

Joint conference of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania
***Sustainability of the Song and Dance Celebration Tradition in the
Baltics***

November 8 - 10, 2007, Riga

RESOLUTION

Highly appreciating previous cooperation, exchange of experience and ideas of the three Baltic States ensuring the safeguarding and sustainability of the Song and Dance Celebration tradition and intangible cultural heritage,

Taking into consideration common features and different characteristics of the intangible cultural heritage of each country, *inter alia* the preservation and revitalisation of the Song and Dance Celebration tradition,

Expressing a conviction that each inhabitant of the Baltic States has a right to get acquainted with the cultural heritage of previous generations, as well as a responsibility to participate in its exploration, safeguarding and cultivation,

Emphasizing that in the globalised world it is especially significant to preserve the cultural diversity and the unique roots of each nation's cultural traditions – intangible cultural heritage,

Recognising that cultural diversity and intangible cultural heritage is the basis of sustainable development of each state and its regional and local governments and particularly emphasising the role of oral and intangible cultural heritage in maintaining the identity of local communities and developing social inclusion within the society,

Emphasising that the local governments and communities have a decisive role in safeguarding the Song and Dance Celebration

tradition as an internationally recognised Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity,

As well as emphasising that human factor has a significant role in ensuring the continuous process and the quality of the tradition – motivation and skills of each participant and particularly the motivation and skills of artistic leaders and organisers of the tradition process,

Recognizing the decisive role of a personality in motivating the Song and Dance Celebration participants and ensuring sustainability in transmission of the tradition,

We, the participants of joint conference of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania “Sustainability of the Song and Dance Celebration Tradition in the Baltics”, as a result of discussions, have come to the following conclusions and proposals with which we address parliaments, governments, local governments, non-governmental organisations, society and media of our countries:

1. In order to guarantee the sustainability of the Song and Dance Celebration process it is essential that the state and local governments unite efforts to jointly work out clear and systematic support mechanisms of the process, to determine stable sources of its financing and to specify the responsibilities of different levels involved in safeguarding the tradition. For this purpose, a strategic development plan should be elaborated, in the framework of which also the following issues need to be addressed:
 - 1.1. optimal cycle of events (national children and youth celebrations, nationwide celebrations, regional and local celebrations, singing and dancing days and other activities related to the development of the genres of the Song and Dance Celebration tradition,

- 1.2. motivation of instructors active in the various fields of artistic expression that carry the Song and Dance Celebration tradition,
 - 1.3. principles of creating suitable conditions (legal, financial, educational, organisational and others), for the activities of practitioner groups and individual practitioners, taking into account the size of the practitioner group and the variety of genres practiced,
 - 1.4. targeted and purposeful use of financial and human resources according to the established principles and timeframe,
 - 1.5. role of cultural and educational institutions that ensure needed infrastructure and organisation of the grassroots level activities of the tradition.
2. Song and Dance Celebration process as a cultural expression of deep symbolic and comprehensive edifying value should be seen in the context of lifelong learning. The transmission of the tradition from one generation to another is the key factor of its sustainability and therefore cooperation and link between the processes and participants of the Children and Youth Celebrations and Nationwide Celebrations should be encouraged at national, regional and local level by organising joint activities. In cooperation of educational and cultural sectors educational programmes should be developed at all levels to contribute to safeguarding of artistic qualities and values of the tradition.
3. The key ingredient in safeguarding the sustainability of the tradition and high artistic quality of the practitioner groups and celebrations alike is the existence of qualified and motivated human resources (artistic leaders, instructors, administrators and other culture specialists). A broad based motivation programme needs to be worked out for them. For that purpose:
- 3.1. Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian experts should jointly work out the joint ground principles of the programme,

3.2. each state and its regional and local governments should jointly outline the main directions of the programme and to agree on the division of duties,

3.3. each regional and local government should work out a concrete programme that is based on the respective principles, directions, local traditions and best practices.

Special attention should be paid to the following important aspects: stable and competitive salary that corresponds to their qualification and results of their work, good working conditions and positive working environment, as well as possibilities and financial means for training and developing professional skills.

4. In the framework of Song and Dance Celebration process the uniqueness of local cultural environment and intangible cultural heritage should be emphasised, regional and local identity highlighted and strengthened, particularly through development of activities at all levels aimed at transmission of the traditional knowledge and skills. Adequate attention should be paid to national costumes as one of the visual reflections of local identity and to the parade of the celebration as an important opportunity for presenting such local identity.

5. In order to develop further cooperation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania:

5.1. to strengthen ties between artistic unions and the organisations representing instructors active in the various fields of artistic expression that carry the Song and Dance Celebration tradition of the three countries;

5.2. to prepare and endorse a common internship programme for instructors and artistic leaders, which would enable to learn and to practice from each other at relevant cultural institutions and art collectives;

5.3. to develop a set of comparative indicators to measure sustainability of tradition in all three countries (for example percentage of practitioners *vis a vis* the population of the country etc);

- 5.4. to activate and renew the Baltic Coordination Committee on the Song and Dance Celebration tradition with a mandate to monitor the implementation of the adopted resolutions of the Baltic conferences at national levels, to present a progress report on the implementation of the previous joint resolution at the next joint conference and to further develop the Baltic Action plan for the safeguarding and the revitalisation of the Song and Dance Celebration tradition;
- 5.5. to organise Baltic conferences on the Song and Dance Celebration tradition at least every three years and to organise in the framework of these conferences round tables for professional discussions on the repertoire policy and other artistic and organisational issues of the latest Song and Dance Celebrations.