

The Living Human Treasures Bulgaria National System: Between the Conservation of Folklore and the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

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(Summary)

This article reviews two co-existing and mutually conflicting concepts in Bulgaria: the one of *folklore* and the policies of its conservation in the course of the 20th century, and the one of *intangible cultural heritage* (ICH) and the efforts for safeguarding it following the adoption, in 2003, of the relevant UNESCO Convention. A comparison is made between the folklore festivals, characteristic of the second half of the 20th century, and the Living Human Treasures Bulgaria National System, created in 2008 as one of the fundamental cultural policies of the Republic of Bulgaria in this sphere, which has resulted in the compiling of the National Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Based on observations made during several of its consecutive iterations conducted so far, the article seeks to outline important aspects and issues of the rationalization of ICH and its safeguarding at the present moment. The author draws on her experience as a member of the team of scholars at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IEFSEM – BAS), which has been participating actively at expert level in the implementation of the 2003 Convention in Bulgaria.

Keywords: folklore; conservation; folklore festivals; intangible cultural heritage; safeguarding; 2003 Convention; Living Human Treasures Bulgaria National System

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