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

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

**Fifth Extraordinary Session**

**Online**

**1 July 2022**

**Item 5 of the provisional agenda:**

**Request by Ukraine to examine the nomination ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’**

**for the Urgent Safeguarding List as a case of extreme urgency**

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| Ukraine made a request for the Committee to examine the nomination ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List as a case of extreme urgency as per Article 17.3 of the 2003 Convention. Following the procedure established by the Bureau of the Committee, this document presents this request and the recommendation of the Evaluation Body.  **Decision Required:** paragraph 7 |

1. This document concerns the request by Ukraine to inscribe as soon as possible the nomination ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (hereafter, ‘the Urgent Safeguarding List’). Following the initial submission in March 2021 for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the nomination was pending treatment in application of Priority (0) category as part of the annual ceiling and the order of priorities system for the listing mechanisms set out in the Operational Directives. In the context of the ongoing armed conflict, Ukraine made a request on 21 April 2022 for this nomination to be treated as a case of extreme urgency in reference to Article 17.3 of the 2003 Convention, which would be the first time that this provision would be applied in the implementation of the Convention.
2. The Bureau met on 6 May 2022 to consider the request and establish a step-by-step procedure to treat the request (document [LHE/22/17.COM 3.BUR/3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM_3.BUR-3-EN.docx) and [Decision 17.COM 3.BUR 3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM_3.BUR-Decisions-EN.docx)). Following the procedure established, Ukraine was invited to submit any additional information to that which had been previously provided, particularly as regards inscription criteria U.2(b) and U.6. The Secretariat consolidated the additional information received from Ukraine on 14 June (a letter) and 15 June (a complete Form ICH-01 and a new set of ten photos) into a composite nomination dossier (no. 01852; <https://ich.unesco.org/en/ukraine-request-01263>), using newly submitted Form ICH-01 as a main base.
3. Following the request by the Bureau, the 2022 Evaluation Body evaluated the nomination, using the same working method as that used for evaluating the files of the 2022 cycle. The nomination was first transmitted to its members on 15 and 16 June 2022 through the online interface to facilitate individual evaluations. During its June meeting the Body members evaluated the nomination collectively on 20 June 2022 and finalized its recommendation on 21 June 2022. The recommendation of the Evaluation Body was transferred to the Bureau for its meeting on 23 June 2022 (document [LHE/22/17 COM 4.BUR 5](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM_4.BUR-5-EN.docx)).
4. The Evaluation Body noted that the element performs a function of social integration and cohesion that serves to unite the people of Ukraine, regardless of age, gender or background. In this sense, the present case also demonstrates the dual role of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies in the sense of the Convention’s [Operational principles and modalities](https://ich.unesco.org/en/operational-principles-and-modalities-in-emergencies-01143) for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and emergencies. While on the one hand its continued practice is directly threatened by the armed conflict, on the other hand, the element plays a role in supporting affected communities by providing a sense of resilience and solidarity.
5. Based on the recommendation of the Evaluation Body, which is provided in sections A and B below, the Bureau considered that the nomination constituted a case of extreme urgency in line with Article 17.3 of the Convention and underscored the importance of bringing this request to the Committee as quickly as possible after its submission (Decision [17.COM 4.BUR 5](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/17.COM%204.BUR/5)). In this regard, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to initiate an electronic exchange with the Committee members to include an item on the request by Ukraine in the fifth extraordinary session of the Committee (Online, 1 July 2022). As at least two thirds of the Committee agreed with the proposal by the Bureau with reference to Rule 2.2 and Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, the request is brought to the attention of the present extraordinary session of the Committee.
6. **Recommendation**
7. The Evaluation Body recommends that the Committee inscribe the following element on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding as a case of extreme urgency:

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| **Draft Decision** | **Submitting State** | **Nomination** | **File No.** |
| 17 COM 5.EXT 5 | Ukraine | Culture of Ukrainian Borscht Cooking | 01852 |

1. **Draft Decision**
2. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

**DRAFT DECISION 17.COM 5.EXT 5**

The Committee

Takes note of the request that Ukraine made on 21 April 2022 to process the nomination **Culture of Ukrainian Borscht Cooking** (No. 01852) for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, as a case of extreme urgency, as foreseen under Article 17.3 of the Convention and paragraphs 1 and 32 of the Operational Directives:

Ukrainian borscht is a traditional dish that is cooked with broth combined with beetroot, sugar beet or fermented beet juice. There are many versions, and the practice entails the recipe, cooking method and occasion, according to which a certain variety is prepared. Borscht is cooked in a large pan or pot and typically served with bread or garlic buns. It is prepared primarily by women, although many men also prepare it as an everyday dish. The practice dates back centuries and is passed on within families, with children participating in the preparation. An expression of hospitality, Ukrainian borscht unites people of all ages, genders and backgrounds at the table. It is also used in ritual practices, such as in the region of Podillia, where the third day of the wedding has maintained its ritual name *do* *nevistky – na borshch*, meaning ‘visit daughter-in-law to eat borscht’. It is lauded in tales, folk songs and proverbs and viewed as a lifestyle and identity marker. The viability of the element, however, is threatened by various factors since the beginning of the armed conflict in February 2022, including the displacement of bearers from their communities of origin and from the cultural contexts necessary for the cooking and consumption of borscht in Ukraine. Moreover, destruction to the surrounding environment and traditional agriculture has prevented communities from accessing local products, such as vegetables, needed to prepare the dish. Despite these difficulties, communities across Ukraine have united around the element.

Further takes note of the procedure that the third meeting of the Bureau of the Committee established on 6 May 2022 to treat the request ([Decision 17.COM 3.BUR 3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM_3.BUR-Decisions-EN.docx));

Considers that, from the information included in the file, the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

U.1: The borscht in Ukraine is a traditional dish with a long history and diverse variations. The culture of borscht cooking and consumption is widespread in all regions of Ukraine. Women and men participate equally in the practice of the element. The knowledge and skills of the element are transmitted within families, from elder members of the family to younger ones by way of cooking together. The element is also transmitted in catering establishments and educational institutions, and during borscht festivals and events held in different regions of Ukraine and abroad. Borscht performs a function of social integration and cohesion amongst all people in Ukraine. Borscht in Ukraine is an indispensable part of social events, holidays and ritual practices. The element fosters mutual respect and trust among groups of people and individuals. The element is in line with human rights instruments, the principle of mutual respect amongst communities and sustainable development.

U.2(b): The nomination file explains that the armed conflict has threatened the viability of the element. The displacement of people and bearers threatens the element, as people are unable not only to cook or grow local vegetables for borscht, but also to come together to practice the element, which undermines the social and cultural well-being of communities. As such, the transmission of the element is also threatened. The armed conflict destroys the environment (fauna and flora), which in turn, seriously threatens the diverse nature of the element. The armed conflict leads to the loss of the everyday contexts associated with practicing the element, and has significantly affected the holding of cultural events, in particular festivals dedicated to traditional food, including borscht. All of these factors justify the need for urgent safeguarding of the element as a case of extreme urgency.

U.3: The nomination file provides information on past safeguarding measures involving local, regional festivals and cultural events related to the element. The proposed safeguarding plan includes a list of key activities to address the situation of urgent safeguarding. These include efforts to monitor the situation concerning the bearers, raising awareness of the element among the general public, promotion of the element through specialized literature and festivals, etc. The safeguarding measures will be implemented in close cooperation with national, public, state and municipal institutions, as well as practitioners from all regions of Ukraine. The timetable of the activities and detailed budget breakdown were provided in the file. Nevertheless, the ability to implement the safeguarding plan is likely to be subject to the evolving nature of the armed conflict.

U.4: The nomination file as originally compiled for the Representative List demonstrated a broad involvement of bearers and stakeholders and provided evidence of free, prior and informed consent for the nomination of the element. The element is practiced in the form of public access and there are no secret aspects or restrictions on the basis of age, race or gender. The working group, involving bearers of the element, cooperated in making the film, compiling promotional materials and writing the nomination dossier. The text of the dossier was open for discussion and agreed with the bearers of the element, including the safeguarding measures. Following the outbreak of the armed conflict, communities, experts and the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine worked together to develop a security plan which, the inscription is expected to support.

U.5: The element was listed on the National List of Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ukraine on 13 October 2020. The inventory is maintained by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine. The element was identified for inclusion on the inventory at the initiative of the NGO “Institute of Culture of Ukraine” and with the support of bearers from across Ukraine. The inventory is updated twice a year. The monitoring of the viability of the elements on the inventory is conducted by specialized cultural agencies, the NGOs concerned and the Ukrainian Centre for Cultural Research (UCCR).

U.6: The State Party made the request to inscribe the element, as a case of extreme urgency on the Urgent Safeguarding List and in reference to Article 17.3, in a letter to the Secretariat on 21 April 2022. Following the request by the Bureau of the Committee ([Decision 17.COM 3.BUR 3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM_3.BUR-Decisions-EN.docx)), additional information was subsequently provided by the State Party on 14 and 15 June 2022, particularly with regards to criteria U.2(b) and U.6 using Form ICH-01.

Decides to inscribe **Culture of Ukrainian Borscht Cooking** on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, as a case of extreme urgency as stipulated in Article 17.3 of the Convention;

Also takes note that the culture of Borscht cooking is shared with other communities in the region, and recalls that the inscription of an element on a List of the Convention does not imply exclusivity or ownership;

Further considers that the implementation of the proposed safeguarding plan will need to be reviewed in view of the evolving context of the threats concerning the element and invites the submitting State to revise the safeguarding plan accordingly;

Further invites the submitting State to report on the viability of the element and the safeguarding situation of the element, including any adjustments to the safeguarding plan, for examination by the eighteenth session of the Committee in 2023.