

ENGLISH (original)

Decision recommendation of the Evaluation Body to the plenary assembly on the Swedish proposal

DRAFT DECISION 18.COM 8.c.2

The Committee

1. Takes note that Sweden has proposed **Nyckelharpa network, an innovative dissemination of a music and instrument-building tradition with roots in Sweden** (No. 01976) for selection and promotion by the Committee as a programme, project or activity best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention:

The nyckelharpa is a bowed instrument, originally built and played by farmers and craftspeople in northern Uppland in Sweden. Dating back to the seventeenth century, it was the most common instrument in this region, played at dances and in various ceremonies and rituals. In the early twentieth century, interest in the nyckelharpa waned but the traditions were maintained by enthusiasts, amateurs and professional builders and musicians. The need for a cohesive organization was identified in the late twentieth century and resulted in the establishment of the nyckelharpa network. The primary objective of the network is to safeguard living heritage through safeguarding activities such as: (a) building, playing and dancing to the traditional instrument; (b) facilitating meetings and live music performances; and (c) supporting documentation, research and knowledge dissemination. Today, the nyckelharpa network is characterized by the exchange of knowledge among builders, musicians, researchers, public institutions and other stakeholders. The informal and non-hierarchical model has enabled the spread and use of an almost extinct local instrument. The network's activities and over sixty years of experience are also applicable to other forms of crafts and creating music in other parts of the world.

2. Considers that, from the information included in the file, the programme responds as follows to the criteria for selection as a best safeguarding practice in paragraph 7 of the Operational Directives:

P.1: Safeguarding nyckelharpa entails long-term and conscientious work, such as documentation, research, education, seminars, workshops, regular musicians' meetings and construction courses. It involves many different actors. The nyckelharpa network focuses on knowledge exchange between all participants in courses and seminars, with a view towards continuous quality improvement. The network comprises practitioners (musicians, instrument makers, folk dancers and listeners), folk music organizations and institutions, schools, academic researchers, concert organizers and independent record producers. They work in a spirit of informal and inclusive, non-hierarchical exchange. The Eric Sahlström Institute plays a central role, and has established a series of measures focused on safeguarding. These include education, promotion and the realization of specific projects such as programmes for children and a book publication documenting the instrument-making process.

P.2: The network is spread across Sweden and in other countries around the world and focuses on coordinating regional and international efforts to safeguard the nyckelharpa tradition. Regional festivals, online courses with significant international participation, and seminars held in many countries demonstrate global awareness and interest in the instrument. The efforts to raise awareness and safeguard the tradition extend to many parts of the

world, and the collaborative approach to safeguarding has proven effective in promoting the cultural significance of the nyckelharpa.

- P.3: The activities within the nyckelharpa network are aligned with the principles of the 2003 Convention. Safeguarding, ensuring respect, raising awareness and international cooperation are at its core. The activities are open to anyone who is interested. The traditions that are performed in the network are recognized as intangible cultural heritage by the communities, groups and individuals concerned. Dissemination and perpetuation of knowledge about playing and constructing the nyckelharpa are central to the work of the network. Practitioners support the nomination to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. A national inventory of intangible cultural heritage exists in Sweden, and Nyckelharpa is included therein.
- P.4: The activities of the nyckelharpa network have contributed greatly to the viability of the element. Older instruments have been preserved and the creative innovation that resulted in the modern nyckelharpa has continued, leading to the creation of several new instrument types. The nyckelharpa now features in a range of different music styles, from classical folk music to pop, rock and jazz, and is performed by a wide range of practitioners. The different actors in the network contribute to the viability of this living heritage through teaching, playing and building activities. Students are engaged in a wide array of educational activities, some of them reaching professional or semi-professional status in Sweden or abroad. The quality of the instruments has improved as a result of the network's efforts and in response to the demand from music colleges.
- P.5: The nyckelharpa network is a result of the commitment and initiatives of devoted individual practitioners, civil society, non-profit organizations and public institutions, at local, regional and national levels. Amateurs and enthusiasts have been involved in local folk music groups, local organizations, and larger associations, including at the national level. The Eric Sahlström Memorial Foundation and the Eric Sahlström Institute are also involved. The latter has representatives in its board from major national organizations for traditional music and dance (Sveriges Spelmäns Riksförbund, Svenska Ungdomsringen för Bygdekultur and Riksföreningen för Folkmusik och Dans), as well as the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, and Stockholm University of the Arts. The consent letters attached testify to the general support of various communities and groups.
- P.6: The nyckelharpa safeguarding activities are applicable to other types of acoustic, handcrafted instruments and can be a model for supporting other forms of intangible cultural heritage. The network can act as an example of a bottom-up network, characterized by informality, inclusivity, sharing, and a non-hierarchical organization focused on preservation and innovation. Other aspects such as the educational tools used in the network and the element's contribution to sustainable development may have the potential to inspire other projects for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
- P.7: The file demonstrates how the actors in the nyckelharpa network have already shared experiences and expertise with a wide range of other people and organizations. Meeting and sharing are some of the key aspects characterizing the communities concerned. The file clearly elaborates how the State Party, implementing bodies, communities, groups and individuals will continue their efforts, with a focus on disseminating this best practice to other countries, partners, institutes, communities, groups and individuals.

P.8: The Eric Sahlström Institute (ESI), as a focal point in the nyckelharpa network, receives annual funding from organizations at different levels, from municipalities to ministries. It is required to report and assess its activities and their outcome. The courses that are organized by the ESI are developed within curriculum frameworks, designed and managed by the Ministry of Education and Research through the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. At the end of each course, the ESI conducts a thorough assessment with the students.

3. Decides to select **Nyckelharpa network, an innovative dissemination of a music and instrument-building tradition with roots in Sweden** as a programme, project or activity best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention;
4. Commends the State Party for a well-prepared file and a safeguarding model that features innovative and multi-pronged methods of safeguarding and that demonstrates the power of a community to revitalize an element.