



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Intangible
Cultural
Heritage

Original: English

**CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING
OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

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

**Fifth session
Nairobi, Kenya
November 2010**

**NOMINATION FILE NO. 00357
FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST
OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN 2010**

<p>A. STATE(S) PARTY(IES)</p> <p><i>For multi-national nominations, States Parties should be listed in the order on which they have mutually agreed.</i></p>
<p>Croatia</p>
<p>B. NAME OF THE ELEMENT</p>
<p>B.1. Name of the element in English or French</p> <p><i>This is the official name of the element that will appear in published material about the Representative List. It should be concise. Please do not exceed 200 characters, including spaces and punctuation. The name should be transcribed in Latin Unicode characters (Basic Latin, Latin-1 Supplement, Latin Extended-A or Latin Extended Additional).</i></p>
<p>The Sinjska Alka, a knights' tournament in Sinj</p>
<p>B.2. Name of the element in the language and script of the community concerned, if applicable</p> <p><i>This is the official name of the element in the vernacular language corresponding to the official name in English or French (point B.1.). It should be concise. Please do not exceed 200 characters in Unicode (Latin or others), including spaces and punctuation.</i></p>
<p>Sinjska alka</p>

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

In addition to the official name(s) of the element (B.1.) please mention alternate name(s), if any, by which the element is known, in Unicode characters (Latin or others).

The Sinjska Alka chivalric competition

The Alka of Sinj

C. CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ELEMENT**C.1. Identification of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned**

According to the 2003 Convention, intangible heritage can only be identified with reference to communities, groups or individuals that recognize it as part of their cultural heritage. Thus it is important to identify clearly one or several communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned with the nominated element. The information provided should allow the Committee to identify the communities, groups or individuals concerned with an element, and should be mutually coherent with the information in sections 1 to 5 below.

The Chivalric Society of the Alka in the town of Sinj is the local association responsible for ensuring the continuation of the tradition of the tournament, which includes securing the conditions for the transmission of skills and for the logistical preparation of the tournament.

Besides the mentioned association, the whole community, the people of the Cetinje region and the town of Sinj take part in the preparation of the tournament. Until today, almost for three centuries, they have been engaging in the activities that unfold during the tournament days, thus transmitting various forms and expressions of the intangible cultural heritage to younger generations.

C.2. Geographic location and range of the element and location of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned

This section should identify the range of distribution of the element, indicating if possible the geographic locations in which it is centred. If related elements are practiced in neighbouring areas, please so indicate.

The Alka tournament takes place in the town of Sinj, in the Cetinje region, within the borders of the Republic of Croatia. The specificity of the location is reflected in the Alka tournament, as is the region's and the town's history. The Alka has been continually held in the same place for nearly three centuries. The Cetinje region is officially part of the Dalmatian hinterland (which encompasses about 1,000 km²) situated between the two parallel mountain chains of Svilaja and Dinara, with the River Cetina flowing through a long depression whose base is formed by the fields of Cetina, Vrlika, Hrvace and Sinj. With its magnificent shape and length, and the diversity of its underground and surface crags, the Dinara Mountain has given its name to the biggest mountain chain on the Balkan Peninsula.

C.3. Domain(s) represented by the element

Identify concisely 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. (This information will be used primarily for visibility, if the element is inscribed.)

Oral traditions and expressions;

Performing arts (festivity, dance and song);

Social practices, rituals and festive events;
Traditional craftsmanship.

D. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENT

The brief description of the element will be particularly helpful in allowing the Committee to know at a glance what element is being proposed for inscription, and, in the event of inscription, will be used for purposes of visibility. It should be a summary of the description provided in point 1 below but is not an introduction to that longer description.

The Sinjska Alka – a Knights' Tournament in Sinj was founded in the 18th century in honour of Our Lady (in Catholic Christianity: Mary, Mother of Jesus) who, according to the beliefs of local people, saved the city.

It has been held continuously for nearly three centuries in accordance with a strictly codified decree.

The Sinjska Alka has preserved its authenticity by melding ancient local, oriental and Venetian influences that are reflected in rich historical costumes and strict and elaborate rules.

This syncretism is a typical result of the historical co-existence of two different civilisations spanning the borders of Catholicism and Islam. It is also mirrored in the terminology used in the tournament and the etymology of its name (the term 'alka' comes from the Turkish 'halka' meaning a ring or door-knocker).

It is the only authentic remnant of ancient medieval knightly competitions that were regularly held in the Croatian coastal towns until the 19th century.

The Sinjska Alka was, therefore, given a prominent place in literature, the plastic arts, painting and music and has remained the single most important annual social event.

1. IDENTIFICATION AND DEFINITION OF THE ELEMENT (CF. CRITERION R.1)

This is the key section of the nomination to satisfy criterion R.1: “The element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention”. A clear and complete explanation is essential to demonstrate that the nominated element meets the Convention’s definition of intangible heritage. 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 and cultural functions and meanings today, within and for its community,*
- b. the characteristics of the bearers and practitioners of the element,*
- c. any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities towards the element,*
- 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 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.

Although its focal point is winning the main tournament, the Sinjska Alka is actually a set of events taking place over a number of days in the wider area of Sinj and the Cetinje region during which the actual participants of the Sinjska Alka—alkars, their men and the musicians accompanying them – mingle with cheerful crowds in the street and among the spectators. The tournament is held on the first Sunday in August.

The Sinjska Alka is a chivalric competition where knights riding horses at full gallop, not slower than 45 km/h, holding lances (poles) 290-300 centimetres long, aim at an iron ring hanging on a rope, at a height of 3.22 metres over the course on one of the main streets of the town of Sinj. The ring (‘alka’ – the original Arabic name ‘halqa’ entered the Croatian language through the Turkish word ‘halka’) is made of two concentric rings connected with three bars.

When a knight strikes through the inner circle, the city music starts playing and a volley of artillery fire sounds three times in a row (this is called ‘Mačkule’).

If a knight, while aiming at the ring, bounces it and somehow manages to hit it again while it is in the air (no matter in which partition) and if it remains on his lance, three extra points are added to those won by the strike.

(This was the case that Dinko Šimunović, a writer, described in his story ‘The Alkar’ which was translated into many different languages, including Chinese).

Very often there is an extra race known as the ‘pripetavanje’ for those knights who have the same number of points after three attempts. The winner receives a generous yet symbolic reward, as well as money to be spent on a celebration to which all the participants of the contest are invited.

Two main rehearsals take place prior to the main tournament, which are both accompanied by a great number of spectators and preparations for the main event. On Friday, the rehearsal is

called the 'bara' and on Saturday the 'čoja', during which knights wear casual clothes instead of the solemn costume.

The smallest number of competitors is 11, the greatest 15, exceptionally 17 including the 'alaj-čajuš', the commander of the knights' troop.

Only those who have never been in trouble with the law and were born there, and whose ancestors originate from the Cetinje region can become knights and participate in the tournament.

Originating at the beginning of the 18th century, the Alka tournament of Sinj is an example of the survival and transformation of one of numerous chivalric competitions held in some cities along the coast of Croatia. During the 19th century this tournament was organised in Makarska, Zadar, and Imotski, and earlier even in Split and Dubrovnik, on the islands of Krk, Rab, Hvar, the Istrian peninsula and elsewhere.

The first Statute of the Alka was carefully drawn up in 1833 based on the tradition, describing in detail the origins of the Alka, its purpose and the way of running it. This Statute is the basis for today's tournament which is constantly being recreated and complemented with many unwritten rules.

Many intangible elements belong to the tournament, although they are not so obvious: conservation, restoration and reconstruction of a great amount of different parts of alkars' weapons, clothes and accessories help to preserve the continuation of the tradition, such as traditional shoe making, garment making (sewing and weaving), jewellery making, etc. Another aspect of the tournament is the religious practices and worship of the local people, social gathering, family visits, celebration parties that take place in homes, as well as the expression of festive feelings in the open.

What also makes the Sinjska Alka special is the fact that a chivalric tradition is being constantly revitalised at the very time when the traditional characteristics of the authentic culture upon which it is based and within which it was created are becoming assimilated and stratified under the weight of IT globalization and modern civilization achievements. That the Sinjska Alka is deeply rooted in the spiritual and physical space of the Cetinje region is also reflected in the 'alkarići' (small alkars – knights), boys who practise riding and aiming at the ring with their lances and maintaining the equipment, all of which introduces them to the specific code of ethics of the alkars and helps them learn about the glorious times of their ancestors and famous tournaments. They are the future generations of knights ('alkars') and their men.

Established at the beginning of the 18th century and based on Venitian and oriental chivalric traditions, the Sinjska Alka soon became a typically local phenomenon which cannot be eradicated. In its heroic spirit, splendour and wealth of costumes and weaponry, these chivalric games have preserved the memory of the famous victory and made the local people, whose frame of mind is best mirrored in the world of epic poems and stories, proud and self-confident. In its three centuries of continuous existence, the Sinjska Alka has become a summary of local history and a medium for transferring collective memory from one generation to another. At certain points in history, it was even regarded as a substitute for freedom.

2. CONTRIBUTION TO ENSURING VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS AND TO ENCOURAGING DIALOGUE (CF. CRITERION R.2)

The nomination should demonstrate (Criterion R.2) 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".

Please explain how the element's inscription on the Representative List will contribute to ensuring visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and will raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of its importance. This section need not address how inscription will bring greater visibility to the element, but how its inscription will contribute to the visibility of intangible cultural heritage more broadly.

Explain how inscription will promote respect for cultural diversity and human creativity, and will promote mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals.

Among games based on aiming at a ring, the Sinjska Alka is a unique example of intangible cultural heritage and contributes to marking cultural and civilisation differences at both national and international levels.

Local people consider the Sinjska Alka as their property – one that they have been constantly renewing for the past three centuries, and its inscription in the register of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia has created preconditions for its increased visibility and acknowledgement at the national level.

With the inscription of the Sinjska Alka on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the local communities of Sinj and the Cetinje region, as well as the international community, would undertake the obligation of safeguarding, transferring and maintaining its customs. Not only would awareness of the need to protect the tradition be raised, but inscription would also testify to the level of general culture our society has reached in which dialogue and respect among cultures is secured.

The Sinjska Alka is a rare example of local, oriental and Venetian influences shown in the festive clothing, strictly defined rules and specific terminology, and the unique combination of these elements testifies to the historical co-existence of two different cultural influences.

The vitality and ever-present social importance of the Sinjska Alka, as well as the role that it plays, testify that all generations and people from all walks of life can relate to the phenomenon of the Sinjska Alka which has been recognised as a common denominator of their cultural identity.

Along with the chosen knights, the tournament also includes special infantry units consisting of ordinary people from local villages. Including all people in the tournament regardless of their social and economic status shows how cultural customs can be reinterpreted and brought into a new era, in other words, how they can be improved.

Former conflicts are borne in mind in a manner that encourages mutual understanding, with a view to avoiding future ones. This is especially emphasised during the opening ceremony of the tournament, so the military aspect of the Sinjska Alka contributes to the visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and opens up space for establishing dialogue among cultures.

Skills demonstrated in the course of the tournament are based on military experience, but are used to promote its peaceful goals (aiming at the ring being just one of the examples of such practices). Besides being focused on a pure desire to be victorious, the rules of the tournament are geared towards promoting ethics and fair play typical of similar sporting competitions. They also stress the importance of participation and being part of the local community.

A special sense of belonging is also strengthened by the fact that the participants have to be members of the local families of the town of Sinj and the Cetinje region.

Art forms connected with the Sinjska Alka can also help to establish cultural dialogue with people from the region and with the rest of the world. Art, music, dance and science are part of the Sinjska Alka festivities, and the memory of days gone by gives numerous opportunities for people to express their own identity and sense of belonging to a certain community and to the

area where they live, and all this without aggressive behaviour.

A wealth of visitors invited by the local inhabitants contributes to dialogue among communities of different traditions.

The ability to communicate at the global level, which is the result of the strong will of the community to do so, demonstrates that the Sinjska Alka is more important than any other material element.

High-ranking officials from the government and the President of the Republic of Croatia are regular spectators who, by being there and also by providing financial support, show that both individual officials and state bodies help the local community to continue their tradition.

The inscription of this ritual onto the Representative List would help achieve a greater understanding of the phenomenon and of the intangible culture as a whole in the region. It would also contribute to reducing the danger of the Sinjska Alka becoming over commercialised by the media and by poorly informed outsiders. Inscription on the List would also shield the Sinjska Alka from becoming dependent on external aid and sponsors and being transferred to the realm of theatre and becoming a simple stage performance.

The tradition bearers would thus gain long-term and thorough insight into the value of the Sinjska Alka and intangible cultural heritage in general, and they would surely be motivated to continue to insist on preserving an approach that contributes to its safeguarding. They would also be able to see that, although unique and special in their own way, they are also a small part of the world's intangible cultural heritage that consists of many different related forms with which they can communicate.

The ability to communicate with the world through the Sinjska Alka (which is a vital expression of the local community) would emphasize the communication potential of intangible culture as a whole. It is up to teachers, ethnologists, folklorists and those working in tourism to include knowledge of the Sinjska Alka - a Knights' Tournament in Sinj in the training and educational programmes.

Awareness should be raised of all the above mentioned points in a more comprehensive manner, given the fact that there is still a huge lack of understanding and knowledge of the qualities and values of this custom.

3. SAFEGUARDING MEASURES (CF. CRITERION R.3)

Items 3.a. to 3.c. request the elaboration of a coherent set of safeguarding measures as called for in Criterion R.3: "Safeguarding measures are elaborated that may protect and promote the element". Such measures should reflect the broadest possible participation of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned, both in their formulation and in their implementation.

3.a. Current and recent efforts to safeguard the element

Please describe the current and recent efforts of the concerned communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals to ensure the viability of the element. Describe efforts of the concerned State(s) Party(ies) to safeguard the element, taking note of external or internal constraints, such as limited resources.

The Sinjska Alka – a Knights' Tournament in Sinj has been held each year since the 18th century by the local people of the Cetinje region and is almost always enjoying the support of local and national political leaders.

There have been attempts in other places throughout Europe, including Croatia, to restore similar chivalric tournaments documented in archives. In these cases, the magnificence of the restored competitions has not only failed to compensate for the loss of the tournament's authenticity, but has also never managed to establish the close link between the chivalric competition and the chivalric spirit in the specific social environment which is the permanent and most distinctive feature of the Sinjska Alka.

The Sinjska Alka has never been banned, but was only postponed for several months during a period of cholera in 1885. During the Second World War, the Alka did not take place, except in 1944.

The chivalric rule book, codified throughout the 19th century that has to be strictly followed by all knights, ensures the viability of the tournament.

The Chivalric Society was established in the 18th century and is nowadays a civic organisation with four permanent employees (secretary, treasurer, marketing manager and administrator). The Society has 190 members (exclusively from the Cetinje region) and numerous volunteers whose work is related to the Society's operation. The Society looks after the horses, their breeding and maintenance throughout the whole year. There are around 30 horses that are to be prepared for the tournament.

The Chivalric Society of the Alka is in charge of making sure that new monographs, different publications and promotional material about the Alka are regularly published. A great deal of effort has been put into establishing the first ever Alka Knights' Court ('Alkarski dvori'), the headquarters of the Chivalric Society of the Alka, which should also house the future Museum of the Alka.

The continuous restoration of the knights' clothes and equipment started in 1984 in the Croatian Conservation Institute in Zagreb in accordance with the highest conservation standards.

The Sinjska Alka – a Knights' Tournament in Sinj is one of the best and most thoroughly described phenomena of the Croatian heritage, which can be seen from the enclosed bibliographies, as well as recent literary productions and films. Pictures from the beginning of the 19th century constitute documents on the continuity and changes in the Alka, as do numerous original archive documents (since 1798).

Many individuals with multidisciplinary interests are included in the research pertaining to the Alka. Individuals at all levels participated in the preparation of the nomination and included the Chivalric Society of the Alka, local people, local and regional authorities, experts, scientific institutions and conservators from the Ministry of Culture.

Entering the Sinjska Alka – a Knights' Tournament in Sinj into the Register of Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Croatia in 2007 established the preconditions to ensure its visibility and to create awareness at the national level.

3.b. Safeguarding measures proposed

For the Representative List, the safeguarding measures are those that may help to solidify the element's current viability and to ensure that its viability is not jeopardized in the future, especially as an unintended result of inscription and the resulting visibility and public attention.

Identify and describe the various safeguarding measures that are elaborated that may, if implemented, protect and promote the element, and provide brief information concerning, for example, their priority, scope, approaches, timetables, responsible persons or bodies, and costs.

The Sinjska Alka – a Knights' Tournament in Sinj is one of the most spectacular forms of the Croatian cultural heritage. Every August, it attracts numerous tourists and all the inhabitants of the Cetinje region to the small town of Sinj. When travelling from Split, entering Sinj, you will pass next to a bridge and see the starting point for knights on horseback who gallop along a 200 metre track, shaded by magnificent chestnuts. The track is maintained regularly, as are the stands for nearly 15,000 people who come every year to see the tournament.

The spirit and rules of these ancient chivalric games will be clearly elaborated and presented in the new Alka Knights' Court ('Alkarski dvori'), and especially in the contemporary museum displays which are currently being prepared and which will be accessible throughout the year. The underlying idea of the project of the Alka Knights' Court which is being implemented on the location of the old Venetian 'Kvartir' (the former headquarters of the Military Authority in the 18th century) and the permanent exhibition of the Alka is to create an entire experience open to the general public, passers-by, those on field trips and citizens of Sinj 365 days a year. The ideal visitor for whom this programme is being tailored is a student, first and foremost one from Sinj, who would be attracted by the traditional ideas of the Alka and all the local values that

accompany this phenomenon that will be communicated to him/her in a contemporary manner.

The transformation of the 'Kvartir' (with the useful surface of 5040 m² and a courtyard of 1674 m²) into the Alka Knights' Court was initiated on March 18, 2007 and is being carried out in accordance with the first-prize-winning project submitted in an invitation for tenders. The project is consistent with all the guidelines applied for the faithful restoration of the existing military quarter structure (established at the same time as the Alka) laid down in the elaborate conservation master plan which is the result of extensive research. The total costs of the project are estimated at about EUR 5 billion. 52% of the amount will be covered from the state budget, 15% from the budget of the town of Sinj and the rest from donations and the revenues of the Chivalric Society of the Alka.

The end of first stage of the project was celebrated in August 2009 and the project of compiling the museum displays is currently underway. Historic objects directly linked to the Alka are being purchased and will be used as exhibits in the future Alka Knights' Court (these include old, weapons, jewellery, costumes). By the time the museum is completed in the summer of 2011, its core exhibits will have been displayed in a number of exhibitions in Croatia and abroad.

The Ministry of Culture has established a system of safeguarding measures for the intangible cultural heritage at the national level which should also promote the importance and values of the Sinjska Alka. However, the most important role is played by the Chivalric Society of the Alka, the local civic organization in charge of the preparations of the tournament and other activities throughout the year. A web-site (www.alka.hr) has recently been created which for the moment only contains the latest news of the activities of the Chivalric Society, but will help extend understanding of the importance of the tournament nationally and internationally and place it in the context of Croatian and European intangible cultural heritage.

New educational and visitors' programmes are being prepared and are geared towards a comparative interpretation of the cultural and historical importance of this tournament and other similar ones that have existed or that still exist in Europe. This approach should help visitors, especially youngsters to become aware of their region's heritage.

Inscribing the Sinjska Alka – a Knights' Tournament in Sinj on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity would contribute to general and further study of the phenomenon, as well as to discovering the complex cultural background of its origin. Furthermore, it would help preserving the Sinjska Alka's uniqueness within the local community at the time when its particularities are inevitably modified under the influence of digital technology, media, and cultural and commercial globalization.

3.c. Commitment of communities, groups or individuals concerned

The feasibility of safeguarding depends in large part on the aspirations and commitment of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned. This section should provide evidence that the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned have the will and commitment to safeguard the element if conditions are favourable. The best evidence will often be an explanation of their involvement in past and ongoing safeguarding measures and of their participation in the formulation and implementation of future safeguarding measures, rather than simple pledges or affirmations of their support or commitment.

The town administration, the Chivalric Society of the Alka and many other local organizations and individuals have participated in elaborating all the points of this nomination. The members of the Chivalric Society are representatives of the entire community and are residents of the Cetinje region, so they are fully aware of the threats to the preservation of this tradition – especially different aspects that might be exploited commercially and which might have a detrimental effect on the tradition itself.

Besides providing full moral support for the tradition of the Alka, the town of Sinj is also co-financing the restoration of the 'Kvartir', the 18th century Venetian military headquarters, which is being transformed into the Alka Knights' Court ('Alkarski dvori') and the museum of the Alka in an amount of about EUR 830,000. The town of Sinj also provides some EUR 28,000 annually for the organization of the tournament.

The town of Sinj is also co-financing the restoration of the Fortress of Grad, a historical site. So far, the town has invested about EUR 280,000, and it is expected that by the end of the restoration (in 2014) the total of EUR 700,000 will have been disbursed. The greatest part of this amount is secured through annual safeguarding programmes of the Ministry of Culture.

3.d. Commitment of State(s) Party(ies)

The feasibility of safeguarding also depends on the support and cooperation of the concerned State(s) Party(ies). This section should provide evidence that the State Party concerned has the commitment to support the safeguarding effort by creating favourable conditions for its implementation and should describe how the State Party has previously and will in the future demonstrate such commitment. Declarations or pledges of support are less informative than explanations and demonstrations.

The importance of the Alka of Sinj as an intangible cultural good has been confirmed by its inscription in the Register of Protected Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia.

This decision stipulates the implementation of a number of measures for the safeguarding and revitalisation of such goods. This primarily relates to continued research, documentation, expert and scientific valuation, as well as the training of professional staff and tradition bearers for the transfer of knowledge to young people.

Special significance is attached to the popularisation and promotion of the values of this intangible cultural property as a component part of local identity and of the cultural identity of Croatia. The holding of exhibitions, expert meetings, the organisation of events and the popularisation of this heritage through the electronic media, audio and video recordings and other modes of transmission are some of the activities that should contribute to its preservation.

This proclamation opens up opportunities for those involved in its preservation and safeguarding to apply to the Ministry of Culture for financial support in order to carry out activities linked to research and to the collection and documentation of folk heritage.

The help of the authorities is invaluable, as is the support of the State which recognises the event as important to the local community as well as to national history and identity. Through various development and cultural programmes, the state and local government provide financial and ethical support for the preservation of this piece of heritage in all its segments.

4. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT IN THE NOMINATION PROCESS (CF. CRITERION R.4)

This section asks the submitting State Party to establish that the nomination satisfies Criterion R.4: '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 in the nomination process

Describe how and in what ways the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned have participated actively in the nomination process at all stages, as required by Criterion R.4. States Parties are further encouraged to prepare nominations with the participation of a wide variety of other concerned parties, including where appropriate local and regional governments, neighbouring communities, NGOs, research institutes, centres of expertise and other interested parties. The participation of communities in the practice and transmission of the element should be addressed in point 1 above, and their participation in safeguarding should be addressed in point 3; here the submitting State should describe the widest possible participation of communities in the nomination process.

The Alka tradition bearers were highly pleased with the inscription of the Sinjska Alka on the Register of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia and with its nomination for inscription on UNESCO's Representative List. This was reflected in their active participation in the preparatory activities taking place before the nomination, such as drafting parts of the nomination text and preparation of the accompanying photographs and video recordings. They were asked to submit

suggestions pertaining to the description of the element and the safeguarding measures that were then incorporated in the nomination. They chose representative photographs and selected the feature-length film excerpts that were to be shown. They also participated in the making of the aforementioned film and, furthermore, made a 10-minute film to accompany the nomination, with the Ministry adding only the titles.

While preparing the nomination, the members of the Alka Society cooperated with pleasure, and were constantly in contact both with local and national authorities, as well as with experts who helped them shape their opinions and attitudes to best meet the clarity of explanation and other criteria for inscription. The local community, the tradition bearers, the authorities and experts are all aware of the nomination, and the information that the Alka has been nominated has been received enthusiastically and there is a special sense of honour and privilege to be inscribed on the Representative List of ICH of Humanity. The preparation of this nomination has thus involved individuals from many levels, ranging from the Chivalric Society and local habitants, local and regional authorities, to professional and scientific institutions and conservators who work in the Ministry of Culture.

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

The free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of the element from 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..

Please attach supporting evidence demonstrating such consent and indicate below what evidence you are providing and what form it takes.

Appended Statements

4.c. Respect for customary practices governing access

Access to certain specific aspects of intangible cultural heritage is sometimes restricted by customary practices governing, for example, its transmission or performance or maintaining the secrecy of certain knowledge. Please indicate if such practices exist and, if they do, demonstrate that 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.

Knightly tournaments took place in a number of our coastal towns and on many islands in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries; however, the Sinjska Alka – a Knights' Tournament in Sinj is the only one that continues today.

Besides love, heroism is one of the human qualities that has been most frequently celebrated in verse. Heroism is also a noble trait, encompassing courage, fortitude and justice in the fight for the protection of the enslaved and the degraded. The identity of the people of the Cetina region has been forged by this intangible aspect of the heroic spirit throughout history until the present day, and such people have passed this knightly competition on to younger generations by organising a children's knightly tournament called the 'Children's Alka'.

Preserving this aspect of the Sinjska Alka and respecting the feelings of the local people should be of utmost concern in future research, visits, development programmes or any activities that might be seen as a threat.

One of the reasons contributing to the preservation of the Alka in the town of Sinj is also the believe of local people and defenders in Our Lady of Miracles who, as the story goes, came to the aid of the Sinj citizens and helped them defend their town. The people of Sinj were, therefore, very much in favour of the tournament and they try to emphasise, besides its noble

symbolism (in the spectators' eyes, it is solemn and knightly), the religious aspect of the Alka.

The local people's right to choose the Catholic Christian religion and to make it part of the tournament's significance should be respected in future activities, whether by researchers, authorities, visitors and other people interested in the tournament itself.

It is also necessary to ensure that:

the local culture be understood to a much greater extent;

the bearers of this intangible cultural element be respected;

the boundaries between the active participants and the spectators be erased by turning all those present into participants;

quality cultural exchange takes place.

The above described ideas and plans are entirely in line with these priorities.

Due to the great visibility of the Sinjska Alka, it is necessary that local and wider communities closely monitor the implementation of the programmes pertaining to the Alka in order for them to be able to point out all possible deviations or deformations of the phenomenon and undertake measures for rectifying them.

The inscription of the Sinjska Alka on UNESCO's Representative List and the implementation of the safeguarding measures will ensure the full respect of the customs and traditional practices.

5. INCLUSION OF THE ELEMENT IN AN INVENTORY (CF. CRITERION R.5)

This section is where the State Party establishes that the nomination satisfies Criterion R.5: "The 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".

Identify the inventory in which the element has been included and the office, agency, organization or body responsible for maintaining that inventory. Demonstrate that the inventory has been drawn up in conformity with Articles 11 and 12, in particular Article 11(b) that stipulates that intangible cultural heritage shall be identified and defined "with the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations" and Article 12 requiring that inventories be regularly updated.

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

In line with the provisions of Article 9 of the Croatian Act on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Goods (Official Gazette 69/99, 151/03, 157/03) which includes the category of intangible cultural heritage, a formal decision was taken by the Ministry of Culture that the Sinjska Alka – A Knights' Tournament in Sinj, was safeguarded as part of the intangible cultural heritage, and thus it was inscribed in the Register of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia.

The Sinjska Alka – A Knights' Tournament in Sinj is a separate entry in the Register of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia under no. Z 3238 in line with the formal decision proclaiming the Alka as an item of the intangible cultural heritage, signed by the Minister of Culture on 2 May 2007.

According to the Act on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Property, cultural properties are registered in the Register of the Cultural Property of the Republic of Croatia. The Register of Cultural Goods is a public document under the authority of the Ministry of Culture.

The Register consists of three lists:

- List of registered cultural property;
- List of cultural property of national significance;
- List of cultural property under preventive protection.

As far as intangible cultural property is concerned, Croatia has registered 9 phenomena or forms of intangible cultural heritage on the List of Cultural Property under preventive protection, and 77

different phenomena or forms of intangible cultural heritage in the List of Registered Cultural Property.

The list is being continuously amended with new intangible cultural goods. There are currently some 130 recorded important phenomena of intangible heritage in the procedure of inscription on the List of Registered Cultural Property.

Proposals for the inscription of intangible cultural goods in the Register of the Ministry of Culture are usually submitted by the tradition bearers of the phenomena.

Requests for inscription in the Register are drawn up on the corresponding application forms for the establishment of the protection of the intangible cultural property. The tradition bearers use application forms as a guide to which type and scope of data need to be submitted when requesting an element to be entered into the Register.

Proposals have also been submitted by the competent conservation departments, the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Research, the Institute for Croatian Language and Linguistics, and local communities (museums, cultural-artistic societies, non-governmental organisations, etc.).

The majority of the proposals have been elaborated for inscription in the register by experts - members of the special Advisory Committee for the Intangible Cultural Heritage established within the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture. The Committee is made up of 20 associates from the Ministry of Culture and, outside the Ministry, experts in specific types of intangible heritage for the purpose of encouraging its legal and practical protection, its preservation and promotion both at national and international levels.

DOCUMENTATION

a. Required and supplementary documentation

Required documentation provided.

b. Cession of rights including registry of items

Required cession of rights provided.

c. List of additional resources

Graphic showing the siege of Sinj 1715

A. Barač, Water-colour painting showing the fortress, city's old centre and the Alka procession (1838)

A. Barač, Water-colour painting of a knight and his man (1838)

A. Barač, Water-colour painting of the procession of knights (1838)

V. Poiret, Water-colour painting of the procession of knights (1840)

V. Poiret. Water-colour painting that shows a farewell of a knight and his wife (1840)

various photographs from Society's photo documentation

Bibliography:

L. DUDAN, La giostra di Sign nel giorno natalizio di s.m. imperatore e re Francesco I., Venezia 1827

I. MARKOVIĆ, Sinj and Its Celebration, Sinj 1898 (reprint)

S. GRČIĆ, Native Poems and Stories of Sinj, Split 1920

S. GUNJAČA, Of the Chivalric Tournaments of Dalmatia, Obzor 1933:179

I. LOVRIĆ, Remarks After Travelling Through Dalmatia, Zagreb, 1949 (originally published)

Ivan Lovrić and his work, Miscellaneous Collection of Cetinje region vol. 1 Sinj 1979
Archaeological and Historical Heritage of Cetinje Region Miscellaneous Collection of the Cetinje Region, vol. 2 Sinj 1981
The Alka Tournament of Sinj, Beograd 1987
Š. JURIC, Documents and Literary Material on the Alka of Sinj, 1988
Sinj and the Cetinje Region in Time of Turkish Rule, Miscellaneous Collection of the Cetinje Region, volume V, Sinj 1989
M. MILOŠEVIĆ, 5000 Years of the City of Sinj, Sinj 1989
J. SOLDI, Region of Sinj during the 17th and the 18th cent. I and II, Sinj 1995 and 1998
Alka 1715, (J. Soldo and M. Grčić), Sinj 2001
Films:
Alka Tournament of Sinj, video movie (directed by J. Sedlar)
Sinj and Cetinje region, DVD movie
The Knights of Alka, DVD movie
Cheval mon ami, DVD movie

CONTACT INFORMATION

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b. Competent body involved

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c. Concerned community organization(s) or representative(s)

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SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF THE STATE PARTY

Name: Bozo Biskupic
Title: Minister of Culture
Date: 25 August 2009
Signature: <signed>