



## 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. 00364 FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN 2010

<p><b>A. STATE(S) PARTY(IES)</b></p> <p><i>For multi-national nominations, States Parties should be listed in the order on which they have mutually agreed.</i></p>
Spain
<p><b>B. NAME OF THE ELEMENT</b></p>
<p><b>B.1. Name of the element in English or French</b></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>
Human towers
<p><b>B.2. Name of the element in the language and script of the community concerned, if applicable</b></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>
Castells

**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).*

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**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.*

“Castelis” are regarded by the whole of Catalan society as part of their own cultural heritage. They are regarded as especially typical by people in the Catalan regions of the Camp de Tarragona and the Penedes, where historically they have been particularly well established. Indeed, towns that have a “colla castellerà” are usually more involved in the phenomenon and so they regard it as part of their local cultural heritage.

**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 Autonomous Community of Catalonia (Spain). “Castells” are also raised in the Catalan area of the south of France, particularly in the villages of Saint-Jean-Pla-de-Corts and Baho, where there are “colles castelleres”. The same is true on the island of Mallorca: there is a colla castellerà in Palma de Mallorca and another one in Manacor.

**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.)*

Social practices, rituals and festive events; to a lesser degree, it is considered to belong to the performing arts.

**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.*

“Castells” are a typically festive expression in Catalonia dating back more than 200 years and consisting in raising human towers formed by building a number of levels (between 6 and 10) of

people standing on top of each other. The number of people on each level is usually between one and five.

A “castell” is raised by members of an amateur group formed for this purpose, known as the “colla” (plural colles). Each “colla” is comprised of between 75 and 500 men and women of varying ages, who are known as “castellers” and “castelieres”.

“Castells” are normally raised during celebratory events, usually as part of community street festivals. “Castells” are always accompanied by their own kind of music, played on a wind instrument known as a “gralla”, which sets the rhythm to which the tower is raised. It is common for members of the public watching this kind of performance to volunteer to make up the human base, formed by dozens of people, on which the “castell” is raised.

“Castellers” and “castelieres” wear distinctive clothing, based on traditional garments, and each “colla” can be identified by the colour of the shirts worn by its members.

## 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.*

“Castells” are human towers raised by members of amateur groups formed for this purpose. These human towers are raised during festivals, usually as part of the annual festivities in the town hosting the event. The traditional setting is the town square, in front of the town hall balcony.

In Catalan, the word “Castell” means “castle”; the name was coined by local people to describe these human towers, which resemble castles in their height and complexity.

The “castells” calendar runs from April through to November and some “castells” events have been held practically without a break since the 19th century. However, “castells” are also frequently raised to commemorate an especially important event.

Music is an inseparable part of “castells” exhibitions and is provided by groups of musicians,

known as “grillers”, whose name comes from the wind instrument they play - the “gralla”, from the oboe family. Throughout the performance, the musicians play a variety of “tocs”, traditional melodies marking the rhythm to which the “castell” is raised and against which the day’s proceedings unfold.

“Castells” can be between six and ten levels high. Each level or stage usually consists of two, three, four or five “castellers”, except for the three uppermost levels. Towers consisting of just one person per level can also be made, and are known as “pillars”, meaning pillars. There are also more complex constructions, such as “castells” with a pillar in the middle.

The group of people who raise “castells” are called “colles”. Each “colla” is formed by a group of people, the number of which varies from 75 to 500 people. The “colles” are always connected to a particular town or place, which they represent in “castells” events, and consist of individuals from a mix of genders, ages and social spheres, who are placed in one part of the “castell” or another, depending on their ability. The “tronc”, the name given to the “castell” structure from the second level upwards, is generally formed by heavier built men occupying the lower levels, and the upper levels are raised by younger, lighter-weight boys or girls. The “pom de dalt” -the three uppermost levels of the “castell”- is raised by young girls and boys. In contrast, almost anyone can be part of the “pinya” -the group of people that support the base of the “castell”- even senior citizens get involved.

Membership of a “colla” is usually passed down from generation to generation. This means that people develop a sense of belonging to a group, a feeling that has been handed down by their ancestors. This identification with the “colla” goes hand in hand with their sense of belonging to the town and the desire to get better achievements than other “colles”. They are driven by a spirit of collaboration and the desire to progress both as individuals and, especially, as a group.

Each group can be identified by the costumes they wear, particularly the colour of their shirts, which is often associated with features of the town they come from. Another important piece of clothing is the cummerbund, an item that has its origins in rural life; it serves to protect the back and is gripped by “castellers” as they climb up the tower. Other distinguishing features of the “castellers” costume are the trousers, which are always full-length and white, and a red handkerchief with white spots.

The knowledge required for raising “castells” has traditionally been passed down from generation to generation on an informal basis, by continuous membership of a “colla”. Some specialist publications describe in detail the steps and techniques needed to raise a “castell”; however, this can only be regarded as a complement to learning how to do it through personal experience. The essential role played by children and teenagers in raising “castells” is highly beneficial in safeguarding the handover from one generation to the next and the continuity of this tradition. In fact, many of the adults who are now leaders of a “colla” started raising “castells” when they were only seven or eight years old.

The world of “castells” has been an integral part of community life in Catalonia for a very long time. This is illustrated by the Catalan expression “fer pinya” (making the “pinya”), which has its roots in “castells” vocabulary and which has over time become synonymous with “working together” in any context. At a symbolic level, it is evident that Catalan people regard castells as an icon of their identity. The places with the greatest “castells” tradition (Valls, Vilafranca, El Vendrell, Tarragona, etc.) have commemorative monuments in public areas within their town centres. It is also significant that in 2008, “castells” were declared one of the ten “treasures of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Catalonia and Andorra” following a public vote via the Internet in which 37,418 people took part. Their representative power is frequently put to good use in a range of celebratory events organised by various groups, such as in the summer of 2009, when the members of a number of “colies” performed together in the inauguration ceremony of the new RCD Espanyol football stadium (the Espanyol is a Spanish league 1st division football team based in Barcelona).

For this same reason, “castells” are often used to present Catalan culture to people who are unfamiliar with it. A striking example of this was the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games inaugural ceremony (1992), during which 12 “castells” were raised simultaneously by 2,174 participants from 16 different “colles”. In 2007, when Catalonia was invited to be the official guest culture at the Frankfurt Book Fair, two “colles” were picked to represent Catalan popular and traditional culture. Finally, In May 2010, a “colla castellerà” (castell group) will be taking part in Catalonia

Week at the Shanghai World Expo.

**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.*

The world of “castelis” is a perfect example of participation, integration, diversity, team work, effort, passion and the spirit of self-improvement and achievement. The sum of these values produces the result of an incredibly spectacular cultural display, unique in the world.

“Castelis” are raised in a festive atmosphere, almost always in public spaces. In fact, the context in which the “castells” are performed, the community festival, is itself an example of intangible heritage. “Castells” performances become a time for completely spontaneous participation, exchange and dialogue between people who are often from very different backgrounds.

The “colles” have historically been a tool for integration, mainly because they need a large number of people to play a part in achieving the end result. People of all ages, social backgrounds and origins mix together in a “colla castellera”, all sharing the same aim. Belonging to a “colla” requires no previous knowledge at all; just the desire to join in and the will to learn the techniques that make “castells” possible. This means that it is common to find “colles” with people from a huge range of backgrounds, languages and cultures.

There is currently a well established “colla” in Lo Prado (in Santiago de Chile), proving that this phenomenon can also happen outside its original cultural context. In Chile, “castells” have been adopted as a method of integration, for socialising people at risk of exclusion and for promoting social cohesion.

200 years after they were first raised, “castells” are nowadays regarded as being at their peak. This fact alone shows how certain expressions of popular culture have the ability to evolve, adapt and keep their essential meaning in a very different context to the one in which they first emerged.

The registration of this element in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (RLICH) will contribute to highlighting the community festival side of “castells”, with the street as its physical setting and participation, interaction, spontaneity, etc. as the values inherent in it, in stark contrast to the social and individual fragmentation involved in some of today's leisure activities. It will also contribute towards underlining the importance of associations in general and more specifically, of belonging to associations that cultivate popular culture as a means of integration into the communities in which people live and, in a wider sense, as a form of social cohesion in mass societies. It will help to envision how satisfying it can be as a form of self-improvement and cooperation, not based on competing but rather on achieving pre-set goals, in which the challenge is not to beat the other side but to get the best outcome from the whole group's joint efforts. Registering “castelis” in the RLICH will also help to show how popular culture is a fantastic way of integrating newcomers into receiving cultures, because of its permeability and easy access.

Registering “castells” will also do much to foster cultural diversity, as its distinctive features demonstrate the lengths to which human creativity can go, and how its survival depends on being rooted in a specific cultural community. This is a key issue; although it is always possible to raise the occasional “castell”, the longevity and continuity of this activity over more than two

centuries can only be explained by the significance it acquires in the heart of a community and by the way the community identifies with this cultural element. This expression of intangible culture, therefore, reveals the importance of maintaining cultural specificity, thus enabling phenomena such as this one to emerge and to be kept alive and perpetuated. Finally, including “castells” on the RLICH will clearly illustrate how, although intangible heritage usually has ancient roots, it does not require an enforced formal process of adaptation to safeguard its relevance, on the contrary, it is kept alive by being allowed to evolve and update.

In terms of the visibility and dissemination of the values enshrined in the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, it is important to note that “castells” are watched every year by thousands of people, including a large part of the non-resident population, as well as by thousands of others via the various communication media broadcasting the events.

The Colles Castelleres coordinating body in Catalonia, the CCCC, will acknowledge the inclusion of “castells” in the RLICH on its web site and at all public events it holds, displaying the Convention logo wherever possible and in keeping with guidelines for applying the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The CCCC will also make the Convention known to its members by publishing an information booklet about “castells” as an element of ICH inscribed on the List and explaining about the Convention. This booklet will be distributed to the nearly 8,000 “castellers” and “castelleres” currently registered so they are aware of the importance of their activity and the specific role they play as trustees of part of the world's intangible cultural heritage. The Government of Catalonia will also carry out widespread publicity about this recognition, explaining the importance of safeguarding local intangible cultural heritage and that of the world in general. As part of the activities for publicising the Convention carried out by the Government of Catalonia and the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia, an NGO put forward for accreditation by the Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, “castells” will be a specific local example that will serve to illustrate what the intangible cultural heritage is and how important it is to safeguard it. This means that will prompt local people to think about their own intangible cultural heritage and will also raise its profile.

### **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.*

“Castells” have been raised continuously the early 19th century, which shows how well established they have become. They are currently experiencing a boom. Apart from an increase in the number of “colles”, the very first ten-stage castells have been raised in recent years. In addition, over the last thirty years they have progressed from being a local phenomenon to being performed all over the autonomous community of Catalonia and beyond.

The Colles Castelleres coordinating body in Catalonia (CCCC) has been in existence since 1989. Its purpose is to look after the groups' shared interests, promote the world of “castells” and ensure that the risks inherent to the activity are covered by proper insurance; thanks to this, all the “castellers” who take part in an exhibition are always insured. Currently, the coordinating body (the only organisation of its kind) acts on behalf of all existing “colles castelleres”. It is run by a Managing Board formed by representatives from twelve groups who are elected every three years at a general meeting. The coordinating body is supported and partially funded by the

Government of Catalonia.

The coordinating body has carried out a number of studies to improve quality and guarantee the continuity of “castells”. Its activities have included 1) a joint study with the Catalan Paediatric Society on accident rates; 2) study and development of children's protective head gear, together with the Government of Catalonia's High Performance Sport Centre and a private sector specialist helmet manufacturer; 3) first aid courses delivered in conjunction with the Red Cross; and 4) a study on the use of soft surfaces in rehearsals. A psychological study is currently underway with the University of Vic on the subject of children's participation in “castells”. For the last ten years, the CCCC has also been organising an injury prevention workshop together with the Group for Promoting Science and Health in the Castell Sphere.

Castells Night has been held since 2007, organised by the Castells magazine and its publisher Utopia Global. The night is an annual gathering bringing together the leaders of all the “colles castelleres”, the media and institutions involved. During this event, the Castells prizes are awarded to honour the work of a person, a social initiative and a personality or institution which has raised the profile of “castells” outside their own sphere of activity. A research subvention is also awarded for a project that aims to promote “castells”.

“Castells” news has generated a specific type of journalism. The main newspapers, radio and television stations have fixed schedules and programmes broadcast at the most popular viewing times. A good example is the Catalan national television channel programme “Quarts de nou”, which broadcasts live coverage of the main “castells” events. The bi-monthly magazine Castells is published privately and has been in circulation for the last five years.

Lastly, the Rovira i Virgili University in Tarragona offers courses on “castells” world to its students, looking at this phenomenon from all angles.

### **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.*

Safeguarding “castells” for the future has to start with the annual “castells” season. There appears to be no threat to the “castells” exhibition calendar, which runs from April to November, on the contrary: there has been an increase in the number of opportunities for raising “castells” outside these dates, coinciding with a range of events. Neither are there any threats to the normal practice of transferring the knowledge that enables new groups to be formed: when a group of people want to set up a new “colla”, they attend the rehearsals of an existing group, where the leaders teach them the techniques and everything else they need to know for creating a new “colla”. The huge numbers of public spectators who normally attend “castells” performances is also a guarantee that the practice will be safeguarded for the future.

The CCCC, Televisió de Catalunya (autonomous public television) and Damm (sponsoring company) signed a convention on 2 June 2009 guaranteeing both financial support for the Coordinating body and television coverage for the next four years. This convention also sets out the creation of a commission to “study new formats for promoting ‘castells’ on television”. This commission was set up in Autumn of 2009 and the results are expected to be applied from the 2010 season, with an increasing presence of “castells” on television.

Financial support is assured from the Government of Catalonia. A good example of this is the campaign “Tots som una Colla” (we're all a colla) run by the CCCC to attract new “castellers” and especially targeting the immigrant community. This recruiting drive is being carried out jointly with the Immigration Department, the Youth Department and the Centre for the Promotion of Catalan Traditional and Folk Culture, all organisations under the remit of the Government of Catalonia. In 2009, four “colles” took part in a pilot scheme with excellent results, and this is to be extended to all interested groups in 2010.

The CCCC is also working on setting up a single database -using various sources- that will store data on all “castells” events from 1926 to the present day. This database will be available for consultation on the CCCC web site and will be updated every week with new events taking place. It is expected to be up and running in Spring 2010, coinciding with the start of the new season.

On the educational side of things, there are currently a number of initiatives at local and regional level to bring “castells” into primary schools, with visits from “colles”, special educational material on “castells”, etc. One of the actions planned by the CCCC for the coming years is to use these local experiences to work towards guaranteeing the presence of “castells” in schools across the whole of Catalonia.

The latest measure to safeguard an even more successful future for “castells” is the creation of the Casteller museum, set up in response to demand from the “castells” groups and to be based in the town of Valls. The Museum governing body comprises the Government of Catalonia, Tarragona Provincial Council, Valls Town Council and the Colles Castelleres coordinating body. The museum's main aim is to become a platform for informing about the nature and potential of “castells” and their values, as well as being a centre for preserving and disseminating their rich past and heritage. The museum's displays and texts have been prepared and approved, and the following exhibition spaces are planned: “Castells and reaching for the heights”, “human architecture”, “Valls, the home of Castells”, “Castellers”, “the Colles”, “technique and constructions”, “performances”, “the music”, “the fans”, “Castells around the world”, “history and timeline” and a final display. To make this museum a reality, a new building is planned, with an inside area of 3,000m<sup>2</sup> and an outside area of 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The total project budget amounts to €10,000,000. The building plans were approved in December 2009, and the executive project is currently in the process of being drawn up. This project is being undertaken by Dani Freixes, author of numerous architectural projects for museums and 2007 winner of the National Prize for Architecture and Public Space awarded by the Government of Catalonia for his Mines de Gava (Barcelona) project. The building work will be put out to tender and it is expected that the foundation stone will be laid during 2010. The museum project also includes setting up a Castells Documentation and Research Centre, which will enable identification, documentation and research work on the world of “castells” to be carried out to guarantee that this heritage is preserved, protected, promoted, highlighted, passed on and kept alive.

### **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 existence of the “colles”, which remain completely amateur, is proof of their will to keep this tradition alive. The evolution of the number of groups over recent years shows a constant upward trend: 6 groups in 1970, 17 in 1980, 26 in 1992 and 56 in 2009. It is important to bear in mind that a “colla” is created spontaneously, with no stimulus other than the desire of its members to raise “castells”, fulfil their potential as individuals and as a group, participate in a collaborative activity and keep alive a tradition embedded in their culture.

The Colles Castelleres coordinating body was set up to strengthen and guarantee the survival of “castells”. In addition to the subscription fees paid to it by the “colies castelleres”, the coordinating body is sponsored by the Catalan television channel and by two well-established private sector companies in Catalonia. The province of Tarragona has always had the most “colies castelleres”, and with the creation of the Casteller Museum, its Provincial Council has shown a desire to strengthen its commitment to the world of “castells”. The majority of town councils in places where there is a “colla castellera” also provide, either directly or indirectly, part of the funding needed by the group to carry out their activities (help with rehearsal space rental,



travelling expenses, etc.).

### **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 State supports the “castells” through the Government of Catalonia, an institution with exclusive responsibility for cultural affairs in this autonomous community. The Government of Catalonia has provided financial support to the CCCC since its inception in 1989, and together with other institutions they make up the board of trustees developing the Casteller Museum.

The Government of Catalonia has also published a range of materials, such as the information DVDs “Eis castellers” (1993) and “Human towers of the world” (2007), educational resources such as “Eis castells a l'escola” (1986) and “Castellers: els castells, la colla, la musica, historia castellera” (2002), and technical publications such as “Prevençió de lesions en els castellers” (1994). The Government of Catalonia's Culture and Communication Media Department has also funded various research projects on the history of “castells” and other sociological issues related to the activity, by awarding individual grants to researchers and through its research programme Ethnological Heritage Inventory of Catalonia.

In 2007, the Culture and Communication Media Department and the CCCC jointly commissioned a survey of 3,000 residents in Catalonia to ascertain their views on “castells” in general, with extremely positive results. On 17 April 2008, the Parliament of Catalonia drew up a unanimous statement of support for the nomination of “castells” to be included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

## **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.*

On the first Night of Castells in the town of Valls in April 2007, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Castells Commission was formally set up in the presence of the leaders of all the “colles castelleres” and of the President of the Parliament of Catalonia. The Commission comprises the Government of Catalonia, the CCCC, Castells magazine (which first put forward the initiative), and the UNESCO Centre in Catalonia, a non-governmental organisation linked with the United Nations Public Information Department. At the event, the President of the Parliament of Catalonia publicly gave his full backing to the nomination.

The nomination of “castells” as Intangible Cultural Heritage was one of the points covered by the CCCC President's report at the general meeting held in Valls on the 29th March 2008. The

report explained that “Castells magazine approached the coordinating body and Unescocat (the UNESCO Centre in Catalonia) to work jointly to achieve this aim. Since then, the promoting group have been working on drawing up the nomination text and designing strategy to enable such a major task to be completed”. The report also described the preparation of a motion of support to be tabled and approved by the Parliament of Catalonia and the town councils.

On the 29th of May 2008 an extraordinary CCCC board meeting was held in Valls exclusively to address the nomination, and was attended by members of the promoting Commission. At the meeting it was agreed that the CCCC would be the vehicle for the hard work of the “colles castelleres” in support of the nomination. The last CCCC general meeting, held in Valls on the 28th of March 2009 also dealt with this matter. Included in the governing programme proposal for 2009 presented by the board and under the title “Increasing the prestige of Castells”, the first item was: “Continue working to include ‘castells’ in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage”. The action plan was unanimously approved by all the “collies” present at the general meeting.

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Castells Commission has been responsible for undertaking all the actions and procedures required in the Spanish State for the “castells” nomination for inclusion in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage to be effective. The main actions were, firstly, presenting the project to the Government of Catalonia's Counselor of Culture and secure the Government's support in this venture. Subsequently, the motion of support for the “castells” nomination for inclusion in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage was presented to the Parliament of Catalonia. The motion was voted and unanimously approved by this institution on the 17th of April 2008, thus also securing the official support of 59 town councils and 2 regional councils (supra-municipal organisations). This was followed by the presentation of the nomination on the 31st of March 2009 to the Spanish Historic Heritage Council in Madrid, and on the 17th of July in Mallorca to representatives from all the Spanish Autonomous Communities. In the last stages of this process, the Commission has provided the majority of data required to formally present this nomination to UNESCO, following the procedures outlined by this organisation.

#### **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.*

[Please refer to the authorization of the “Colles Castelleres” coordinating body (attached document)]

#### **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.*

No aspect whatsoever of the “castells” world (knowledge, practice, etc.) is of restricted access.

**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.*

"Castells", being part of the intangible cultural heritage of Catalan society, are included in the Ethnological Heritage Inventory of Catalonia. The task of managing and updating the Inventory is undertaken by the Government of Catalonia's Department of Culture and Communication Media. The inclusion of "castells" in this inventory was done on the initiative of the Colles Castelleres coordinating body (the CCCC), which unanimously approved the application for including "castells" in this inventory on 28 March 2009. The inclusion of "castells" in the Ethnological Heritage Inventory of Catalonia was finalised on 20 August 2009; it was done in keeping with scientific criteria and the Colles Castelleres coordinating body collaborated in its description. The Ethnological Heritage Inventory of Catalonia is a living entity and the information it contains is updated on a regular basis.

**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**

[Please refer to the attached document]

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**a. Contact person for correspondence**

Contact person:

Ministerio de Cultura Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Bienes Culturales ("Ministry of Culture, General Department of Fine Arts and Cultural Assets")

Holder: Ángeles Albert

Address:

Plaza del Rey, 1  
28004 Madrid (Spain)

Other contact details:  
Tel: 0034917017383  
Fax: 0034968277762  
E-mail: angeles.albert@mcu.es

**b. Competent body involved**

Body:

Centre de Promoció de la Cultura Popular i Tradicional Catalana (“Centre for the Promotion of Catalan Traditional and Folk Culture”)

Departament de Cultura i Mitjans de Comunicació (“Department of Culture and Communication Media”)

Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia)

Address:

Passatge de la Banca, 1-3

08002 Barcelona (Spain)

Other contact details:

Tel: +34933162720, extension 14636

rfontdevila@gencat.cat (Ramon Fontdevila Subirana, Director)

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

Name of the organisation:

Coordinadora de Colles Castelleres de Catalunya (“Colles Castelleres” of Catalonia coordinating body, CCCC)

Address:

Carrer de la Cort, 1

E - 43800 Valls

Other contact details:

Tel: +34 977 605 206

coordinadora@cccc.cat

**SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF THE STATE PARTY**

Name: Ángeles Albert

Title: Director General of Fine Arts and Cultural Assets

Date: 27 August 2009

Signature: <signed>