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EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN THE FIELD OF BAGPIPES IN EUROPE

Erasmus+ program project

“THE NETWORK OF EUROPEAN BAGPIPERS”



Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) – knowledge, practices and traditions of European citizens – is an essential part of Europe's common cultural heritage, perhaps the most important. And traditional music is one of its brightest, most popular and visible areas.

Six organisations from different European countries, joined by similar objectives – to safeguard and to promote specific part of ICH (bagpipes playing and making tradition) have joined forces to strengthen both the capacity of their staff and organizations and to promote the knowledge and skills of their target groups, practitioners of ICH, in parallel with the specific goals of the project: promoting more active community activities and the formation of a more inclusive society.

The main project objective will be achieved through various project activities, implementing the project in a diverse and effective way: project partners' staff and practitioners training events in all partner countries and several educational materials (intellectual outputs) created in the project. Different activities are also envisaged to ensure the dissemination of project results to as many target groups and stakeholders as possible.

The project will set up a European network of bagpipers, involving both the partner organizations themselves and practitioners of ICH, as well as other local and national level cooperation organizations, raising their competencies in nonformal adult education. The project will enable people from very different European countries to work together, thus raising their awareness of Europe's common cultural heritage and strengthening their sense of belonging to it, as well as to their communities.

Belarusian Cultural-Educational Center – an organisation representing Belarusian traditional culture is also involved as an associate partner of the project.

Project duration is from 01.09.2022. – 31.08.2024., total budget 120 000 euro. The project is supported by the Latvian National Centre for Culture and Latvian National Commission for UNESCO.

PROJECT PARTNERS

LATVIA

the Coordinating partner

Suiti Cultural Heritage Foundation



SUITU KULTŪRAS MANTOJUMS

Suiti Cultural Heritage Foundation is NGO, established in 2013. It aims at promoting and developing different aspects of Suiti cultural heritage which is included in the UNESCO List of

Intangible Cultural Heritage. Organisations of various non-formal educational activities for all age groups (from pre-school children to seniors) are the heart of the foundation's activities.

People of Suiti region (circa 2500 members) of all ages are a direct target group of Suiti Cultural Heritage Foundation activities. A significant part of our community members come from socially or/and economically disadvantaged groups – seniors, unemployed people and especially people from remote rural areas.

NGO is active in various fields of traditional culture, attracting funding from various funds for its activities. A great emphasis is placed on the promotion and popularization of traditional musical cultural heritage: organised traditional musical instruments workshops and concerts, bagpipe festivals; musical heritage digitization activities. Suiti Cultural Heritage Foundation regularly organises concerts and performances in cooperation with local folk groups – singers, folk dancers and instrument players.

The organization is active in the research and popularization of the local dialect, as well as with various activities for children - publications, events for families with children, etc. In recent years, international cooperation has been more and more actively developed.

It cooperates and is supported by various organizations - in 2022 a cooperation memorandum was signed between the organizations of Suiti region and a number of local, regional and national level organizations.

Most of the projects to date have been supported by the State Cultural Capital Fund, EU funds as well as local municipalities.



CROATIA

Centre of Croatian traditional instruments

Centre of Croatian traditional instruments was established in 2007 in order to research and gather knowledge about playing and making Croatian traditional instruments. Our main activities are organizing and conducting seminars and workshops on playing and making traditional instruments, organization of festivals and concerts, publishing texts, books, audio and video materials of traditional instruments, making connections and cooperating with foreign organizations with common interests.

As part of these activities, we have been organizing an International bagpipe festival for 14 years. We regularly organize and conduct seminars and workshops on playing and making traditional instruments in Croatia and abroad. We have published two books (Croatian bagpipes - GAJDE and Croatian bagpipes - DUDE), three DVD-s, and two CD-s. We have a very good cooperation with many cultural institutions and folklore groups. All our projects are supported by the Croatian Ministry of Culture.

We work with people of all ages (we have workshops for children in kindergarten, schools, students at universities, seniors, workshops for educators, teachers, professors, members of folklore societies etc.). Sometimes we have workshops for people with special needs (autism and others). In this project, the target group is adults who have a desire to learn to play or make bagpipes and players and makers who want to share their knowledge and experience with others.

ITALY

**Associazione
culturale
Multietnica**



MULTIETNICA

Multietnica is a cultural association based in Potenza, in the Southern Italian region of Basilicata. Since 1997, it has developed cultural projects in the field of live music and music festivals, encouraging independent music production and creating opportunities for young musicians. It has also developed the Open Sound Project, aiming to create a bridge between folk/traditional music and the contemporary music scene, creating an open-source library with local traditional sounds, used by many producers, and promoting performance for folk instruments and electronic music. With the relation to European project management, Multietnica can be defined as a newcomer. However, Multietnica has been working with call for proposals financed by regional and national funds for more than 25 years. Taking part in a European partnership would be an enjoyable and worthwhile experience to enrich the organisation's profile as well as to strengthen our methods and practices.

Learners are communities living in a mountain area. Many activities will be located in Val Sarmento, an isolated part of the Basilicata, with limited facilities. This condition allowed to preserve the cultural heritage and the zampogna tradition. The project will offer an opportunity to know similar traditions of other European areas. Basilicata traditional young musicians. The project will involve musicians coming to Val Sarmento from different territories, and share experiences with the musicians coming from other European countries. Many players are also craftsmen, so the activities will include workshops of construction.

SPAIN

Asociación Gaiteros de Graus



Our work as a legal organisation began in 2007 but until then we were the local bagpipers. The last picture of the main bagpipers in our region was taken in our town in 1911. When this bagpipers disappeared then non professional local bagpipers began to play.

We can't understand our tradition without bagpipes and bagpipers. In 1973 our traditional dances were declared as national touristic interest tradition. We work with the municipality and other local organisations to organise traditional events. We perform in these events declared as "Interés Turístico Nacional" and we take care of our bagpipes, our songs, our dances, our costumes.

We worked hard to create the bagpipe speciality in the music school in 2010. We organise workshops about our bagpipe, we participate and perform in traditional local events, we organise the festival "Encuentro de Músicas Tradicionales del Pirineo", and traditional performances in other towns in our region. In summer, we organise a workshop for all kinds of musical instruments (guitar, mandolin, violin, accordion...) to approach our traditional music and dances. There are two kinds of workshop for adults and kids.

We work with adults and we organise activities to involve children in the traditions and in the study and practice of bagpipes. We are a small group about 6 persons from 40 to 68 years old involved to organise all the projects but in some activities we are about 20 bagpipers aged between 12 and 68.

We make resources and publications for adults and we have a project for children called "Pepa Chireta" to initiate children in the practice of bagpipe and another project based in videos in Youtube called "mis amigos gaiteros" to present other bagpipers of Europe.



SLOVAKIA

Cech slovenskych gajdosov

The aim of The Guild of Slovak Bagpipers is to maintain, document, promote and develop the traditions, knowledge, craftsmanship and artistic skills associated with playing bagpipes and making bagpipes in relation to the entire instrumental tradition in Slovakia, as well as the social and cultural phenomena associated with them, to create masters, companions and apprentices of the guild favorable conditions for their activities and activities and to expand their base mainly to young people and children. In pursuing this objective, the role of the guild shall be in particular:

1. to create a space for intensive contact between bagpipes and bagpipe producers, as well as for contact with representatives of other areas of traditional folk music culture with the aim of mutually beneficial exchange of experience and information,
2. to contribute to the maintenance of existing and the creation of new playing opportunities for bagpipes through concerts, exhibitions and other opportunities for artistic and professional self-realization of guild members,
3. to disseminate, develop and promote the bagpipe tradition at home and abroad.

Members of The Guild of Slovak Bagpipers consist of a broad variety of professions. University teachers, scientists, analysts, managers, entrepreneurs, students and members who are retired. The Guild of Slovak Bagpipers consists of 52 members.

GEORGIA

V. Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire



Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire (<https://tsc.edu.ge/>) is an important cultural and scientific-educational center of Georgia. Since the day of its foundation (1917) it has become one of the major cultural and educational centers in Georgia.

Tbilisi State Conservatoire has a particularly rich tradition of studying folklore.

The project will be implemented by The International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony of the Tbilisi State Conservatoire (IRCTP).

IRCTP was established at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire in 2003 with the support of UNESCO and world-renowned ethnomusicologists participating in the First International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony (2002). The Conservatoire International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony, is a member of two international organizations: ESEM (European Seminar on Ethnomusicology) and ICTM (International Council for Traditional Music).

The members of IRCTP have experience in project management and financing for many years – its main activities is to organise International Symposia on Traditional Polyphony/. Since 2002, there were held 10 Symposia, the 11th symposium scheduled for September 2022. The previous symposia have hosted more than 100 foreign and Georgian scholars and up to 1,000 Georgian and foreign singers of Georgian and World folk songs from 20 countries around the world; Published and on the website of the Center (www.polyphony.ge; <http://symposium.polyphony.ge/>) there are the proceedings and booklets of the previous symposia (the last 5 include DVDs).

In addition, the Center has extensive international contacts, constantly implementing both local and international projects.

BELARUS

Associated partner

**Belarusian
Cultural-Educational
Center**



Our organisation was established with the aim to participate in various projects raising the topic of civil society and minorities. Our scope includes topics such as protection of rights, dissemination and protection of human freedoms and rights, civil liberties and activities supporting the development of democracy, science, higher education, education, training and upbringing, culture, art, protection of cultural goods and national heritage. Also activities for European integration and developing contacts and cooperation between societies and activities supporting the development of communities and local communities. We achieve these goals by organizing various types of events, including informal adult education training activities related to traditional culture.

We have experience in organizing concerts – our particular focus being folk music. We have recorder and published music records. Some of our projects were devoted directly to the bagpipes, it's preservation, development and promotion.

Since 2017 we have organized the "The Festival of European Bagpipe Regions in Belarus, in Hlybokaje". The festival promotes the idea of integrating various bagpipe regions of Europe by organizing common events and exchange of experience.

Our target group is Belarusian minority in Poland, living in the region of Podlasie. We want to engage them in the revival of Belarusian bagpiping culture.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

LATVIA

Suiti Cultural Heritage Foundation

Restoration of bagpipe playing and making skills in Suiti region

The oldest information about the Suiti bagpipers is from the middle of the 19th century – it is mentioned that in the summer of 1860, when the heir to the Russian throne, Alexander II, visited Liepāja, the Suiti group performed for him in a separate music pavilion, with 7 playing bagpipes and 8 playing goat horns.

At the end of the 19th century, the bagpipes were almost no longer played anywhere in Latvia, presumably outcompeted by other instruments. Only in the Suiti region in the first half of the 20th century were the last real bagpipers to be found. However, until 1950s, the playing of the bagpipes disappeared completely here as well for more than 60 years.

The rebirth of bagpipes in Suiti region began in January 2013, when the priest of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church in Alsunga, Andris Vasiļevskis, brought the first bagpipes to Alsunga. Musician Aleta Lipsne started learning the instrument made by Eduards Klints by self-taught. However, other local enthusiasts also became interested in playing the bagpipes. And in 2014, bagpipe training was organized in Alsunga, led by Eduards Klints. This training was



organized and two instruments were purchased by local NGO - Ethnic Culture Centre Suiti Foundation.

Suiti bagpipers (3 bagpipers and 1 drummer) had their first public performance in June 2014, at the International Bourdon Festival in Alsunga.

Currently, there are already a total of 12 bagpipe players in Alsunga, and their number is growing every year.

From 2019-2020, Juris Lipsnis, the leader of the folk group "Suiti dūdenieki" also started making bagpipes.



The Lipšņi family - bagpipe tradition enthusiasts in Suiti region

Aleta Lipsne, enthusiast of Suiti traditional culture, also singer of the famous folk group "Suitu sievas", was the first person in Suiti region who learned to play bagpipes in 2013. Initially, she learned to play the bagpipes by herself, through self-studying. Her professional education as a musician was very useful in the process.

However, bagpipes were traditionally played by men and Aleta's husband Juris also became interested in them. But Juris had no musical education and no practical experience in traditional folklore. The training conducted by Eduards Klints was very valuable and through training and constant practice, he learned to play the instrument at a good level and became the leader of the folk group "Suitu dūdenieki" (Suiti bagpipers).

Since there were no bagpipe makers in the area, it soon became clear that he had to learn how to tune, repair and also make the bagpipes himself. In order to learn these skills, Juris participated in workshop in Drabeši in 2017. And in 2019/2020, he implemented a similar project in Suiti region co-financed by the State Culture Capital Fund. Under the leadership of master Uldis Austriņš and with the assistance of Juris Lipsnis, the participants made a total of 7 bagpipes by themselves.

Another way in which bagpipe playing is popularized in the Suiti region is by holding master classes at various public events - such as Suiti Craft Days and Suiti Family Days. Due to the cooperation of the folklore group "Suitu dūdenieki" and the Suiti Cultural Heritage Foundation, anyone interested is given the opportunity to try playing the bagpipes. This has become possible by using the method created by Juris Lipsnis - the trainee holds a bag of bagpipes under his arm and plays the stave while the instructor blows the bagpipes with a flexible tube. Such hygiene measures were especially important during the pandemic.

In recent years, at least 50-60 interested people - not only locals, but also visitors from other places in Latvia and even some foreign guests - have gained an insight into playing the bagpipes in such lessons.

The Lipšņi family is the core of Alsunga bagpipe players - both by participating in various events in Suiti region and elsewhere in Latvia and abroad, and also by popularizing the bagpipe game in master classes, workshops and elsewhere and inspiring others to preserve this valuable part of traditional cultural heritage.

The annual festival of Latvian bagpipers in the Suiti region

Interest in playing traditional bagpipes and making them has grown rapidly throughout Latvia in the last years. Following the initiative of the Suiti bagpipers, a Latvian-wide tradition has been started: at the end of May 2018, the Suiti bagpipers together with local NGO – Suiti Cultural Heritage Foundation in Alsunga organized the 1st Latvian piper meeting in Suiti region, in which 16 pipers and 4 drummers participated.

The purpose of this event is to bring together bagpipe players and masters from all over Latvia to share experience and skills, as well as learn from experienced Latvian and foreign bagpipe specialists.

Since 2018, such events have been organized in Suiti region every year, attracting lecturers and practical master class leaders from Latvia and Estonia. Good cooperation has been established with the Estonian specialist, ethnomusicologist Leanne Barbo, as well as valuable knowledge gained from the professor of the University of Latvia, Valdis Muktupāvels, the restorer of the bagpipe tradition in Latvia, and others.

In 2023, the 6th annual festival of Latvian bagpipers is planned in the Suiti region. In addition to other activities, it is also planned to create a small exposition on the history and restoration of bagpipes in Suiti region.

Photos by: Juris Lipsnis, Dzintars Leja





CROATIA

Centre of Croatian traditional instruments

Reconstruction and restoration of old traditional musical instruments

Croatia is extremely rich in old traditional musical instruments, especially bagpipe type musical instruments of which there are at least a dozen different types. Many of them disappeared in the second half of the 20th century and no one knew how to make or play them anymore. There were only some observations in museums and some audio recordings of old players. This especially applies to four- and five-voiced "dude", very valuable traditional bagpipe-type instruments. For musical instruments of this type, it is assumed that the Croats brought them with them to these regions when they immigrated in the 7th and 8th centuries. Back in the 19th and early 20th centuries, there were many bagpipe players in parts of continental Croatia, and these instruments were an important part of the people's life. Some of those old players (such as Marko Križan from the Bjelovar area) are still mentioned today as excellent players and makers.

Thanks to Stjepan Večković, many forgotten musical instruments have been reconstructed and brought back to life, especially four- and five-voice bagpipes. It was extremely difficult to reconstruct playing techniques based only on a few original audio recordings. Today, there are already several young musicians who play these instruments very well.

Seminars on playing and making traditional musical instruments

Centre of Croatian traditional instruments every year organizes and holds a series of seminars on playing and making traditional musical instruments, especially bagpipes. Seminars are held throughout Croatia and are a great help for local cultural and artistic societies. It is important to note that many traditional musical instruments have almost disappeared and these seminars are extremely helpful in preserving these musical instruments and applying them on stage. So far, over 1,000 students of various ages, especially young people, have participated in the seminars. Students learn basic and advanced techniques of playing bagpipes and other musical instruments, how to tune and maintain bagpipes, and ancient and modern manufacturing techniques.

During the year, at least 10 seminars are held, and they are supported by the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia.

International bagpipe festival in Croatia

Since 2007, the Center of Croatian traditional instruments has been organizing the International Bagpipe Festival with the aim of promoting and popularizing bagpipe playing. The festival is regularly held every year in autumn and lasts from three to seven days. The venues of the festival are the capital city of Zagreb, and in several smaller towns (Mihovljan, Belec, Gospić, Bjelovar). The goal of the festival is to encourage young musicians to preserve the tradition of playing bagpipes. Bagpipe playing workshops are also held as part of the festival.

The themes of the festival are different every year. Sometimes there are bagpipe soloists, other times small musical groups and larger orchestras, and the most interesting were concerts dedicated to women who play bagpipes. Also, in addition to bagpipes, many other traditional musical instruments are represented at the concerts, which makes the festival attractive both for players and for the audience. The great value of the festival is that players get to know each other and exchange experiences not only in playing but also in making and preserving bagpipes.

Bagpipe players and music groups from the following countries have performed at the festival so far: Colombia, Mexico, Ghana, Japan, Ireland, Scotland, Belgium, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Spain, Belarus, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Italy, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Croatia.

Photos by: Stjepan Večković

ITALY

Associazione
culturale
Multietnica

The tradition of bagpipes in Basilicata: *zampogna a chiave* and *surdulina*

The bagpipes are very common in region of Basilicata, in Southern Italy, especially in the area of Mount Pollino National Park; they are also present in the valleys of Sarmento Sinni, Noce and Agri.

The two types of bagpipes present in this area, are the *surdulina* and the *zampogna a chiave*; they are the most important musical folk instrument in Basilicata, and among the most relevant in the Italian folk tradition as a whole; this for the high number of performers still active in the region, the presence of several workshops in which it is built, as well as for the particularity of the sound and the musical repertoires.

Today these instruments are still in use, as it happened in the past, in rural contexts, especially during the festivals and the religious processions. Their music follows the old traditional way of transmission, where listening, memory and imitation still play a crucial role.

The *zampogna a chiave* is composed of two conical chanters and two cylindrical drones of different length, inserted in a wood block; this is connected to a bag realized with a whole goat skin; it has an insufflator through which the performer blows the air. The chanters and drones of the *zampogna a chiave* are made up of two



pieces; those of the chanters (pipe and bell) are fixed with a screw, while those of the drones are mobile and sliding in order to be easily tuned. The left chanter of the *zampogna a chiave* has a metal key (*chiave*) to close the last fingerhole, from which derives the name of the instrument. The *zampogna a chiave* can be of different sizes, spanning from about 50 cm of length up to 2 meters.

The *surdulina* is smaller, with the two cylindrical chanters of the same length made by only one piece of wood, and the two cylindrical drones composed by two sliding pieces; the *surdulina* too has a goat skin bag.

Beside the size, the substantial difference between the *zampogna a chiave* and the *surdulina* is in the reeds: the first mounts double reeds, and constitutes, from the organology, a double oboe with two drones; the second mounts simple reeds and constitutes a double clarinet with two drones.

Both the *zampogna* and the *surdulina* are used especially as a solo instrument; they play fast music for dancing, or slow music during religious processions; moreover, they can play to support the singing. They can play also together with other instruments, especially the frame drum, called *tamburello*; this is common in Italian folk music and play the rhythm for the dances.

In this area is present also the *ciaramella*, also known in Italy as oboe popolare (folk oboe). It is a, a double reed conical instrument that plays together with the *zampogna a chiave*; usually the *ciaramella* plays melodies, while the *zampogna* provide the accompaniment.

Making the instruments

The construction of the bagpipe, especially of the *zampogna a chiave*, requires specific ability and an equipment, consisting of a lathe, a drill, and the reamers.

In the construction of the *zampogna a chiave* different types of wood are used. One of the most frequent combination of wood is using maple for the block, olive for the pipes (as it does not absorb the humidity of the breath), and cherry or maple for the bells of the chanters.

For the construction, the maker starts from the selected wood that is cut to the desired length and split into four parts. Subsequently, after having cut the pieces of wood, these are roughed up and worked on the lathe to give a precise shape. The cylindrical hole of the drones is made on the lathe with a drill bit, while the conical hole of the chanters is obtained with special reamer; the size of the holes can vary and this affects the tuning of the instrument.

The reeds are the most delicate component of the *zampogna a chiave*. The construction of the reeds is done with a seasoned cane (*Arundo donax*): an internodal version is split into three parts, and from each part is obtained a reed. The length of the reeds determines the tuning.

The upper parts of the reeds are smoothed in the shape of an olive frond or nail. The internal recess, gutter, if it is very deep, determines a more serious sound. A circular twig is inserted between the two parts of the reed and then tied with string.

To make the bag, a complete goat skin is usually used. The leather is tanned either with salt or with copper sulfate. Then the zampogna block is inserted into the neck of the bag, the insufflator into the right front leg, while the left is knotted to prevent the air from escaping.

Making the small surdulina is less difficult; due to the small size, it can be made also by knives. The simple reeds are done with cane. The bag is always done with a whole goat skin and mounted in the same way of the zampogna.

A musical gathering of zampogna players: the Madonna di Pollino festival

In the area of Mount Pollino, in Basilicata, the main gatherings of musicians were - and still are nowadays - some important religious pilgrimages: The Madonna del Pollino festival is the main one. The festival is in honor of the saint patron of the area, the Virgin Mary. All the devotees of the region make a pilgrimage to adore the Madonna, in the sanctuary built in the mountains, at more than 1500 meters, in the territory of San Severino Lucano. Here the Virgin, according to a local legend, appears in the XVIII century in a cave.

The Pollino festival has three phases.

The first takes place on the first weekend in June; the statue of the Virgin Mary from the village of S. Severino Lucano is carried to the sanctuary, accompanied by a procession lasting a whole day and going through all the villages in the valley. Meanwhile there is continuous music and dancing, with many zampogna players, and food and drinks are distributed.

The second phase takes place on the mountain on the Friday and Saturday before the first Sunday in July. The sanctuary is

taken by storm by hundreds of pilgrims, who sleep outside at least for a night; there are processions, vigils, songs and dance, with zampogne, organetti (diatonic accordion) and tamburelli playing continuously and creating the typical soundscape of this event.

The third and final phase occurs during the second weekend of September, starting with a vigil on the Saturday night at the sanctuary, and followed by a long procession, which completes the cycle by bringing the Virgin back to S. Severino accompanied by the sound of the zampogne.

The main moment of the festival, relevant also for musical traditions, is the second one, in July, when hundreds of pilgrims from different regions come to participate in the mountain. Among them, a big number of musicians and especially zampogna players.

The Pollino festival is a fantastic opportunity to listen to a living tradition of the zampogne in Italy. During these events, there is also the transmission of musical repertoires from the older players to the young musicians; moreover, the makers bring and sell their instruments.

The Pollino Festival is one of the most important moments in Italy to observe and listen to a still active musical tradition. It is a unique case and over time it has been studied by various researchers. The festival represents an important moment of encounter between players of zampogne, organetto and tamburello. Musicians of different generations, coming from different villages and regions, for some days gather together in informal way, and create a special musical community. The festival therefore represents a key moment for the conservation of the music of the folk instruments.

A celebratory account of this festival, with a focus on the important musical presence, was already written by the writer and traveler Norman Douglas, one century ago:

"It is a vast picnic in honour of the Virgin. Two thousand persons are encamped about the chapel, amid a formidable army of donkeys and mules whose braying mingles with the pastoral music of reeds and bagpipes - bagpipes of two kinds, the common Calabrian variety and that of Basilicata, much larger and with a resounding base key, which will soon cease to exist. [...] On all sides pictures groups of dancers indulge in the old peasants' measure, the pecorara, to the droning of bagpipes - a demure kind of tarantella, the male capering about with faun-like attitudes of invitation and snappings of fingers, his partner evading the

advances with downcast eyes. [...] Night brings no respite; on the contrary, the din grows livelier than ever; fires gleam brightly on the meadow and under the trees; the dancers are unwearied, the bagpipers with their brazen lungs show no signs of exhaustion." (Norman Douglas. 1926. Old Calabria. Martin Secker. London. pp. 151-153.)

Even today a visit to the Pollino festival, in addition to the religious aspect, represents an experience that allows to relive the situation described by Douglas; this as a testimony of a musical tradition that has remained alive and unchanged along the time.

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Photos (Archive Nicola Scaldaferrì):

- 1) Madonna del Pollino: Domenico Miraglia (organetto) and Giuseppe Salamone (zampogna a chiave) play in front of the statue of the Virgin Mary, during the procession in the mountain woods.
- 2) Musician and artisan Quirino Valvano with a zampogna a chiave, made by himself.
- 3) Musician and artisan Quirino Valvano with a surdulina, made by himself.

SPAIN

Asociación
Gaiteros
de Graus

BAGPIPES & TRADITIONS: LAS FIESTAS DE GRAUS

Ribagorza is a region rich in traditions, with a strong cultural identity, which fights over the years. Ancestral instruments such as the bagpipe have been replaced by more modern ones and their music has also changed, adapting to the new times. Their ancestral celebrations, marked by a ritual component of a religious nature, have also adapted to a new way of life marked by the depopulation of the Pyrenees.

While most of the towns in Ribagorza manage to maintain part of their traditional festivals and their ritual dances, Graus is the paradigm of the Festival where religious and pagan traditions are mixed.

On September 12, at the time of vespers, the Pipers arrive. They are received on the medieval bridge by all the authorities of the town (civil and religious) and the population from Graus. Upon entering the village through the Barbastro Gate, the first of the melodies called "Entrada de la Gaita" (The Entrance of the Bagpipe) sounds. A mixture of smells of gunpowder and basil invades the entire town. The party has started and cannot be

understood without the presence of the bagpipers. They interpret melodies of an intimate and ritual nature, accompanying songs dedicated to our Patron Saints. In the crowded church of San Miguel one bagpiper plays the "Albada", while the shots from the blunderbuss fill the entire environment with a strong smell of gunpowder.

The bagpipe and the bagpipers are the center of the "Fiesta". They participate in the religious processions and they play the melodies of the "Dance" (a traditional swords dance) in the "Plaza Mayor" (Main Square), full of people waiting to see the dancers performing the traditional dances of Graus that can only be seen twice a year: the 13th and 14th September.

Other acts such as the "Pllega" that runs through the streets of Graus to collect donations for the Santo Cristo Brotherhood, which was in charge of paying the costs of the festivals, or the singing of the "Albadas" at dawn on September 15 are accompanied by the Bagpipers that make them an essential figure for the development of the "Fiestas de Graus" that were declared of National Tourist Interest in 1973.





Making instruments: Gaita de Boto, Trompa de Ribagorza and Clarí.

The bagpipe is the most representative instrument of our territory but as it happens in other places, the ensemble formed by oboe and bagpipe can also be found in Ribagorza. We remind the "Gaiters de Caserras" (Pipers of Caserras) and we see a group made up of a Gaita de Boto (Aragonese bagpipe) and two "Trompas de Ribagorza" (traditional oboe from Ribagorza). Although the tradition only stopped for a few years during the Civil War, our bagpipes disappeared, and in 1945 they were replaced by other bagpipes, which were bagpipes from Galicia. For this reason, we could find Galician bagpipes in our folklore, since our native instruments were no longer made and played.

It was in the 80s that a process of recovery of our instruments began and that work was carried out on the investigation of our bagpipe, the Gaita de Boto. Marcel Gaztellu, an instrument maker from Tarbes, studied it and drew the plans based on the bagpipe founded in Bestué. In 1990, they were reintroduced in Graus and the bagpipers played the old instruments that used to be played in the mountains of Ribagorza again.

On the other hand, our most charismatic oboe, the Trompa de Ribagorza, continued to be forgotten until a copy was found in a house in Graus, and years later another copy of this instrument appeared. In 1991, Mariano Pascual was in charge of starting the recovery process to complete the piece that was missing from the Bagpipers of Caserras and recovered the instrument.

In the absence of builders who could carry out an organological study, he contacted the Luthiers of the Occitan Conservatory in Toulouse. Claude Romero and Bernat Desblanc made some first copies there. Local

makers, Miguel Ferrer and later Sergi Llena, continued making our bagpipe and our oboe.

Mariano Pascual and Sergi Llena have continued on the research on lost instruments, the ones that shepherds played and they made themselves. In November 2022 they presented the recovery study of the "Clarí", a traditional instrument spread throughout the Isábena river valley.

Traditionally, our instruments are linked to our land, its resources, its materials. The wood is from our forests and the most used in our instruments are boxwood, olive and almond wood.

Cow horn, bone or tin are other materials that are used as decorative elements that reinforce the weaker parts of the instrument, as it happens in our houses, churches... We also find solar symbols of protection carved on our instruments and other elements such as snakeskin, considered a magical and esoteric animal, which gives our bagpipes a mystical character.

The characteristic that gives our bagpipes the personality is the dress. After the death of a bagpiper's daughter and due to the longing and sadness he felt, he put her dress on his bagpipe. When playing the instrument, he felt that it was her daughter who was singing and he could hold her in his arms. This story spread throughout Aragon and other bagpipers began to put dresses on their instruments. We will never know if this sad story is true, but when we tell it, we get excited thinking about that piper.





LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

In a globalized world where everything goes very fast, we must stop for a moment, breathe and think beyond the immediate. Who will follow the tradition when we can't? Our young people are the result of a new digital age where we have a whole new world in our hands, where it is possible to reach thousands of people who are hundreds of kilometers away. with applications and a phone. We can see the trend towards uniformity in many aspects of our lives: fashion, the music we listen to...

However, our new generations are increasingly disconnected from their vital environment, they forget everything that connects them to the land they inhabit and all rituals and traditions are lost. And this is a problem that transcends borders as we have been able to verify with colleagues from other countries.

In Ribagorza (Aragon) we have launched several projects to disseminate and promote traditional music and knowledge of our traditions among the youngest ones and our teens. We have worked with the school, we have introduced traditional instruments in the music school and we have carried out intensive traditional music courses in different areas and with different profiles. In all the programmed activities we have set objectives and concepts that go beyond the practice of the bagpipe. Musical concepts are closely linked to other concepts of a linguistic, geographical, historical nature...

Photos by:
Sergi Llena, Pili Tedó, José Manuel Betato

Pepa Chireta Project

According to Sergi Llena Mur, creator of the project, it was of vital importance to create visual stimuli that could break with the established schemes. Pepa Chireta was born there, a girl who wanted to be a bagpiper. Pepa remembered the old bagpipers who played beautiful melodies with their bagpipes and she travelled the Pyrenees in search of instruments and songs. A show was created to be performed in schools with complementary activities and to be able to publicize our instruments and traditions. The title of the CD is "Pepa Chireta: música, bailes y otras historietas" (Pepa Chireta: music, dances and other stories), which was released and the version of the concert dedicated to a family audience.

We carry out more specific work in the musical field with traditional music workshops where children and adolescents put their musical knowledge into practice with their instrument to live a new experience with the traditional music of the Pyrenees.

One last challenge was to introduce traditional instruments in music schools. For this, a pedagogical proposal was necessary. It must be attractive and be able to meet the desired objectives of bringing traditional music and instruments closer to the little ones. Having instruments adapted to small hands was vital for the success of implementing these new instruments in music schools.

Mis amigos gaiteros (my piper friends)

Our friend Pepa Chireta travels through the Pyrenees and other territories searching for instruments and melodies, making new friends. "Mis amigos gaiteros" (My bagpiper friends) is a new project by Sergi Llena Mur which started in the lockdown. It is a collection of videos which are available on YouTube, where bagpipers from all over Europe explain their instruments and perform some of their melodies. In the videos we can discover some curiosities of their countries, learn about their geographical areas and listen to the different languages spoken in Europe. All this is accompanied by illustrations of the different bagpipers in a collection of merchandising (bags, t-shirts, cups...) which has been created with the aim of visualizing the magnificent world of the bagpipe.

SLOVAKIA

Cech slovenských gajdosov

Slovak bagpipe culture and UNESCO

The Guild of Slovak Bagpipers initiated the inscription of Slovak bagpipe culture first in the national list of intangible heritage and on December 2, 2015, Slovak bagpipes and bagpipe culture were added to the prestigious UNESCO Intangible Heritage List.

As a result of registration in the List, the interest in playing the bagpipes among young people is slightly increasing. Bagpipers have several permanent presentation opportunities at regular bagpipe festivals and occasional folklore events and festivals.

After registration the folklore ensembles and the entire folklore community began to pay more attention to bagpipes and bagpipe dances, which brought new opportunities for the presentation of bagpipe culture, especially dances and instrumental music.

Among the folklore ensembles that draw on the bagpipe tradition, we can mention FS Ponitran, which has presented several programs, a significant part of which was with bagpipes. SĽUK (Slovenský ľudový umelecký kolektív/The Slovak State Traditional Dance Company)- a professional dance ensemble, has also included several instrumental interpretations of bagpipes in its repertoire, which brought bagpipe culture to the most recognized theater stages in Slovakia.

Bagpipe culture is a very important element in Slovakia for the community of people who care about maintaining the uniqueness and characteristics of folklore expressions, which are understood as a sign identifying people and customs in this area. Addition to the list increased respect for this element. The municipalities in which this tradition exists are trying to maintain and develop it. The respect for bagpipes in the folklore community has grown and bagpipes appear at all the major festivals. Folklore ensembles and groups also try to use this element if they have the opportunity.

Festival Gajdošské fašiangy

One of the first and until today one of the most important activities of The Guild of Slovak Bagpipers is organizing the festival "Gajdošské Fašiangy". This festival exists for 36 years. Important best practices, which are part of the festival are following:

- Focus on the young generation. Before the festival, children in local schools are educated about bagpipes and traditions as part of their education process. The festival also offers opportunities for young bagpipers to perform.
- Meeting point for Slovak bagpipers and craftsmen. Most of Slovak bagpipers and craftsmen meets on this festival and on a general assembly of The Guild of Slovak Bagpipers, so the community is maintained, best practices shared, etc. There are also irregular workshops focused on the mentioned topics.
- Preservation of tradition. On the general assembly of The Guild of Slovak Bagpipers are discussed new trends in the tradition and new risks for the tradition, such as playing together with other bagpipers or with a band, which is a risk for the individualistic playstyle. As a result a concept for competition for bagpipers was created.



Getting closer to bagpipe culture through publications

Collecting, preserving information about bagpipe culture, and presenting it to contemporary consumers in an engaging way is a proven method of getting newcomers closer to the bagpipe culture. Here are some of latest publications which are offering insights to bagpipe culture from the Nitra region of western Slovakia.

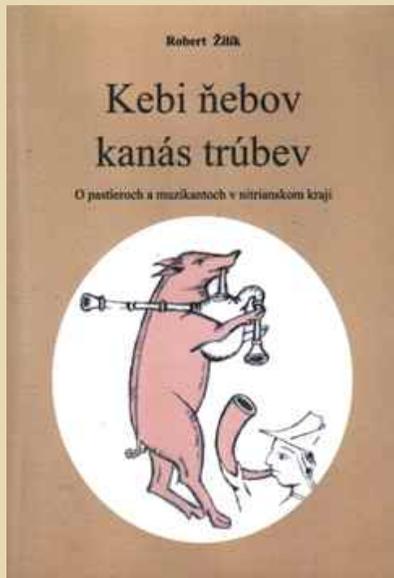
Book "Kebi ňebov kanás trúbev" by Robert Žilík.

The author reveals a 300-year tradition of herding pigs, sheep and other animals. For the first time, the reader has the opportunity to get to know the shepherds' articles from 1718 on Count Huňady's estate. Through the stories of memoirs, as well as the author's tales and legends, the reader can perceive the world of shepherds, life on the old granges, and superstitious accounts of mythological phenomena (witchcraft, magic bagpipes).

The bagpipe tradition in our Nitra region is presented in the book with text and pictures concerning 60 bagpipers. This fact places us among the most important bagpipe regions in Slovakia. Artistic reproductions from Slovak galleries, which can be found in the publication, reinforce the idea of shepherds and musicians in the past. The author pays tribute to the living and non-living bearers of the musical traditions (a rich list of specific people). In the chapter How We Discovered the Bagpipers, the author outlines both the history and how we can return to the values of our ancestors. In the last part of the book, the reader will find up to 90 songs (sheet music, many of them are for bagpipes) with original lyrics, which will serve to further spread our folk music culture.

The publication "Kebi ňebou kanás trúbeu" is intended for lovers of history, ethnography, folklorists, schools as part of regional education, as well as for presentation of their villages by municipal authorities, cultural and recreational facilities for visitors to this region, and the public. The author wants to educate or entertain the reader with his lyrical information, but above all to raise the historical and cultural consciousness of the young and older citizens of the Nitra region.

As a reaction to this publication bagpiper Tomáš Blažek decided to record CD „A bagpiper is walking down the village“. The content of the CD encompasses several types of music units called runda (rounds) which are images from various life events of villagers, dinner dances, Christmas, carnivals, war, dance balls, etc. The songs present the tunes of the bagpipes from the Nitra region and also many other traditional instruments.



Innovations

In recent years in Slovakia, we have noticed an increase in interest in learning to play the bagpipes, mainly among children and young people. However, it is often said that the price of new bagpipes is too high for a beginner player, and not everyone has the opportunity to borrow the instrument. We see making bagpipes for beginners using 3D printers as one of the ways to make bagpipes more affordable.

This attempt includes the creation of a 3D model of bagpipes and the use of FFF type 3D printing, which can reduce production costs. It is necessary to mention that the goal of this production method is not to replace the classically traditional wooden instrument, but to bring to the market a more accessible version for beginners to learn the technique of playing. From the experiments that have been made so far, we could notice that the 3D printed parts of the bagpipes can play tones like classic wooden bagpipes, but the color of the sound is significantly different.



Photos by: Miso Veselsky

GEORGIA

V. Sarajshvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire

Georgian bagpipe – Gudastviri used to be spread in Kartli, Racha, Adjara (where it is called Chiboni), Meskheti (where it is called Tulumi) and Pshavi. They differ from one another in timbre, capacity / size of the bag and number of holes on the two pipes. Nowadays, this instrumental tradition is mainly preserved in two regions of Georgia – Adjara and Racha.

Adjaran Bagpipe. Chiboni performance is an organic part of traditional life of Adjara – the southwest region of Georgia. In the past, this instrument always accompanied community festive gatherings. Mostly dance tunes were performed on it. Some of the Chiboni performers danced along with the playing. As a rule, the status of Mechibone – Chiboni player – meant mastery of the instrument, practical knowledge of its making. This was often family tradition and passed from father to son. In recent decades, the number of Chiboni performers in Adjara has decreased. Although people of different ages still play the Chibon, however, fewer and fewer people own the technology of making it, and those mostly belong to the older generation.



Murad Tavartkiladze (born in 1961) is the virtuoso representative of Adjaran Chiboni tradition. He still lives and works in native village Kokotauri of Keda municipality. Tavartkiladze relates the desire to play Chiboni to a childhood memory. The young boy was greatly impressed by the joint performance of his father – Merdial Tavartkiladze and Vaso Iremadze, a famous master of this instrument in the past. His first Chiboni teacher was his father, and later Vaso Iremadze. 14-year-old Murad already mastered the technique of playing Chibon, and from the same period he studied the making of this instrument.

Murad Tavartkiladze is a building engineer, although his life and work are mainly related to Chiboni. In this regard, he has gained rich experience: in different years, he played in the choreographic ensemble of the Batumi VET School, the Keda municipality ensemble "Fesvebi", the Khorumi¹ dancers group of the village of Tshkomoris; He worked as a chiboni teacher in the Georgian State Song and Dance Ensemble "Erision". He still teaches students in Keda. Also to those people who come to him from different parts of Georgia and different countries of the world. His instruments are mostly bought by foreigners. As he notes, over time he made more than 300 Chibonis.

Murad Tavartkiladze is a typical representative of this tradition with his inherited knowledge, which includes the mastery of the instrument along with performance. In addition to sharing knowledge and experience with interested youth, he promotes this instrument by participating in folklore concerts, local and international festivals, and projects.

Rachan Bagpipe. Racha, a highland region of west Georgia was famous for its bagpipe tradition in the past, in Georgian called *Mestvireoba*². According to data's, in the 19th century, this region had a number of bagpipers. They mainly led a wandering life, and the area of their activity sometimes went beyond the borders of Georgia. *Mestvireoba* is based on a strong tradition of master-apprenticeship. A 12-15-year-old teenager was assigned to a famous master, and over the years the apprentice acquired professional skills from him. *Mestvires* were indispensable participants of the festive gatherings. They used *Gudastviri* not as a solo instrument, but as an accompaniment to the song. In the 20th century, this tradition began to weaken, and gradually the cases of performance on *Gudastviri* became rare. Current revival movement of Rachan *Gudastviri* tradition is connected with two young musicians – **Tornike Skhiereli and Levan Berelidze**.

¹ The Khorumi is a war dance that originated in the region of Guria/Adjara.

² Mestvire – *Gudastviri* performer, bagpiper. *Mestvireoba* – tradition of bagpipe performance.



Tornike Skhiereli (born in 1989) has been interested in Georgian traditional music – polyphonic songs and instruments since childhood. His interest was strengthened by the folklore atmosphere that reigned in his family and native village in the end of 1990s.

Tornike graduated from Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chant College (Tbilisi), where he mastered the profession of choir leader of folk songs and chant. Along with his studies, he often returned to Racha, in order to collect folk music examples. He was also interested in the technology of making traditional instruments, and searched for information among the bearers of traditions and in scientific literature.

After completing his studies, Tornike returned to Racha. Since 2016, he has been working as a teacher at the Singing School of the State Folklore Center in Oni municipality. He is a leader of folk ensembles – "Sagalobeli" and "Dziriani" – with Rachan folk musical repertory. Plays on all instruments spread in Racha, including Gudastviri.

In 2022, with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia, Tornike Skhiereli founded a school of master-apprentices of traditional Chianuri³ and Gudastviri manufacturing in Oni municipality. Within the framework of the project, working spaces were organized with equipment and inventory necessary for the production of instruments. Along with making instruments, the apprentices also learn the practice of performing. He often hosts workshops for foreigners in Racha and abroad. Tornike Skhiereli as a performer and as a teacher is trying to contribute to the restoration, preservation and popularization of the fading tradition of Rachan Gudastviri.



Levan Berelidze (born in 1990) was raised in a family known in Racha for its rich musical traditions. Georgian polyphonic singing and traditional instruments have had a prominent place in his life since childhood. His parents, brother, children and nephews sing and play various instruments.

Shortly after Levan's birth, his family moved to the industrial city of Rustavi, quite far from Racha, where he lived till 2016. Levan graduated from Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chant College (Tbilisi), where he mastered the profession of choir leader of folk songs and chant.

In 2016, Levan Berelidze with his elder brother returned to native Racha. From this period he leads the chanting choir of Nikortsminda Cathedral; is the teacher of the Singing School of the State Folklore Center in Ambrolauri municipality; He leads the Berelidze Family Ensemble, presented by three generations of his family.

Levan Berelidze became interested in Gudastviri in 2011. He decided to learn how to play this instrument and the rules of its making from the old Gudastviri performers still living in Racha and Kartli.

Nowadays, together with other musical instruments – Chianuri and Daira – characteristic of Racha, Levan tries to continue the instrumental tradition of the region. His repertory includes restored examples of the old sound recordings, which he performs during concerts and festivals, and in this way, he popularizes Rachan Gudastviri among Georgian and foreign listeners.

Photos by: The International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony

³. A bowed, two-stringed viol-type instrument from Racha

BELARUS

Belarusian Cultural-Educational Center

Hlybokaye, Belarus

"Dudarki Rej" is an international festival of European bagpipe regions that embodies our best practices in the revival of local bagpiping traditions. Established in 2017, it is the first of its kind, with a focus on integrating bagpipe regions from across Europe, as opposed to other festivals that concentrate on specific countries. As most European traditions are local, regional, and not national phenomena, "Dudarki Rej's" task is to bring these regions together and strengthen their cooperation by highlighting their regional potential and the uniqueness of their bagpipe traditions. Beyond its celebration of bagpipe music, the festival holds cultural significance as a platform for promoting cultural exchange and understanding between different regions united by a shared history of bagpiping. Participants from different parts of Europe, with a love for bagpipes and unique cultural traditions, come together to learn from one another, share their music and stories, and build relationships that transcend borders.

The festival's best practices are connected to and sustained by the event. The first practice is the annual revival of a significant artifact, either by making a copy of a known local piece of bagpipes or creating unique art inspired by bagpiping tradition. For instance, the festival revived the oldest set of bagpipes from 1849 by creating an exact copy of the instrument based on the original, which happened to be stored abroad. The set was officially presented during the festival, attracting local and state media attention. The set was also played during the festival and stored in the local museum afterward. Additionally, local professional and amateur artists are encouraged every year to depict the history of bagpipes in their chosen techniques, such as painting, paper cutting, clay, straw, and more. Their art is

presented to festival visitors and used in the festival's logos and other visual merchandise. Every year, a book, booklet, map or postcard is printed with new findings about local bagpiping traditions.

The oldest preserved Belarusian bagpipes, from Vieracieji (Hlybokaye district) from 1849. Photo by Vital Voranau



Festival souvenirs. Photo by Vital Voranau



The second best practice is the engagement of local institutions and organizations. The festival tries to involve more local institutions and organizations every year, such as music schools, art schools, museums of history and ethnography, local libraries, business owners, hotels, souvenir shop owners, local food makers, and church communities. This engagement enables people to learn about the tradition while also gaining new partners who are willing to spend money on the festival, with the possibility of advertising their businesses.



More information about the project is available here: www.suitunovads.lv and on the websites of project partners

Photo Uładzimir Skrabatun

The third best practice is dedicating each festival to a particular bagpiper or a person who had some influence on the preservation of the local bagpiping tradition. The festival also does not focus solely on the town of Hlybokaye but aims to cover and engage as many local communities as possible, especially villages with cultural infrastructure, like local culture houses. These communities are usually willing to host events from the festival list and are eager to participate in any cultural events.

In conclusion, the "Dudarki Rej" festival's best practices highlight its success in promoting cultural exchange and understanding between different regions united by a shared history of bagpiping. The festival's focus on integrating bagpipe regions from across Europe, revival of significant artifacts, engagement of local institutions and organizations, and dedication to particular bagpipers or persons who had some influence on the preservation of the local bagpiping tradition, have contributed to the festival's significance beyond the celebration of bagpipe music. All the activities and important places of the bagpipe traditions of the district are marked on an interactive map⁴ available to the public.

⁴ https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1_vjWqVxDK50th2Cm8WCujtD2CLj5zzAh

Associated partners:
Latvian National Centre for Culture and
Latvian National Commission for UNESCO

