

DECISION 9.COM 10.16

The Committee

1. Takes note that Estonia has nominated **Smoke sauna tradition in Võromaa** (No. 00951) for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

The smoke sauna tradition is an important part of everyday life in the Võro community of Estonia. It comprises a rich set of traditions including the actual bathing customs, the skills of making bath whisks, building and repairing saunas, and smoking meat in the sauna. The sauna is a building or room heated by a stove covered with stones and with an elevated platform for sitting or lying. It has no chimney, and the smoke from burning wood circulates in the room. People usually visit the sauna together and remain until the body sweats. Water is thrown on the heated stones to produce hot steam-laden air and bathers beat their bodies with whisks to scrub off dead skin and stimulate blood circulation. After sweating, whisking, relaxing and possible healing procedures, people cool themselves outside and rinse their bodies with water. The procedure is repeated. The smoke sauna tradition is primarily a family custom, practised usually on Saturdays but also before major festivals or family events, whose main function is to relax the body and mind. Families take turns hosting each other. Usually an older family member is responsible for preparing the sauna, accompanied by children who gradually acquire the necessary skills.

2. Decides that, from the information included in the file, the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the Representative List:

R.1: Belonging to the everyday life of the Võro community, the smoke sauna tradition encompasses a set of practices and techniques recognized by Võro families as part of their cultural heritage that tightens the link between them and connects them to stories and memories of their ancestors;

R.2: Inscription of the element on the Representative List could raise awareness at the international level of the anchoring of daily and contemporary lifestyles in intangible cultural heritage, promoting exchanges with neighbouring countries with similar practices;

R.3: A well-articulated safeguarding plan is proposed with an appropriate balance between preservation and promotional measures; the plan counts on the active participation of community associations, regional and national governmental institutions, academic institutions as well as non-governmental organizations;

R.4: The nomination was elaborated by the Võromaa Smoke Sauna Cooperation Council, created for this purpose and including representatives of various community associations who provided their free, prior and informed consent to the nomination; the wishes of families to keep certain techniques and customary practices to themselves was respected throughout the nomination process;

R.5: The element is included in the Estonian Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2010; administered by the Estonian Folk Culture Centre, the inventory promotes a participatory approach and its entries are updated every five years by communities themselves.

Inscribes **Smoke sauna tradition in Võromaa** on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.