsible for all correspondence concerning the nomination. For multinational nominations, provide complete contact information for one person designated by the States Parties as the main contact person for all correspondence relating to the nomination.

Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Mr

Family name: Azzopardi

Given name: Mario

Institution/position: Director, Cultural Directorate, Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government

Address: Chateau De La Ville, Archbishop Street, Valletta, Malta.

Telephone number: +35625674201

Email address: mario.d.azzopardi@gov.mt

## E.2. Other contact persons (for multinational files only)

Provide below complete contact information for one person in each submitting State, other than the primary contact person identified above.

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### 1. Identification and definition of the element

For **Criterion R.1**, States **shall demonstrate that 'the element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention'**.

Tick one or more boxes to identify the domain(s) of intangible cultural heritage manifested by the element, which might include one or more of the domains identified in Article 2.2 of the Convention. If you tick 'other(s)', specify the domain(s) in brackets.

- oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage
- performing arts
- social practices, rituals and festive events
- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- traditional craftsmanship
- other(s)

This section should address all the significant features of the element as it exists at present, and should include:

- a. an explanation of its social functions and cultural meanings today, within and for its community;
- b. the characteristics of the bearers and practitioners of the element;
- c. any specific roles, including gender-related ones or categories of persons with special responsibilities towards the element; and
- d. the current modes of transmission of the knowledge and skills related to the element.

The Committee should receive sufficient information to determine:

- a. that the element is among the 'practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills — as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith —';
- b. 'that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize [it] as part of their cultural heritage';
- c. that it is being 'transmitted from generation to generation, [and] is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history';
- d. that it provides the communities and groups involved with 'a sense of identity and continuity'; and
- e. that it is not incompatible with 'existing international human rights instruments as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development'.

Overly technical descriptions should be avoided and submitting States should keep in mind that this section must explain the element to readers who have no prior knowledge or direct experience of it. Nomination files need not address in detail the history of the element, or its origin or antiquity.

- (i) Provide a brief description of the element that can introduce it to readers who have never seen or experienced it.

Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words

Għana (pronounced 'ana') is used to describe three related types of structured, rhymed folksong in Malta accompanied by guitar. The most popular form of Għana nowadays is the 'spirtu pront' (quick spirit/wit), an improvised song duel between one or two pairs of singers, focusing on the rhyming of words, convincing argumentation and witty repartee. Għana tal-fatt (factual Għana) is a long narrative poem sung by a solo singer, usually from memory, that records important local events in popular memory (e.g. tragedies, crimes, historical events). 'La Bormliža' (Bormla style Għana) has simple lyrics sung using a large vocal range and a particular vocal style, where a single syllable is sung while moving between several different notes in succession. It was historically often sung by women, but has declined in popularity today compared to the more male-dominated Spirtu Pront style.

Għana sessions are held all year round in different public or private venues, as well as at festivals and festivities in the open air. A strong camaraderie develops between the performers

and the audience through friendly exchanges, often referenced in the songs themselves. Once shunned by Anglophile elites, Ghana is now generally celebrated as part of cultural life in Malta. Sharing jokes and recalling common experiences of historical events fosters a sense of common history, identity and community. Deploying elaborate metaphors, nicknames and rhymes in Maltese, Ghana assists in the transmission and development of this unique semitic language reflecting the diverse Arabic, Italian and English influences on Maltese history.

- (ii) *Who are the bearers and practitioners of the element? Are there any specific roles, including gender-related ones or categories of persons with special responsibilities for the practice and transmission of the element? If so, who are they and what are their responsibilities?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

The practitioners of Ghana are performers (singers and accompanying guitarists), patrons, impresarios, and audience members, including dedicated enthusiasts. Singers and guitarists usually teach their art informally to family members.

The Għannejja (singers) form a close community, using nicknames among themselves. Their songs involve verbal jousting, referencing events and personalities within the community. Female Ghana performers mainly sing in private; some women, for example Mariele Zammit, also perform in public.

Guitarists usually perform in groups, with one lead or solo guitarist and two accompanying musicians. The Prejjem, or lead guitarists, usually play improvised solos as part of the warm up to the session, the solo parts between stanzas as well as musical interludes between sessions. Some use a special guitar with an extended horn design developed in the 1950s by a local instrument-maker, Indri Brincat 'il-Pupa'.

Patrons and impresarios work with community organisers (and enthusiasts) to put on Ghana events in local bars and clubs, or at festivals. The practice of Ghana is generally a pastime rather than a source of employment, although practitioners and organisers may receive modest payments from large public performances.

Audience enthusiasts meet at Ghana events, applaud performer virtuosity, make and share amateur live recordings (including on social media), with performers' informal agreement. They also discuss memorable sessions and notable song feuds, both during Ghana events and at other get-togethers. The continued vibrancy and creativity of Ghana events, especially Spirtu Pront, depends on ongoing engagement between rival performers and their followers.

- (iii) *How are the knowledge and skills related to the element transmitted today?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

Young and old acquire skills for Ghana by listening to live impromptu performances of Spirtu Pront, by memorising and repeating tal-fatt or La Bormliža texts, and through informal instruction, commonly passed down within kinship networks in domestic settings.

Once novice singers can rhyme and keep up with the rhythm set by the guitarists, they are given the opportunity to perform. Performers are proud of who they learned from and who they have sung with. These relationships between singers is often a subject of their songs, helping to create a sense of continuity in the community. They remember virtuosos like Frans Baldacchino 'il-Budaj', (1943-2006) who migrated to Australia but returned to Malta in the 1970s and helped promote and renew the tradition.

Ghana guitarists also learn to play informally, often from relatives, either before a session or at home; others teach themselves using online resources. Some aspiring guitarists simply note the fingering patterns during a performance and then copy them.

Ghana performances and events such as festivals provide opportunities for impresarios and patrons to teach their proteges on the job.

Audiences, especially enthusiasts, make recordings of Ghana. Videos of performances posted online are used to inspire young performers and educate audiences, and to improve the skills of performers. Enthusiasts discuss the best techniques for filming and recording of performances, sharing information and enhancing their documentation and dissemination skills. They also

discuss the relationship between innate talent and training in the development of individual Għana performers, prompting reflection on the transmission process.

(iv) *What social functions and cultural meanings does the element have for its community nowadays?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

In the early twentieth century, Għana performers, who were mainly rural farmers, fishermen and manual labourers in urban districts such as Bormla, were somewhat marginalised in Maltese society. Since the 1950s, Għana came to be more generally appreciated as Maltese folklore. More recently, it has been embraced more widely at the national level. Today, regular Għana events in local venues or domestic settings bring neighbours and families together, and, like Għana festivals or larger events, provide entertainment and a sense of identity both within the Għana community, and more broadly in Maltese society – Malta has a population of just under half a million.

Għana (especially the tal-fatt style) stimulates grassroots civic and popular engagement about local history and contemporary events and politics. The singers, especially in Spirtu Pront, focus on issues such as honour, shrewdness, bravado and prowess, generosity and talent. The songs invoke popular wisdom about the effects of ageing, the scope of work and other topics from their everyday lives, using idiomatic phrases or witty reference to them. Singers thus act as the voice of the working classes, providing social critique through satire. Through oral poetry and music, the performers share collective memories and popular wisdom with audiences.

Maltese words and expressions no longer used in everyday language are used and celebrated in Għana. This helps the preservation and transmission of the language, deepening speakers' engagement with Maltese history and cultural identity.

(v) *Is there any part of the element that is not compatible with existing international human rights instruments or with the requirement of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, or with sustainable development?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

There is no aspect of Għana that is incompatible with existing international human rights instruments. Għana performances can include performers and audiences from any gender, age, class and locality. While Għana is still mainly practised by men, especially in the Spirtu Pront form, women do practise the art. Some women have achieved prominence and national acclaim as Għannejja. In the safeguarding measures that target young people, special attention will be paid to involving more girls, although it may take some time for a more equal gender balance to be achieved.

Spirtu Pront provides a musical forum for informal social and political debate that fosters mutual respect because all participants have equal space and time to express their opinions in a ritualised format and a safe public setting. Audiences and enthusiasts freely engage with performers in all Għana events.

All three types of Għana bring people together in reflecting on their common history and language, thus encouraging social cohesion; an important part of sustainable development. At larger events, Għana performers are paid modest fees by the organisers, thus contributing to sustainable livelihoods, while at smaller gatherings they are usually given traditional Maltese food and drink for free in return for their performances.

There are no negative environmental consequences of Għana. Since there is a strong Għana tradition in farming and fishing areas, environmental themes are sometimes topics in Għana songs, thus raising awareness about the importance of preserving the natural heritage and lamenting their decline using satire.

## **2. Contribution to ensuring visibility and awareness and to encouraging dialogue**

*For Criterion R.2, the States shall demonstrate that 'Inscription of the element will contribute to ensuring visibility and awareness of the significance of the intangible cultural heritage and to encouraging dialogue, thus reflecting cultural diversity worldwide and testifying to human creativity'. This criterion will only be considered to be satisfied if the nomination demonstrates how the possible inscription would contribute to ensuring the*

visibility and awareness of the significance of intangible cultural heritage in general, and not only of the inscribed element itself, and to encouraging dialogue that respects cultural diversity.

(i) How could the inscription of the element on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity contribute to the visibility of the intangible cultural heritage in general (and not only of the inscribed element itself) and raise awareness of its importance?

(i.a) Please explain how this would be achieved at the local level.

Not fewer than 100 or more than 150 words

The community consultation exercise during development of this nomination has already helped spread local awareness in Malta of ICH and the importance of safeguarding it, especially among members of the communities concerned who did not previously see their practices in terms of ICH. Knowledge about the Convention and ICH is fairly recent in Malta, and not yet widespread. Given the size of Malta, (316km<sup>2</sup>) the local and the national aren't readily differentiated in this regard. Inscribing Għana on the List would further raise awareness in Malta about ICH by making people more aware of the value of oral performance in keeping Maltese and its local dialects alive, and conscious of inscribed performance or language-related ICH in other countries. This could encourage appreciation of the need to protect intergenerationally active spaces for social commentary and debate that are required for the practice of Għana, and their role in fostering community cohesion.

(i.b) Please explain how this would be achieved at the national level.

Not fewer than 100 or more than 150 words

The inscription of Għana on the Representative List, alongside other ICH elements, would encourage greater public awareness in Malta about ICH in general, especially because Malta is not yet represented on that List. Community consultation events and media coverage during the nomination process already increased public interest in ICH in Malta. The inscription of Għana, whose safeguarding is supported by a strategic partnership between community members, government agencies and the University of Malta, would help to sustain this momentum. University students who help the Għana community with safeguarding activities, and young people who are involved in learning Għana, may be inspired by the inscription to identify and safeguard other aspects of ICH in Malta. The visibility given to ICH in Malta by the inscription may also inspire further training and educational initiatives at schools and the University of Malta, and greater interest and investment by government agencies in ICH safeguarding.

(i.c) Please explain how this would be achieved at the international level.

Not fewer than 100 or more than 150 words

The inscription of Għana would help to give international visibility to the social and cultural value of popular songs and oral performance, for example in fostering community cohesion and communal memory. As a form of social satire that supports culturally-appropriate and peaceful methods of tackling disagreement and dissent, Għana, along with other elements on the Representative List, can also highlight the role of ICH in developing participatory democracy, tolerance for divergent voices and peace.

Inscription of the element would generate greater awareness of the different ways in which communal memory can be sustained as a source of community history, especially for groups who are underrepresented in the historical canon. Inscription may raise awareness about similarities between Għana and different traditions of sung poetry within the Mediterranean region, and the important role of informal domestic learning in transmitting musical traditions at a global level.

(ii) How would dialogue among communities, groups and individuals be encouraged by the inscription of the element?

Not fewer than 100 or more than 150 words

Għana is itself a form of dialogue among and between performers and their audiences. The inventorying and nomination processes have started a more specific dialogue within the Għana community about the need for community mobilization, the safeguarding needs of the element, and their hopes and aspirations for practising and transmitting Għana into the future. Inscription

of Għana on the Representative List would provide further incentive for continuing this dialogue both within Malta, and an international framework for engaging with other communities practising similar oral performance traditions. Għana is sung in Maltese, a language of Semitic origin (through Maghrebi Arabic) with strong Indo-European input (through Sicilian, Italian and – more recently - English). Inscription of the element may thus promote intercultural exchange and dialogue between communities across the different shores of the Mediterranean.

(iii) How would human creativity and respect for cultural diversity be promoted by the inscription of the element?

Not fewer than 100 or more than 150 words

Għana is a highly creative practice requiring singers to respond rapidly to each other in the witty repartee of Spirtu Pront. Għannejja performing tal-fatt sometimes compose their own ballads to commemorate historical events. Guitarists improvise during performances too. Recordings made by enthusiasts stimulate creative innovation when they are shared among artists locally or in the diaspora. Inscription of Għana would promote human creativity by encouraging wider awareness of its innovative use of language and music, and enable safeguarding and sharing of Għana's creative approaches with other oral performance traditions.

Għana attracts both local and international audiences, depending on the scale of the event, often including members of the Maltese diaspora and sometimes also people from different cultural backgrounds. Inscription of the element can help to promote discussion about how such linguistic and cultural heritage is best translated and enjoyed within multicultural settings, and thereby promote respect for cultural diversity.

### 3. Safeguarding measures

For **Criterion R.3**, States shall demonstrate that 'safeguarding measures are elaborated that may protect and promote the element'.

#### 3.a. Past and current efforts to safeguard the element

(i) How is the viability of the element being ensured by the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned? What past and current initiatives have they taken in this regard?

Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words

The viability of the element is not seriously threatened at the moment although Għana has not always been fully understood and valued by all strata of society in Malta and it still lacks status and visibility to some extent. Limited interest among young people to perform Għana may be linked to this residual stigma, and to the availability of alternative hobbies and pastimes.

To address these problems, the Għana community has tried in the past to raise awareness about the value of the practice. Community scholars and Għana enthusiasts such as Charles Coleiro and the late Ġorg Mifsud-Chircop organised many outreach public events including folksong festivals and events since the 1970s. Coleiro and Mifsud-Chircop also arranged an international tour of Għana performers and lobbied for increased government support in Malta.

Għannejja have promoted their art by participating in the writing of history in Malta at the national level. For an important national celebration commemorating the centenary of the Sette Giugno Riots, when the Maltese protested British colonial rule in 1919, Żeppi Spagnol 'il-Kelba' composed and performed an Għana tal-fatt at the National Għana Festival.

Enthusiasts continue to play an important role in safeguarding Għana by documenting and sharing performances, with the informal agreement of performers. This freely-circulating documentation is used for skills transmission, community engagement, as well as promotion and awareness raising. To preserve and share this documentation more widely, they have been participating also in programmes such as MEMORJA (see below), working with academic and government institutions.

Tick one or more boxes to identify the safeguarding measures that have been and are currently being taken by the **communities, groups or individuals** concerned:

- transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education
- identification, documentation, research

- preservation, protection
- promotion, enhancement
- revitalization

(ii) *What past and current efforts have the States Parties concerned made to safeguard the element? Specify any external or internal constraints in this regard?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

The State has supported various initiatives aimed at safeguarding Għana, in spite of limited resources, through budget and organisational assistance for:

(1) A national folksong competition, established in the 1950s as part of the Imnarja celebration, to raise public awareness about Għana. The Imnarja celebration continues to do this today, although without the competition. A national folksong festival, Għanafest, established in 1998, promotes Għana and showcases current innovations.

(2) Celebrations organised by local councils, including the annual 'Zejt iż-Zejtun' (Oil of Zejtun) festival, where Għana is included.

(3) The State acknowledges the important contribution of Għana and its performers to Maltese society and culture. In 1998, for instance, the famous female Maltese Għana singer Ġolina Mifsud was awarded the National Order of Merit by the President of Malta.

(4) Since 2017, the National Archives of Malta and the University of Malta have supported the communal memory project MEMORJA, assisting the Għana community in the documentation, use and dissemination of their oral history and performances, while respecting their intellectual property rights.

(5) In 2019, the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government included Għana in the 'Culture Pass' initiative, giving secondary school students opportunities to experience artistic productions, and employing Għannejja to teach them some basic Għana skills.

(6) Anthropology students at the University of Malta, with State support, are currently developing a radio series interviewing Għannejja about Għana for broadcast in 2020.

*Tick one or more boxes to identify the safeguarding measures that have been and are currently being taken by the **State(s) Party(ies)** with regard to the element:*

- transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education
- identification, documentation, research
- preservation, protection
- promotion, enhancement
- revitalization

### **3.b. Safeguarding measures proposed**

*This section should identify and describe safeguarding measures that will be implemented, especially those intended to protect and promote the element. The safeguarding measures should be described in terms of concrete engagements of the States Parties and communities and not only in terms of possibilities and potentialities.*

(i) *What measures are proposed to help ensure that the viability of the element is not jeopardized in the future, especially as an unintended result of inscription and the resulting visibility and public attention?*

*Not fewer than 500 or more than 750 words*

In the consultation sessions (See 4a below), community members were enthusiastic about the possible inscription of Għana to the UNESCO Representative List and its likely positive effect on the safeguarding of the element. Some specific safeguarding measures were proposed to protect and promote the element with stakeholder support, by increasing youth interest in the art, representation of women and girls, broadcast media visibility, prominence of Għana at Għanafest, access to suitable venues, and generating dialogue about contemporary popular music influences on Għana performances.

(1) To encourage young people in taking up the practice, the following measures will be



implemented:

(i) Ghana performers will introduce boys and girls to Ghana groups and performances in Argotti Public Gardens as part of a 'Ghana Day' curriculum event aimed at 11-13 year old students from 2021. The Culture Directorate of the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government will work with the Ministry of Education's Maltese language curriculum division to set up the event. It will be funded by the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government, including payment for the Ghana performers.

(ii) From 2020, Ghana performers will be employed to provide a free course in Ghana for youth (male and female) residing in the Inner Harbour Region (including Bormla), where Ghana was traditionally very popular. This will help to assess the viability of alternate modes of transmission for those whose family members do not practise the element. The project will also promote social cohesion and identity in a socially marginalised area. This initiative is supported financially by the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government and will be coordinated by the University of Malta's Cottonera Resource Centre, based in that region.

(2) Greater participation of women and girls will be encouraged in the practice and transmission of Ghana through the above youth programmes. A social media page developed by the Culture Directorate with input from community members will act as a communication hub and provide visibility for female performers. Further research will be done at the University of Malta to understand what factors determine female participation in Ghana, and how to encourage it.

(3) Greater visibility of Ghana in the media will be achieved through the development of a dedicated Ghana programming slot for programmes like those mentioned above (see 3(a)ii(6)) to raise more general awareness about its meaning and value to the communities concerned. The National Heritage, Arts and Local Government Ministry is currently engaged in active discussions with the Public Broadcasting Services in order to identify an appropriate channel for broadcasting this programming.

(4) The visibility of Ghana at the National Folksong Festival has been reduced because of the recent emphasis placed on international folk music, especially on the main stage in the Argotti Gardens. Responding to community concerns, the organising committee, Festivals Malta, part of the Arts Council, is investigating ways to address this problem. Possible solutions will be informed by research on the festival, for example that being undertaken at the University of Malta by one of the previous Festival directors, George Mario Attard.

(5) Some key Ghana venues, such as the historic Pieta Bocci Club (Pieta Bowls Club), are no longer accessible to the Ghana community because of cost. Such cultural spaces are not just performance venues, but act as living museums for the community because they house material artifacts related to Ghana. A register of local Ghana venues and events will thus be established by the Culture Directorate in order to track and promote access to suitable venues for local Ghana performances on an ongoing basis.

(6) There is debate within the Ghana community about the extent to which Ghana could be distorted by the extent of innovation in new compositions, influenced by contemporary popular music. Some believe this might increase public interest in the traditional genre. Following community consultations on the matter, the Culture Directorate has requested the Department of Anthropological Sciences at the University of Malta to research the changing nature of innovation in the genre and report back to the community.

No serious unintended negative effects of possible inscription were identified. There is however a possibility that greater visibility could result in over-filling of venues and disruption from unauthorised recording by outsiders, and possibly inappropriate use of recordings by outsiders. This will be addressed by providing information to new audiences and careful advertising and management of events by promoters, with the assistance of the venue register.

*(ii) How will the States Parties concerned support the implementation of the proposed safeguarding measures?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

The Maltese government will support ongoing safeguarding measures logistically and financially through an annual budget allocation, currently €100,000. The Culture Directorate (as lead agency) and other agencies in the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government will be working closely with community stakeholders in the implementation of the

proposed measures, assisted by the Ministry of Education (responsible for the University of Malta, the Cottonera Resource Centre) and the Public Broadcasting Services.

Through the consultation process, the Directorate developed an extensive mailing list of Ghana community members. This will support ongoing consultation, communication and dissemination of safeguarding information. In the absence of community organisations or NGOs representing the community, the Directorate will also create a community social media page to act as a communication hub supporting the safeguarding of Ghana with community involvement. The hub will link to existing platforms used by performers and enthusiasts and will assist in the monitoring and evaluation of safeguarding measures.

The Culture Directorate will fund educational initiatives with schools and youth (see above) in order to support practitioner involvement and ensure that such educational projects are freely accessible to all. It will also provide logistical support for the development of safeguarding initiatives being proposed with partners such as the University of Malta and schools. The Culture Directorate will employ student interns from the Department of Anthropology the University of Malta to assist in the implementation of these initiatives, including the development of the register of venues and the conducting of research.

(iii) *How have communities, groups or individuals been involved in planning the proposed safeguarding measures, including in terms of gender roles, and how will they be involved in their implementation?*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

Proposed safeguarding measures were developed out of the suggestions raised by community members (including men and women, performers, patrons or impresarios and audiences) during the various consultation fora outlined in 4(a) below. Community members were concerned about how to increase youth interest in Ghana in view of the popularity of contemporary global music, raise visibility of Ghana on national media, and increase prominence of Ghana at Ghanafest. In the National Consultation Session held on 8/12/2019, the safeguarding plan was discussed with representatives of the community and further suggestions from them were incorporated in the revision of the safeguarding plan. There was much debate about how best to support the art, what constitutes positive innovation or negative ‘distortion’ in Ghana performance, and how the best singers should be selected for performance events. Ongoing discussions about the creation of a representative organisation for the Ghana community are being supported by the Culture Directorate.

Ghannejja and musicians will teach girls and boys about Ghana at the ‘Ghana Day’ curriculum events (see 3(b)i above) and they will take on pupils from the Inner Harbour Region as part of the free courses on Ghana. Patrons and impresarios will be involved in creating the register of venues. All community members will be able to participate in the planning and implementation of the social media hub for stakeholder communication, monitoring and evaluating the safeguarding measures. This will be used to ensure community participation and feedback regarding the proposed research on questions of innovation and gender.

### **3.c. Competent body(ies) involved in safeguarding**

*Provide the name, address and other contact information of the competent body(ies) and, if applicable, the name and title of the contact person(s), with responsibility for the local management and safeguarding of the element.*

Name of the body: Heritage Malta

Name and title of the contact person: Mr. Noel Zammit, CEO Heritage Malta

Address: Head Office, Ex. Royal Navy Hospital, Marina St. Kalkara, Malta

Telephone number: +356 22954000

Email address: info@heritagemalta.org

Other relevant information: Heritage Malta is the national agency responsible for cultural Heritage information:

Name of the body: Culture Directorate, Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local

## Government

Name and title of the contact person: Mr. Mario Azzopardi, Director, Culture Directorate

Address: Chateau de La Ville, Archbishop Street, Valletta, Malta

Telephone number: +356 25674330

Email address: culture@gov.mt

Name of the body: University of Malta

Name and title of the contact person: Dr Jean Paul Baldacchino, Head Dept. of Anthropological Sciences

Address: Dept. of Anthropology, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

Telephone number: +356 23403714

Email address: jean-paul.baldacchino@um.edu.mt

Name of the body: Festivals Malta

Name and title of the contact person: Ms. Annabelle Stivala, Director, Festivals Malta

Address: 13, Europa Centre, John Lopez St., Floriana

Telephone number: +356 23347301

Email address: info.fm@festivalsmalta.org

Other relevant information: Festivals Malta is the government entity responsible for the organisation of the National Folksong Festival

## 4. Community participation and consent in the nomination process

*For Criterion R.4, States shall demonstrate that 'the element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent'.*

### 4.a. Participation of communities, groups and individuals concerned in the nomination process

*Describe how the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned have actively participated in all stages of the preparation of the nomination, including in terms of the role of gender.*

*States Parties are encouraged to prepare nominations with the participation of a wide variety of other parties concerned, including, where appropriate, local and regional governments, communities, NGOs, research institutes, centres of expertise and others. States Parties are reminded that the communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals whose intangible cultural heritage is concerned are essential participants throughout the conception and preparation of nominations, proposals and requests, as well as the planning and implementation of safeguarding measures, and are invited to devise creative measures to ensure that their widest possible participation is built in at every stage, as required by Article 15 of the Convention.*

*Not fewer than 300 or more than 500 words*

Following the inclusion of Ghana on the National Inventory in July 2018, a consultative committee was set up to enable community participation in developing the inventory file (see 5(v) below). The committee, which had two community members, first suggested that a nomination to the Representative List could be considered.

Since there are currently no organisations representing the Ghana community, the Culture Directorate, with the assistance of the University of Malta, then organised a number of information and consultation sessions to discuss the idea and enable community participation in the nomination process for Ghana. Consultations were held in various locations throughout the islands, during events where Ghana community members were already gathered, to ensure a wide range of community members were represented.

The following consultation sessions were organised:

05/05/2019: after the unveiling of a monument in honour of a well known local Għannej, in Għaxaq (Southern Region), 80 attendees.

24/04/2019: after San Girgor local feast in Marsaxlokk (Southern Region), 67 attendees.

10/5/2019: before an Għana session at Tal-Bagri, Saint Helen Band Club in Birkirkara (Central Region), 119 attendees.

21/06/2019: after an open air Għana evening session at Kottoner Gardens in Bormla (Inner Harbour Region), 164 attendees.

22/06/2019: after the national Għanafest festival at Argotti Gardens, 170 attendees (two sessions). The Culture Directorate also set up a booth at Għanafest for more individual discussion with community members regarding the Għana nomination.

28/06/2019: after the Annual St Peter and St Paul celebrations (Imnarja) at the Buskett gardens (North), 113 attendees.

13/09/2019: after the local feast of Our Lady of Graces in Rabat, Gozo, 137 attendees.

14/09/2019: after the feast of Our Lady of Victories at Mtahleb (North), 149 attendees.

In these sessions, community members were further informed about UNESCO and the Convention's Lists, and the national inventory process. They expressed support for nominating Għana to the Representative List, discussed the viability of the element and possible safeguarding measures; individual feedback and proposals were also sent to the Directorate afterwards. This was used to develop a draft nomination file and video.

After these consultation sessions, an open National Consultation Session was held on 8/12/19 in Żejtun, a hub for Għana practitioners. Community members who had been to previous meetings were invited and announcements were placed on social media platforms. The draft nomination and video based on the consultations were presented for feedback and discussion including a discussion of safeguarding measures being proposed. The community enthusiastically consented to the nomination file at this meeting and discussed implementation of the safeguarding measures proposed.

In total, 1033 people with a good gender and age balance for this community (673 male and 362 female), including performers, patrons or impresarios, audiences and enthusiasts, participated in the consultation meetings (see participation record in Appendix 1.4 ).

#### **4.b. Free, prior and informed consent to the nomination**

*The free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of the element of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned may be demonstrated through written or recorded concurrence, or through other means, according to the legal regimens of the State Party and the infinite variety of communities and groups concerned. The Committee will welcome a broad range of demonstrations or attestations of community consent in preference to standard or uniform declarations. Evidence of free, prior and informed consent shall be provided in one of the working languages of the Committee (English or French), as well as in the language of the community concerned if its members use languages other than English or French.*

*Attach to the nomination form information showing such consent and indicate below what documents you are providing, how they were obtained and what form they take. Indicate also the gender of the people providing their consent.*

*Not fewer than 150 or more than 250 words*

In 2018, the Culture Directorate conducted a public awareness-raising programme informing the public about ICH. Preparation for the Ftira nomination raised awareness in Malta about the Convention. This included a public meeting on 3/2/2018 attended by 62 people (one third women, five from Gozo), media coverage, and a social media campaign.

During consultation sessions held in 2019, performers, patrons, enthusiasts and audiences comprising the Għana community learned more about the nomination process and freely supported the nomination of Għana to the Representative List. In the initial meetings held on 24/04/2019, 05/05/2019 and 10/05/2019 members provided signatures freely supporting the proposal to nominate Għana to the Representative list (203 male 63 female, Appendix 1.1).

At the National Consultation Session on 8/12/2019, a range of community members (27 male 7 female) expressed specific support for the final file (Appendix 1.2). Thereafter Għannejja, patrons, guitarists and enthusiasts sent individual letters of support (8 male) (Appendix 1.3a). Community members who meet and perform at venues sent collective letters of support (3 male

1 female). In one case, an Ghana group led by Angelo Theuma and Kalcidon Vella performed a quatrain in support of the nomination (Appendix 1.3b).

Local councils in Malta (7) and Gozo (1) who organize Ghana events, provided letters supporting the nomination (Appendix 1.3c). Related organizations (Appendix 1.3d) such as band clubs and NGO's also sent in their letters of consent (3 male 1 female). A number of official cultural agencies, namely Heritage Malta, Festivals Malta, the National Archives and the University of Malta have also sent their letters of consent (Appendix 1.3e).

#### **4.c. Respect for customary practices governing access to the element**

*Access to certain specific aspects of intangible cultural heritage or to information about it is sometimes restricted by customary practices enacted and conducted by the communities in order, for example, to maintain the secrecy of specific knowledge. If such practices exist, demonstrate that the inscription of the element and implementation of the safeguarding measures would fully respect such customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage (cf. Article 13 of the Convention). Describe any specific measures that might need to be taken to ensure such respect.*

*If no such practices exist, please provide a clear statement that there are no customary practices governing access to the element in at least 50 words.*

*Not fewer than 50 or more than 250 words*

The knowledge and skills required for performing and transmitting Ghana can be acquired by anyone who is motivated and is endowed with some talent; there are no particular restrictions or secrecy requirements for access to knowledge about Ghana and associated events.

Access to public Ghana events is open to all, limited only by venue capacity, but Ghana sessions held in people's residences and garages are generally only open to people by invitation. In order to respect the practices governing access to private events, they will not be advertised on the proposed social media hub unless specifically requested by the organisers. Promoters and venue owners manage the number of people in venues to ensure safety and enable strong local audience engagement.

Audience members and enthusiasts within the community generally have performers' informal permission for recording or making available recordings of any sessions; this is regulated within the community. As tourist audiences grow after inscription, this may change. Ghana performers and event organisers will supply relevant information to visitors, where needed, about what is acceptable to performers regarding the making of recordings and dissemination of that information to the public, so their intellectual property rights are respected.

#### **4.d. Community organization(s) or representative(s) concerned**

*Provide detailed contact information for each community organization or representative, or other non-governmental organization, concerned with the element such as associations, organizations, clubs, guilds, steering committees, etc.:*

- a. Name of the entity;
- b. Name and title of the contact person;
- c. Address;
- d. Telephone number;
- e. Email address;
- f. Other relevant information.

- b. Mr. Joseph Spagnol
- c. 72 'Ave Maria', Triq il-Falkunier, Żejtun, Malta
- d. +356 21673442
- f. Mr. Spagnol is a celebrated folk singer and leading community member.
- b. Mr Charles Coleiro
- c. 3, Triq San Kirstofru, Valletta VLT1468
- d. +356 21233911
- e. charlesfolk@gmail.com
- f. Mr Coleiro is a community enthusiast and folklorist.
- a. Association for the folklore, arts and crafts of Żejtun
- b. Ms. Joan Agius

- c. 18, Triq San Girgor, Iz-Zejtun  
d. +356 99424517  
e. joan.agius@yahoo.com  
f. Director of a local cultural NGO dedicated to the promotion of local cultural traditions.
- b. Mr Michael Cumbo  
c. 48, Triq Emanuel Attard Bezzina, Iz-Zejtun  
d. +356 99805956  
f. Mr Cumbo is a famous veteran performer and organizer and leading community member.
- b. Mr Lawrence Schembri (Male) a.k.a Lawrence 'Ta' Ganna'  
c. Redentur, Triq Santu Wistin, Iz-Zejtun  
d. +356 99012046  
f. Community enthusiast and retired owner of renowned Ghana venue 'Ta' Ganna' bar.
- a. Juve Bar  
b. Mr. Francis Delia  
c. Misrah Gregorju Bonnici, Iz-Zejtun  
d. +35699464030  
f. Mr Delia is a community enthusiast and owner of 'Juve Bar', a popular Ghana establishment used by community members.
- a. Tottenham Supporters Club  
b. Mr Wayne Lughermo  
c. 22, St Fredrick Street, Valletta.  
d. +35621231192  
f. Ghana event organizer writing on behalf of the community of Għannejja that gather and perform at Tottenham Hotspurs Club in Valletta.
- a. Juventutis Domus Sacra Familia  
b. Mr Jesmond Ferriggi  
c. 63, St. Gregory Street, Iz-Zejtun  
d. +356 99470351  
f. Mr Ferriggi is a community event organizer writing on behalf of the għannejja that perform at the venue he administers.
- a. Society of St Mary Mqabba and King George V Band.  
b. Mr Felix Galea.  
c. San Bazilju St., Mqabba.  
d. +35621683020  
e. info@santamarija.com  
f. Director of 'Society of St Mary Mqabba and King George V Band' writing on behalf of the society and band club who regularly feature Ghana as part of their annual festivities.
- a. Beland Music Society  
b. Mr Antony Aquilina  
c. 5, Misrah ir-Repubblika, iz-Zejtun.  
d. +35621698357  
e. info@belandband.com  
f. General Secretary of the Beland Music Society writing on behalf of the music society and band club.
- b. Mr Charles Seychell  
c. 'il-Qannata', Triq l-Arkibuzier, iz-Zejtun  
d. +35621673247  
f. Local community Ghana event organizer and also organizes workshops on Ghana.
- b. Mr. George Azzopardi  
c. 48, Triq id-Duluri, iz-Zejtun.  
d. +356 77290934  
f. Mr. Azzopardi is a leading traditional Maltese guitar maker.
- a. Tal-Begig Bar and Restaurant  
b. Mr Emanuel Ellul  
c. 104, Triq il-wied tal l-Imnsida, Msida  
d. +35699491433  
f. Mr Ellul is a veteran Ghana performer and organizes regular events in his brother's bar.

- a. Zejtun Heritage  
 b. Mr. Ruben Abela (President).  
 c. P.O. Box 25, iz-Zejtun  
 d. +35699467775  
 e. wirtizzejtun@gmail.com  
 f. Zejtun is an NGO dedicated to the promotion of Zejtun's heritage.
- a. Botta u Risposta, Ta Ganna Bar.  
 b. Mr Mark Bartolo (Proprietor)  
 c. Luqa Briffa St., iz-Zejtun  
 d. +356 98113341  
 f. Ta' Ganna Bar is a leading ghana venue that has a long established tradition of weekly ghana performances on Sundays where emerging and established singers can showcase their talent.
- b. Ms Mariele Zammit  
 c. 48, My Dream, Emanuel Attard Bezzina Street, iz-Zejtun.  
 e. mariele.zammit@gmail.com  
 f. Mariele is an emerging female talent of the Bormliza genre writing on behalf of a group of performers and friends.

## 5. Inclusion of the element in an inventory

*For Criterion R.5, States shall demonstrate that the element is identified and included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies) in conformity with Articles 11.b and 12 of the Convention.*

*The inclusion of the nominated element in an inventory should not in any way imply or require that the inventory(ies) should have been completed prior to the nomination. Rather, the submitting State(s) Party(ies) may be in the process of completing or updating one or more inventories, but have already duly included the nominated element in an inventory-in-progress.*

*Provide the following information:*

*(i) Name of the inventory(ies) in which the element is included:*

National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage

*(ii) Name of the office(s), agency(ies), organization(s) or body(ies) responsible for maintaining and updating that (those) inventory(ies), both in the original language and in translation when the original language is not English or French:*

Directorate of Culture, Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government

*(iii) Reference number(s) and name(s) of the element in the relevant inventory(ies):*

03/2018: L-Għana: Leñen il-poplu Malti

*(iv) Date of inclusion of the element in the inventory(ies) (this date should precede the submission of this nomination):*

2/07/2018

*(v) Explain how the element was identified and defined, including how information was collected and processed 'with the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations' (Article 11.b) for the purpose of inventorying, including reference to the role of the gender of the participants. Additional information may be provided to demonstrate the participation of research institutes and centres of expertise (max. 200 words).*

Dr Philip Ciantar, Head of Music Studies at the University of Malta, compiled an expression of interest for the inventory file for Għana based on research on the tradition with the participation of the communities concerned. When the application was approved for inclusion on the National ICH Inventory in July 2018, a consultative committee was established to develop the full inventory file with further community participation. The committee included researchers from the University of Malta and two community members, Mr. C. Coleiro (Folklorist and community

scholar, Ghana enthusiast) and Mr. G.M. Attard (Ghana community event organiser). The committee added information about the role of audiences, enthusiasts and patrons in the Ghana community, and prepared a new draft of the file. The file was then discussed and updated by the broader community members during the consultation sessions held in 2019, where the name and value of the element for the community, as well as safeguarding measures were discussed (See 4.a). Women participated in the sessions at a ratio of 1 woman to 2 men. A woman, Ms. R. Radmilli (Anthropologist), also served on the consultative committee. The inventory file was updated in October 2019 and February 2020.

(vi) Indicate how often the inventory(ies) is(are) updated (periodicity) (max. 100 words).

As outlined in the 'National Policy on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage', inventory entries for ICH elements inscribed in the National ICH Inventory are subject to a periodic review every four years under the supervision of the Culture Directorate, with the participation of practitioners and other representatives of communities concerned.

(vii) Explain how the inventory(ies) is(are) regularly updated. The updating process is understood not only as adding new elements but also as revising existing information on the evolving nature of the elements already included therein (Article 12.1 of the Convention) (max. 200 words).

The Inventory is open to new submissions, which are evaluated by the National ICH Board on a quarterly basis.

The four yearly periodic review of inventory entries for ICH elements inscribed in the National ICH Inventory, such as Ghana, includes consultation with community members and an evaluation of the impact of inscription and any safeguarding measures undertaken. Feedback from members of the community is requested by the Culture Directorate, using appropriate channels of communication. Community members are encouraged to submit proposals and suggestions for the updating of the file. In the case of Ghana, the mailing list and social media portal created as a result of the nomination process will be used for communicating with the community in the updating process.

The periodic reviews of inventory entries for each element will be included in a 'Report on the State of Intangible Cultural Heritage', that will guide further safeguarding activities.

(viii) Documentary evidence shall be provided in an annex demonstrating that the nominated element is included in one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies), as defined in Articles 11.b and 12 of the Convention. Such evidence shall at least include the name of the element, its description, the name(s) of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned, their geographic location and the range of the element.

- a. If the inventory is available online, provide hyperlinks (URLs) to pages dedicated to the nominated element (max. four hyperlinks in total, to be indicated in the box below). Attach to the nomination print-outs (no more than ten standard A4 sheets) of relevant sections of the content of these links. **The information should be provided in English or French, as well as in the original language if different.**
- b. If the inventory is not available online, attach exact copies of texts (no more than ten standard A4 sheets) concerning the element included in the inventory. **These texts should be provided in English or French as well as in the original language if different.**

Indicate the materials provided and – if applicable – the relevant hyperlinks:

Completed National Inventory form 03/2018 L-Ghana: Lehen il-poplu Malti

## 6. Documentation

### 6.a. Appended documentation (mandatory)

The documentation listed below is mandatory and will be used in the process of evaluating and examining the nomination. The photographs and the video will also be helpful for activities geared at ensuring the visibility of the element if it is inscribed. Tick the following boxes to confirm that the related items are included with the nomination and that they follow the instructions. Additional materials other than those specified below cannot be accepted and will not be returned.



- documentary evidence of the consent of communities, along with a translation into English or French if the language of the community concerned is other than English or French;
- documentary evidence demonstrating that the nominated element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies), as defined in Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention; such evidence shall include a relevant extract of the inventory(ies) in English or in French, as well as in the original language, if different;
- ten recent photographs in high definition;
- grant(s) of rights corresponding to the photos (Form ICH-07-photo);
- edited video (from five to ten minutes), subtitled in one of the languages of the Committee (English or French) if the language utilized is other than English or French;
- grant(s) of rights corresponding to the video recording (Form ICH-07-video).

### 6.b. Principal published references (optional)

*Submitting States may wish to list, using a standard bibliographic format, the principal published references providing supplementary information on the element, such as books, articles, audiovisual materials or websites. Such published works should not be sent along with the nomination.*

*Not to exceed one standard page.*

- ALAMANGO, A. 2011. 'Malta's Lost Voices: The Early Recording of Maltese Folk and Popular Music, 1931-32', *Journal of Maltese History*, 2: 54-8.
- CASSAR PULLICNO, G. and CAMILLERI, C., 1998 *Maltese Oral Poetry and Folk Music*. Malta: Malta University Publishers Ltd.
- CIANTAR, P., 2019. 'Għana and its Mediterranean Parallels: Music, Expression, and Performance Practice'. In: G. BONELLO and A. BORG CARDONA, eds, *Music in Malta: From Prehistory to Vinyl*. Malta: Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, pp. 32-47.
- CIANTAR, P., 2000. 'From the Bar to the Stage: Socio-cultural Processes in the Maltese Spirtu Pront'. [http://www.umbc.edu/MA/index/number5/ciantar/cia\\_0.htm](http://www.umbc.edu/MA/index/number5/ciantar/cia_0.htm) edn.
- FSADNI, R. 1993. The wounding Song: Honour, Politics and Rhetoric in Maltese Għana. *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 3(2): 335-353.
- GALLEY, M. 1980. 'Chants Traditionnels de Malte', *Littérature Orale Arabo-Berbère*, 11: 115-26.
- HERDON, M. and N. MCLEOD. 1975. 'The Bormliza: Maltese Folksong Style and Women', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 88: 81-100.
- MCLEOD, N. and HERNDON, M. 1975. The Bormliza: Maltese Folksong Style and Women, *Journal of American Folklore* 88: 81-100.
- MCLEOD, N. and HERNDON, M. 1980 The Interrelationship of Style and Occasion in the Maltese Spirtu Pront. In: N. MCLEOD and M. HERNDON (EDS.) *The Ethnography of Musical Performance*, Norwood, Pa.: Norwood Editions, pp. 147-166.
- MIFSUD-CHIRCOP G. (Ed.) 1999 *Maltese Folksong 'Għana' : A Bibliography and Resource Material*. Malta: Malta University Press.
- MIFSUD-CHIRCOP, G. 2003 "A New Look at Maltese High Pitched Folk Singing." *Insaniyat* 32-33: 197-215.
- PACE, A. 2015. 'Participating in the Musical Tradition of Prejjem: Transmitting the Guitar Culture of Għana within and between Insular Musical Communities of Islanders in Malta and the Maltese-Australian Diaspora' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester).
- SANT CASSIA, P. (2000). Exoticizing discoveries and extraordinary experiences: "traditional" music, modernity, and nostalgia in Malta and other Mediterranean societies. *Ethnomusicology*, 44(2), 281-301

### 7. Signature(s) on behalf of the State(s) Party(ies)

*The nomination should be signed by the official empowered to do so on behalf of the State Party, together with his or her name, title and the date of submission.*

*In the case of multinational nominations, the document should contain the name, title and signature of an official of each State Party submitting the nomination.*

Name: José A. Herrera

Title: Minister

Date: 17 August 2020 (revised version)

Signature: <signed>