

REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

**Deadline: 31 March 2025
for possible inscription in 2026**

*Instructions for completing the form are available at:
<https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms>*

A. State Party or States Parties

Estonia

B. Name of the element

B.1. Name of the element in the languages and scripts of the community(ies) concerned

Mardi- ja kadrisandis käimine

B.2. Name of the element in English

Mumming and masking in Estonia during St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day

C. Name of the communities, groups or individuals concerned

The mumming community in Estonia.

The custom described in this application is the Estonian mumming and masking (hereafter

mumming) tradition during St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day, which is widespread in urban and rural areas across Estonia. The mumming community is not defined by a narrow geographic region, lifestyle, age or cultural affinity, but by an appreciation of the customs that accompany its vitality, preservation and transmission nowadays. People belonging to different generations from children to adults go mumming both in cities as well as the countryside. This November tradition formerly marking the end of the agricultural season belongs to the traditional autumn-winter calendar traditions of the Estonians. The mumming tradition is an essential and valuable part of the cultural heritage of Estonians living in Estonia. It connects different generations and has in some places become transnational. There are signs of the tradition spreading to local non-Estonian communities.

The mumming community is composed of groups of mummers, who are not the same each year, but their members change, often even during a single evening. The mummer groups are not fixed from year to year but are formed from interested parties for the evening according to the situation and possibilities at the time. Also, the families receiving the mummers change each year.

1. General information about the element

For Criterion R.1, States shall demonstrate that 'the element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention'.

1.1. *Provide a brief description of the element that can introduce it to readers who have never seen or experienced it.*

Not to exceed 300 words

Historically, people in Estonia have gone mumming on fifteen calendar days. Today, it is only practiced nationwide on St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day. For Estonians, mumming is an important autumn-winter ritual entertainment that is awaited and prepared for. Mumming is a tradition-based playful interaction between two parties, the visiting mummers and the receiving family.

St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day mummers are groups of people disguised as various animals, family members and other characters, who go door-to-door in cities and villages mainly on the eve of St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day (9 and 24 November). The disguises are made up of clothing (an inside-out fur or furry overclothes, gloves, scarves, skirts, beads, etc.), changing one's voice, as well as face masks made from available materials.

The mumming ritual begins with singing outside the family's door. Performing the rituals to the accompaniment of songs is a pervasive characteristic of mumming: entrance into the house is requested by singing, the reason for their arrival, thanks and farewell are given by singing. The interaction between the mummers and the family involves the mummers asking riddles, playing instruments, dancing, singing, joking and entertaining the family. Mummers wish the family good luck, success and health for the coming year by throwing grains, peas or rice on the floor. The family thanks the mummers with gifts: food, sweets, and more recently also money. During an evening, the mummer groups usually visit several families. Their scenes are based on traditions that are varied by themes and personalities in society at the given time.

The mumming tradition has been associated with the veneration of ancestors and the autumn-winter time of the souls. Therefore, the mummers were seen as embodiments of ancestral souls. This belief, as well as the past fertility-magical function of the custom, has receded nowadays.

- 1.2. *Who are the bearers and practitioners of the element? Are there any specific roles, including gender-related ones or categories of persons with special responsibilities for the practice and transmission of the element? If so, who are they and what are their responsibilities?*

Not to exceed 100 words

Based on studies, about a third of the mummers are adults; the rest are youth and children. Generally, mummers go in groups, with friends or family. Different age, cultural and social groups are involved in mumming, both as the mummers and those receiving them.

Due to the historical background in fertility magic, the mummers have gender-specific roles: St. Martin's Day mummers (regardless of their actual gender) are masked as men. St. Catherine's Day mummers are mostly masked as women.

Mumming is a democratic and creative tradition, enabling the equal participation of both men and women. Each masked person can freely choose his or her own role.

- 1.3. *How are the knowledge and skills related to the element transmitted today?*

Not to exceed 100 words

The transmission is ensured through inspiring example and the experience of personal participation. It is mainly by going mumming together and welcoming mummers that these customs are transmitted from (grand)parents to children or in circle of friends from the more experienced and inspiring peers to others. Local educational, cultural and memory institutions organize educational days and various thematic events (festivities, workshops, competitions, etc.). The tradition is transmitted through interaction between the mummers and the families. Region-specific customs of mumming are reflected by the extensive folklore collection in the Estonian Folklore Archive and in numerous publications based on it, as well as websites, online campaigns and initiatives by various NGOs.

- 1.4. *What social functions and cultural meanings does the element have nowadays for the communities concerned?*

Not to exceed 200 words

Going mumming or receiving mummers is a welcome event for Estonians. Mumming is usually done with family and friends to spend time together, to strengthen interaction between community members, to get gifts (mainly for children) and for cultural entertainment. The historical priority of wishing the family good luck and health is nowadays less important than recreational interaction.

In both urban and peri-urban areas, mummers are community connectors, involving people in common activities and cheering them up, thus supporting people's mental health and their physical well-being. Mumming enables the first interaction in an otherwise anonymous community (larger cities, peri-urban areas with new inhabitants) and increases social cohesion. Masked family-to-family visits provide an opportunity to visit homes that wouldn't be visited otherwise and thus enable the community to note social and economic inequalities and provide a disadvantaged family with appropriate support.

Mumming develops creativity, initiative, empathy, performance skills, responsibility, cooperation and respect. Many families look forward to St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day mummers and their visits are talked about throughout the year. Welcoming the mummers provides an opportunity to experience the joy of giving, discourages loneliness and offers refreshing social interaction and cultural recreation during the dark autumn months, benefiting both parties.

- 1.5. *Can the State Party or States Parties confirm that nothing in the element is incompatible with existing international human rights instruments?*

Not to exceed 50 words

The mumming custom does not violate international human rights instruments. Mumming and receiving mummers is voluntary. The tradition is equally appropriate for people of all ages, genders, cultural and social groups and religions in different places of residence. Dressing up as different characters promotes tolerance and mutual understanding.

- 1.6. *Can the State Party or States Parties confirm that nothing in the element could be perceived as not compatible with the requirement of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals?*

Not to exceed 50 words

Mumming is a dialogue between two parties based on mutual respect. Without homes that open their doors to mummers, the tradition's transmission is impossible. Mumming offers community members the opportunity to work together, bringing joy and activities to the community. No one is belittled or ridiculed for playing different roles. Mumming is a benevolent activity.

- 1.7. *Can the State Party or States Parties confirm that nothing in the element could be perceived as not compatible with the requirement of sustainable development?*

Not to exceed 50 words

Mumming supports sustainable development through re-use and recycling. Costumes are made mostly from available materials, not bought from the shop. Gifts received are mostly food. The tradition encourages people to value knowledge, creativity and cooperation. Mumming is strongly linked to respect for nature and ancestors and supports social and cultural cohesion.

- 1.8. *Are there customary practices governing access to the element? If yes, describe any specific measures that are in place to ensure their respect.*

Not to exceed 100 words

According to our knowledge, there are no customs in the community limiting access to mumming and masking.

2. Contribution to visibility, awareness, dialogue and sustainable development

For Criterion R.2, the States shall demonstrate 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'. In addition, States are encouraged, with reference to Chapter VI of the Operational Directives, to recognize the interdependence between the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development.

Given its extensive nature, criterion R.2 will be assessed based on the information provided in the nomination file as a whole including the answers provided in this section.

2.1. Do communities concerned consider that the element contributes to the following?

- ☒ Ensuring visibility and awareness of the significance of intangible cultural heritage
- ☒ Encouraging dialogue
- ☒ Reflecting cultural diversity and testifying to human creativity

2.2. Do communities concerned consider that the element contributes to the following? (select only relevant options)

- ☐ Food security
- ☐ Health care
- ☒ Quality education
- ☒ Gender equality
- ☐ Inclusive economic development
- ☒ Environmental sustainability including climate change
- ☒ Peace and social cohesion
- ☐ Others (please specify):

2.3. Provide explanations in support of the statement(s) made above, as appropriate.

Not to exceed 200 words

Quality education:

Training and events in the community that introduce the rich tradition of mumming inspire people to engage in lifelong learning. Many mummers prepare a diverse programme that requires prior research and independent practice. This is a good example of integrating formal and non-formal learning. In pre-schools and schools, the transmission of knowledge and practical learning - going mumming - take place consistently as part of school curricula.

Gender equality:

Masquerading as a representative of the opposite sex or some other character helps to foster mutual understanding, gender equality and tolerance. Everyone can actively participate in mumming.

Environmental sustainability including climate change:

The costumes and masks for mumming are usually made from natural materials available at home, which encourages re-use and teaches responsible consumption. The gifts for the mummers are mostly practical food items or commodities (woollen mittens, socks) or a token amount of money.

Peace and social cohesion:

Mumming encourages people to interact with each other more and use their creativity. It strengthens relationships within the community, enhancing the overall well-being and quality of life of the individual. Collective action encourages people to take more responsibility and value their role in the community more. As the sense of belonging grows, so does the desire to

safeguard the community and its traditions.

- 2.4. States are encouraged to submit audiovisual materials that convey the communities' voice in support of the statements made above (optional).

☒ Materials (written, audiovisual or any other way) are submitted (referred to as 'R.2 materials')

3. Safeguarding measures

For Criterion R.3, States shall demonstrate that 'safeguarding measures are elaborated that may protect and promote the element'.

What safeguarding measures are put in place to protect and promote the element?

Include in your answer:

- the description of the safeguarding measures;
- the communities' role in the planning of measures described;
- the communities' role in the implementation of measures described.

Not to exceed 500 words

Knowledge transfer and sustainability

-The introduction of the customs of St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day is a part of the pre-school and general educational school curricula.

-The mumming custom is included in the curricula of many Estonian higher education and vocational schools.

-Cultural institutions, libraries, museums, community and youth centres organise thematic events, programmes and training sessions for children, youth and adults together with the community.

-The work of folklore circles and other interest groups, including music schools, often includes the introduction of mumming customs and going mumming.

-Tradition bearers are involved as experts and advisors in public events or lectures.

-In the run-up to St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day, researchers and local experts are invited to speak on radio and television about St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day customs.

-Media channels often invite people to share pictures and videos about mumming, which is actively used by communities.

-As St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day approach, the community itself finds different ways to encourage mummers to find families to visit – putting a lit candle in the yard, signs on the outside of apartment buildings, chaining up dogs, keeping lights on in the house, etc. Different communities also create opportunities to popularise mumming and make it more seamless – invitations in forums, where people can come mumming, thematic social media groups, various apps and maps created by people themselves, orienteering games.

Research and documentation

-Memory institutions are involved in researching and popularising the tradition in cooperation with communities.

-The Estonian Folklore Archive has preserved a wealth of material on the descriptions of regional mumming customs. Various digital databases have been created based on archival materials.

-Nearly a dozen different books and reference books have been published on the tradition.

-Various organisations have created educational videos online on the songs, customs and traditions associated with mumming.

'Let's mum!' campaign

Since 2018, a sectoral umbrella organisation in cooperation with communities has been organising a nationwide campaign 'Let's mum!' to popularise the mumming tradition. Community members participate at regular information days and shape the campaign's content.

Within the campaign:

- A nationwide census of St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day mummers has taken place since 2019, open to anyone who has been mumming.
- A network of county-level curators has been created, made up of community members, who act as spokespersons and mediators of mumming between the individual and the NPO coordinating the campaign.
- A website hakkamesantime.ee as well as various social media platforms have been created that bring together information related to mumming.
- Various educational videos, guide materials and creative ideas for celebrating St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day have been produced with community representatives.
- Two large international festivals, concerts in schools and communities, photo competitions etc have been organised.
- Two annual newsletters on mumming have been published, with community members as co-authors.

4. Community participation in the nomination process and consent

For Criterion R.4, States shall demonstrate that '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'.

4.1. Describe how the communities, groups or individuals concerned have actively participated in all stages of the preparation of the nomination.

Not to exceed 300 words

The idea to compile the UNESCO nomination came from the community in 2022, when mummers celebrated St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day. The Estonian Folklore Council consequently convened the Collaborative Assembly on Mumming, composed of community representatives. The Assembly found that an important step to strengthen the transmission of the tradition is to inscribe it on the UNESCO Representative List of ICH. A media appeal was made to join the Assembly, and the information was widely disseminated. The first meeting of the Assembly was held virtually.

In 2023-2024, eight interviews with representatives of different local communities were conducted who expressed their support for nominating the tradition to the Representative List, considering it an important step to support the vitality and transmission of the tradition.

The Collaborative Assembly on Mumming is open to all interested parties. The Estonian Folklore Council and the Assembly have coordinated the nomination process by bringing together community members.

In January 2025, members of the Assembly participated online in the drafting and compilation of the application's text, sharing their experiences.

On 31 January, a meeting of the Assembly was held in Tallinn. The main priorities of the text were jointly set and the safeguarding measures discussed. In addition, members of the Assembly selected the photos for the application and filmed additional video materials for R.4. After required revisions, the Estonian-language version of the application was again sent to the Assembly for approval in early February 2025 and English-language version for final approval in early March 2025.

The text of the nomination, the safeguarding measures, the community consent letter and the supplementary materials have been prepared jointly with the Assembly. The community fully agrees with the content of the nomination and supports the proposal to inscribe the tradition on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

- ☒ Consent (written, audiovisual or any other way) to the nomination of the element from the communities, groups or individuals concerned is attached in support to the description above (referred to as 'consent materials')

4.2. Community organizations or representatives concerned

Contact person for the communities:

Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Ms

Family name: Taal

Given name: Kati

Institution/position: Contact person for Collaborative Assembly on Mumming

Address: Vene tn 6, 10123 Tallinn, Estonia

Telephone number: +372 58022858

Email address: katitaal@gmail.com

Other relevant information: N/A

- ☒ Additional contact information for main community organizations or representatives, non-governmental organizations or other bodies concerned with the element are attached in a separate annex, and their details can be published on the website of the Convention as part of the nomination

5. Inventory

For **Criterion R.5**, States **shall demonstrate that the element is identified and included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies)** in conformity with Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention.

5.1. Name of the inventory(ies) in which the element is included

Estonian Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage

5.2. Name of the office(s), agency(ies), organization(s) or body(ies) responsible for maintaining and updating that (those) inventory(ies), both in the original language and in translation when the original language is not English or French

Eesti Rahvakultuuri Keskus (Estonian Centre of Folk Culture)

5.3. Reference number(s) and name(s) of the element in the relevant inventory(ies)

Mumming and masking in Estonia during St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day

Weblink to the entry (in Estonian) in the online inventory:

[Mardi- ja kadrisandis käimise traditsioon Eestis - Eesti Rahvakultuuri Keskus](#)

5.4. Date of the element's inclusion in the inventory(ies)

31.12.2024

Is the information concerning the updating and periodicity of the inventory(ies), as well as the participation of communities, groups and NGOs concerned to the inventorying process, included in the periodic report on the implementation of the Convention?

- ☒ Yes, the information is included in the periodic report. Specify in the box below the year in which that

report was submitted

☐ No, the information is not included in the periodic report. Provide information in the box below

Not to exceed 200 words

The information is included in both periodic reports Estonia has submitted, in 2013 and in 2022. To sum up the main information provided, the purpose of the inventory is to serve the interests of local communities. The compilation of entries for the Estonian Inventory of ICH follows a bottom-up approach, meaning that practicing communities, groups, and individuals decide whether they want their heritage included, which elements to feature, and how to present them. Communities themselves compile and update entries for the inventory. Entries are based on their research. This approach has encouraged community action. All communities in Estonia can contribute to the inventory. All entries will be updated in every 5 years or sooner if needed to reflect the current viability of the element and practicing community's attitude towards it.

(See B.2 in the periodic report of 2013 and A.1, A.6, 7.3, 7.4, 8.1, 8.2 in the periodic report of 2022)

☒ An extract of inventory(ies) in English or in French and in the original language, if different, is submitted

6. Checklist for audiovisual materials

Confirm that the following audiovisual materials have been submitted:

- ☒ 10 recent photographs in high definition submitted
- ☒ Form ICH-07-photo is attached to grant rights for the 10 photographs submitted
- ☒ A video (from 5 to 10 minutes) is submitted
- ☒ Form ICH-07-video is attached to grant rights for the video submitted
- ☒ R.2 materials (written, audiovisual or any other way) submitted (*optional – with reference to section 2.3; audiovisual materials should last no more than ten minutes*)
- ☐ Form ICH-07-video is attached to grant rights for the R.2 materials submitted (*only if the materials are audiovisual*)
- ☒ Consent materials (written, audiovisual or any other way) submitted (*with reference to section 4.1; audiovisual materials should last no more than ten minutes*)
- ☒ Form ICH-07-video is attached to grant rights for the consent materials submitted (*only if the materials are audiovisual*)

7. Correspondence and signature

7.1. Designated contact person

Provide the contact details of a single person responsible for all correspondence concerning the nomination. For multinational nominations, provide complete contact information for one person designated by the States Parties as the main contact person for all correspondence relating to the nomination.

Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Ms

Family name: Siim

Given name: Margit

Institution/position: Ministry of Culture; Estonian National Commission for UNESCO
Coordinator of Culture Programme

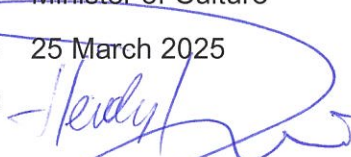
Address:	Suur-Karja 23, 15076 Tallinn, Estonia
Telephone number:	+372 6441431
Email address:	margit.siim@kul.ee
Other relevant information:	N/A

7.2. Other contact persons (for multinational nomination only)

Provide below complete contact information for one person in each submitting State, other than the primary contact person identified above.

Title (Ms/Mr, etc.):
Family name:
Given name:
Institution/position:
Address:
Telephone number:
Email address:
Other relevant information:

7.3. Signature on behalf of Estonia

Name:	Heidy Purga
Title:	Minister of Culture
Date:	25 March 2025
Signature:	

7.4. Name(s), title(s) and signature(s) of other official(s) (for multinational nominations only).

N/A
