



# Intangible Warsaw

The Common Heritage  
of Our City



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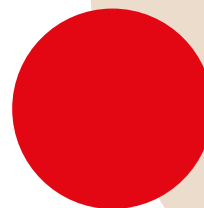



**What makes us feel at home somewhere?**

**A familiar view from the window? The fact that we know the melody played by the clock on a nearby tower? Or maybe that it was our initiative to paint a mural on the wall of a nearby garage? Is it childhood memories, in which the fragrance of chrysanthemums and the flicker of grave candle on All Saints' Day mingle with the taste of traditional candy?**

All these situations imply knowledge, practices and actions that make up the phenomenon known as intangible cultural heritage. It is what builds the sense of community and feeling at home. In the publication *Intangible Warsaw. The Common Heritage of Our City*, we would like to draw attention to various phenomena that constitute the intangible heritage of the city. We will try to explain how this heritage can be understood in the light of the UNESCO Convention on its protection, how it should be cared for and why it is worth doing so.

# Intangible cultural heritage – what is it?





Intangible cultural heritage is the practices, knowledge, skills and traditions that we transmit from generation to generation because they are important to us. Sometimes it is something we have learned from our parents, grandparents or other family members; at other times, it is a skill or knowledge passed down to us by a master or teacher; what is important, however, is that we learn directly from those who themselves do the very things they teach us. Building a boat, baking bread or making sweets, crafting traditional toys, embroidering, weaving baskets, decorating the house but also, for example, dancing or playing an instrument – all of these can be heritage. The communal aspect of these activities is also very important: then we feel that all those who participate in them have something in common, that they think about certain things and experience certain situations in a similar way.

Intangible heritage is therefore something that lives and endures thanks to people who communicate with each other, share experiences and knowledge, and pass on their skills and values to others. The intangibility of heritage means that physical objects, such as dance costumes, musical instruments, ingredients of a dish, raw materials from which things are made, or even the final products themselves: foods, toys, baskets, boats, are not enough. Intangible heritage is the knowledge of a dance and how to perform it; the knowledge of a melody and how to play it; the knowledge of how things or dishes are made and what they mean; it is the actions of people and the meaning ascribed to them.

The term “intangible cultural heritage” was officially defined in the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

## What is UNESCO, and why has it addressed the issue of intangible heritage?



▲ The art of Neapolitan ‘Pizzaiuoli’, © Sebillio, 2015, courtesy of UNESCO

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, established in 1945. Following the tragic experiences of World War II, it set for itself the goal of “building peace in the minds of men and women”. Today, it is engaged in creating standards for international cooperation in the fields of education, science and culture. Under the aegis of this organisation, many important conventions, recommendations and declarations that protect culture and cultural heritage have been adopted.

The most famous international agreement prepared by UNESCO over the years has been the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. It was adopted in 1972 and all the world’s states became parties to it. It established the World Heritage List, which





▲ Yoga, © Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), New Delhi, India, courtesy of UNESCO

currently includes more than 1,100 sites – this is what we usually refer to when we talk about something being “on the UNESCO list”, e.g. the Old Town in Warsaw, the Wieliczka Salt Mine, Malbork Castle or the Białowieża Forest. However, both the Convention and the List are primarily concerned with exceptional monuments and natural sites. They do not help to protect what con-

stitutes “the other lung” of heritage: the practices, customs, rites and rituals that build our sense of community and identity. For this reason, after many years of discussion, UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003. It too quickly gained popularity, and today as many as 180 countries are parties to it, including Poland.



Knowledge on the various expressions of intangible heritage throughout the world is disseminated via three lists established under the 2003 Convention: the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. They are available at [ich.unesco.org](http://ich.unesco.org).

Among the many cultural phenomena on the list are: reggae music (inscription from Jamaica), the art of Neapolitan 'Pizzaiuoli' (inscription from Italy), yoga (inscription from India), traditional Korean wrestling (joint inscription from North Korea and South Korea – an exceptional example of agreement between countries formally at war), falconry (international inscription of as many as 18 countries), the making and sharing of flatbread known as Lavash, Katyrma, Jupka, Yufka (joint international inscription from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey), Finnish sauna traditions and Belgian beer culture. There are currently two elements from Poland inscribed on the Representative List: the Nativity Scene (*szopka*) tradition in Kraków (since 2018) and tree beekeeping culture (submitted jointly with Belarus in 2020).

◀ **Tree beekeeping culture**, © Alfred Mikus, 2017, courtesy of UNESCO





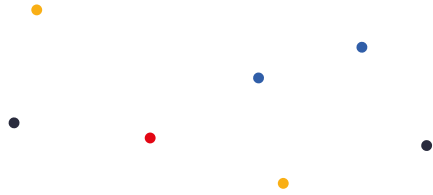
▲ Traditional Korean wrestling, © Korean Ssireum Association, courtesy of UNESCO

▼ Finnish sauna traditions, © Hannu Pakarinen / Suomen Saunaseura ry, 2018, courtesy of UNESCO



▲ Flatbread making and sharing culture: Lavash, Katyrma, Jupka, Yufka, © M. Rahimov / The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2015, courtesy of UNESCO

# Intangible cultural heritage – what is it not?



According to the 2003 UNESCO Convention, intangible heritage is alive, contemporary, subject to change, and yet continuously and uninterruptedly transmitted from generation to generation. Therefore, it is not an artefact whose protection involves conservation. Intangible heritage can be compared to a meadow full of living plants whereas an artefact is more like a dried specimen in a herbarium that we try to preserve intact. We have to remember that a consequence of a custom, skill or practice being alive is its variability, because every performer will sing the same song a little differently. Therefore, we cannot safeguard intangible heritage by preserving and maintaining the status quo.

Importantly, the reconstruction of a practice based on historical and ethnographic documentation but without intergenerational transmission is not intangible heritage. However, it may become so if subsequent generations return to the practice, causing something that initially was just a reconstruction to begin to live again and be passed on.

Intangible heritage is also not a staged performance of skills or practices. When a group chooses an element of their tradition that they find particularly interesting and attractive and begins to present it on stage, it becomes an attraction for tourists rather than a community celebration. It is stripped of the entire context in which it typically occurs. Such actions are sometimes called “folklorisation”. We can compare them to plants on display in a botanical garden: they please the eye and bring enjoyment but we know the environment is not their natural one.

# Intangible cultural heritage



## WHAT IT IS?



- Living cultural practices
- Knowledge transmitted within communities, groups and individuals
- Practices transmitted from generation to generation
- Elements of identity

## WHAT IT IS NOT?



- Reconstructions of historical practices
- Content documented by ethnographers / historians / folklorists
- Practices not transmitted from generation to generation
- Folklorisation



## The essence of intangible heritage and its safeguarding

- ▼ The Praga Museum of Warsaw. Passing on traditional craft skills in the open workshop of purse making. Photo: Liminowicz & Matejko / The Museum of Warsaw, 2019





We do not judge the value of intangible heritage: no heritage is superior to another. Its importance and meaning lie in the fact that it provides a sense of belonging to a group, generates bonds with the community, brings joy from practising something together, and often fills us with pride and motivates us to act for the benefit of our environment. Consequently, when referring to it, we do not employ terms that are used for evaluating monuments, i.e. “authentic”, “exceptional”, “outstanding”. Every intangible heritage is equally important!

Intangible heritage belongs to the people who feel part of it, so the main principle that applies to its protection states: nothing about us without us! It is the practitioners themselves who decide what to do with it: whether to introduce a new flavour of a local delicacy, to put a new spin on a traditional song, or to apply for funding for activities promoting a given skill, practice or custom. All initiatives of non-governmental, local or governmental institutions must, first and foremost, take into account the opinions and obtain the approval of the group practising the given heritage.

However, this does not mean that any group has exclusive rights to specific practices. Intangible heritage cannot be “claimed” or “patented”. Other groups or communities that produce similar things or have similar traditions or customs cannot be excluded.

So, how do we safeguard intangible heritage? First of all, by supporting intergenerational transmission through formal and informal education.

Education-based protection also includes the popularisation of intangible heritage (a role that this publication also plays!). In this way, the group of people involved in a particular practice – for example, craftsmanship or performance – can grow beyond the community in which it has hitherto been transmitted.





## Intangible cultural heritage in the city

Today, more than half of the world's population lives in cities, and it is estimated that by 2050 that proportion could rise to nearly 70%. The modern city is an internally diverse organism and its inhabitants constantly experience rapid changes. On the one hand, many of these changes are considered good and desirable; on the other, they deprive people of the feeling that there are some fixed points that lend continuity to life and provide a sense of being “among friends” and “at home”.

Intangible heritage in cities are the traditions of different groups co-creating the urban world: they may be connected with a place, e.g. a district or a neighbourhood, but also with various communities that make up the growing organism of a modern city. These practices can take the form of holiday parades and festivals, spectacles and shows organised by celebrating communities or anniversary celebrations prepared and attended by members of a community cultivating the memory of an event.



The intangible heritage of a city can be both traditional leisure activities and professional knowledge and skills that a master passes on directly to a pupil. But they are always practices connected with ways of being in the city that we learn from its other inhabitants: our parents, grandparents, neighbourhood friends, work colleagues. Intangible heritage has nothing to do with hard facts or dates. It is based on the kind of knowledge that connects us to the city and makes it familiar and close. Thanks to it, residents feel a sense of community and at the same time realise that they belong to one of many groups that make up a larger whole.



▲ Reggae music of Jamaica,  
© Alwyn Kirik, 2016, courtesy  
of UNESCO



Internal diversity and a multitude of traditions characterise the intangible heritage of cities around the world. In Singapore, for example, it encompasses both Nanjin music, which originated in southern China and has been practised in Singapore since the 19th century, and the Malay tradition of Wayang Kulit shadow puppet theatre. The Representative List, in turn, includes Singapore's street food tradition, or 'hawker culture': dishes belonging to various culinary traditions, predominantly Asian,

originally sold directly on the streets from mobile stands, and since the 1960s also in designated, often roofed squares. In Kolkata, on the other hand, in the district around Chitpur Street in the city's north end, artisanal workshops with several generations of tradition have been integrated into multifaceted educational, artistic and design activities. In them, craftspeople can work with young designers while also passing on their professional knowledge to the next generation.

▼ **Beer culture in Belgium, © Stephanie Radermacher, 2015, courtesy of UNESCO**



**For inhabitants of modern-day European cities, their intangible cultural heritage lies in both traditions dating back to the Middle Ages and customs and practices of relatively recent origin.**



► **Vendors' stalls at the "Kercelak" bazaar, Warsaw, 1927. Photo: polona.pl**

For inhabitants of modern-day European cities, their intangible cultural heritage lies in both traditions dating back to the Middle Ages and customs and practices of relatively recent origin. The former include carnival processions, such as those in Binche (Belgium) or Cologne (Germany), medieval tournaments (in Sinj, Croatia) or traditional sporting events in which teams representing individual city districts compete (the *calcio* in Florence). Having a much later origin as well as multicultural roots are

events like the Notting Hill Carnival in London or the Keti Koti festival commemorating the abolition of slavery in the Dutch colonies in South America, celebrated in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and elsewhere. In Polish cities, intangible cultural heritage is still in the process of being identified. However, it is worth remembering that the first Polish inscription on the Representative List, namely Kraków's tradition of making Nativity Scenes (*szopki*), is one of an urban nature.



◀ The champion six of the Warsaw Rowing Club, early 20th c. Photo: polona.pl



◀ The “wuzetka” – a popular Warsaw cake. Photo: wikipedia.org

# Intangible cultural heritage in Warsaw



Warsaw is not only a big European city attracting – as every capital city does – new residents. It is also a metropolis that in the first half of the 20th century suffered a break in continuity: its inhabitants either lost their lives as civilian victims of persecution by the occupiers or as resistance fighters or insurgents, or were displaced, or fled the city, with most of the urban architecture being destroyed. The enormous destruction to the material fabric of the city during World War II meant that its post-war reconstruction went far beyond restoring demolished monuments. The survivors, some of whom returned to Warsaw immediately after the end of the war, also took care to commemorate



the recent events and to pass the memory of them on to future generations. With time, this memory was also transmitted to those who settled in the city after 1945 and to their children and grandchildren. At the same time, over several decades, a new kind of community emerged in the new housing estates built after the war. On the one hand, it was the result of the social policy of the Polish People's Republic, and on the other, of chronic housing shortages and the ineffective economy of the real socialist era.

Today, Warsaw's intangible heritage is very diverse and interesting. It includes the traditions of sports associations, cultivated continuously since the 19th century (e.g. the Warsaw Rowing Club), practices

connected with various aspects of transmitting the memory of World War II, as well as Warsaw-specific elements of regular, annual celebrations. For instance, All Saints' Day (1 November according to the Roman Catholic calendar) is a time when many people throughout Poland visit cemeteries and commemorate the dead, especially by lighting grave candles – special candles in glass or ceramic vessels. In the capital city, this day is associated primarily with a delicacy specially produced for the occasion – *pańska skórka* candy, and with the fundraising campaign known as Kwesta Powązkowska, initiated in 1974 by the music lover and critic Jerzy Waldorff. *Pańska skórka* is a very sweet, hard mass sold in small portions wrapped in parchment paper. During Kwesta Powązkowska, prominent figures from the world of culture collect donations for the restoration of historic tombstones in Warsaw's oldest cemetery, located in Powązki.

- ▼ **Warsaw, “W” Hour. At 5 PM on 1 August, traffic stops all over the city to honour the memory of the Warsaw Uprising. Photo: City of Warsaw**



**I've been eating *pańska skórka* since I was a little girl. That was the reason why I went to the cemetery. Not to commemorate those who had passed away. I went there for the candy (...) Now, I don't like it anymore. But as a child, I couldn't resist it (...) To be honest, I still eat it.**

—— A resident of Warsaw

The intangible heritage of the city also includes the skills of Warsaw craftspeople passed down from generation to generation and family businesses that have survived not only the war but also the economic policy of the communist Polish People's Republic, which was unfavourable to private entrepreneurs. It also includes the city's music traditions: from the Warsaw tango, to courtyard music-making, to Warsaw hip-hop, which is just becoming a tradition transmitted between generations.

*Pańska skórka* is a unique and local element of All Saints' Day celebrations in Warsaw. It is sold both by manufacturers specialising in sweets for indulgence feasts and by people of other professions, who sell grave candles and *pańska skórka* candy only on 1 November.

- ▶ *Pańska skórka* sold in front of one of Warsaw's cemeteries.  
Photo: wikipedia.org





▲ Warsaw Dance Combo. Photo: K. Dąbrowski, 2020

Aiming to continue the tradition of courtyard music-making is the Warsaw Dance Combo, whose founder and leader Jan Młynarski draws inspiration from the music of Stanisław Grzesiuk and the Jaworski Brothers Orchestra. Other modern-day Warsaw performers preserving elements of traditional courtyard music include CzessBand, the “Warszawiaki” Theatre Troupe, the Warsaw Sentimental Orchestra and Heniek Małolepszy.





The city's musical landscape is also shaped by Chopin concerts held next to the composer's monument in the Royal Łazienki Park and jazz festivals with roots going back to 1958. The "sonic" intangible heritage of Warsaw also includes the alarm signal commemorating the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising – when it sounds at 5 PM on 1 August, the whole city comes to a standstill.

▼ **Chopin concert at the Royal Łazienki Park in Warsaw. Photo: City of Warsaw**





- ▲ **The Modern Dixielanders band, from left: Bogusław “Sis” Orłowski – bass, Zbigniew Namysłowski – trombone, Bogdan Styczyński – cornet, Bogusław “Dyzio” Rudziński – tenor saxophone, Włodzimierz “John” Kruszyński – clarinet (band members not pictured: Czesław “Mały” Bartkowski – drums, Witold Krotochwil – piano). National Philharmonic, concert for Willis Conover, 1957. Photo: private collection**

Coffee bars and the products they offer can also be considered an element of Warsaw’s intangible cultural heritage. The bars “Paragraf”, “Bar Kawowy” next to the Gruba Kaśka well and “Piotruś” on Nowy Świat Street, which have been operating continuously for decades, attract customers of different ages and budgets, both those looking for places outside the mainstream and nostalgic enthusiasts of homeliness and affordable prices. Initially, these bars were run by the Warsaw “Społem” Consumers’ Co-operative (WSS) but started to be leased out after 1989 – among the leaseholders were former “Społem” employees. Some establishments, such as “Bar Kawowy” next to Gruba Kaśka, are run by successive generations of the same family. When such coffee bars faced the threat of closure due to the rapid marketisation of Warsaw’s gastronomy sector, their clientele came to their rescue organising various social actions to ensure that the bars remained part of the city’s landscape.



- ◀ **The “Piotruś” coffee bar, run by the same owner for years – Irena Dańkowska-Jarząbek. Photo: facebook.com**







▲ "Stopa" Specialised Worker Co-operative.  
Photo: G. Kulakowska / The Museum of Warsaw, 2015

A city's trade traditions can be part of its intangible heritage provided that traditional trade knowledge is transmitted directly from generation to generation. Trades are important to a city not only because they provide a livelihood for artisans with unique skills but also because the presence of artisanal workshops contributes to the identity of neighbourhoods and districts.



Social bonds are also created by playing sports and supporting a team together, regardless of the discipline. Although cycling and rowing, for example, can be practised alone, what matters is working together and motivating each other. Local sports clubs are important as a social space in which people pursue their passion for sports as well as organise joint activities that go beyond sports or build an identity rooted in the club tradition. For example, the Hutnik (Steelworker) club operates in the housing estates around the metallurgical works existing since 1957 in the district of Bielany, from which it took its name.



- ▼ A fan of the Hutnik (Steelworker) club in a fan apparel shop. Photo: A. Czyżewska, 2020





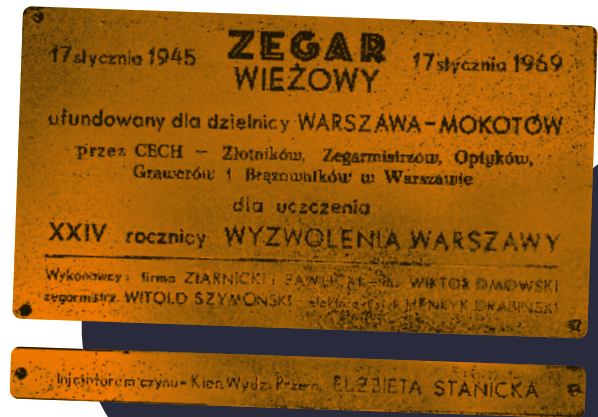
▲ **Plaque at 39/43 Madalińskiego Street, designed by Karol Tchorek, shown during Easter 2020.**  
Photo: A. Czyżewska

Yet another manifestation of the city's intangible heritage is its wartime past. The practices commemorating it focus primarily on the Warsaw Uprising (1944) and the Holocaust, in which almost all the Jewish residents of Warsaw lost their lives.

The Polish People's Republic, established after World War II, was a satellite state of the USSR. In view of the anti-Polish character of many Soviet actions during the war, the historical policy of the Polish People's Republic presented certain events in a distorted manner. One of them was the passivity of the Red Army in the face of the Uprising, which the German occupiers of Warsaw suppressed in an extremely violent way. Due to the involvement of the London Government and the Home Army in the Uprising of 1944, for four decades after World War II, the cultivation of the memory of this event was almost exclusively a grassroots activity, based mainly on oral tradition. Participants included former insurgents, their families and friends, as well as some teams and districts of the Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego (Polish Scouting and Guiding Association), after its official reactivation in 1956. The annual culmination point was an assembly on 1 August at 5 PM near the Gloria Victis monument in the Military Powązki Cemetery, unveiled in 1946.



- ▶ The clock on the Gothic House and a plaque with background information about the *Marsz Mokotowa* (Mokotów March), played every day at 5 PM, 59 Puławska Street. Photo: M. Przewoźniak



In 1969, on the 25th anniversary of the outbreak of the Uprising, a new intangible form of public commemoration appeared in the public space of the city. Since then, every day at 5 PM (“W” Hour), the clock on the tower of the Gothic House at 59 Puławska Street plays the *Marsz Mokotowa* (Mokotów March). The song was written on 20 August 1944 by soldiers from a sapper company of the “Baszta” Home Army regiment: Jan Markowski “Krzysztof” (music) and Mirosław Jezierski “Karnisz” (lyrics).

Nowadays, we commemorate Varsovians who died in World War II by laying flowers and lighting grave candles next to plaques funded by the city. Each year, several new memorial sites are created on the initiative of residents.

**This is a daffodil. Muranów is written here, in Polish and Yiddish. It commemorates the Ghetto Uprising. I am from this neighbourhood, and I identify with its history. It was an important event, and it completely changed this place. And it influenced its later history.**

—— A resident of Warsaw



▲ Daffodil tattoo commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, with “Muranów” written in Polish and Yiddish. Photo: A. Czyżewska, 2020





▲ **The Piechotkovo Housing Estate, a mural commemorating its designers.**  
Photo: A. Krajewska/History Meeting House

The grassroots practices of commemorating Warsaw Jews most often take the form of walks tracing the tangible remains of Jewish heritage and war memorial sites. One can go on such a walk with a guide or alone, using books and materials available online. For residents of districts with a Jewish past, especially Muranów, this is also an element of the urban lifestyle, as walking around one's neighbourhood is considered very "Varsovian".

The memory of the city's reconstruction is cultivated in a unique way in the Bielany I, II, III, and IV housing estates built in 1950–1965, called "Piechotkovo" by the residents in honour of its architects Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka. Their contribution is further commemorated by initiatives undertaken within the area of the housing estates (e.g. murals). Only few architects of modernist or socialist realist housing estates in rebuilt Warsaw have become so important for the neighbourhood's identity.

# Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Poland

When Poland became a party to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2011, it was necessary – in accordance with the Convention’s requirements and its community spirit – to start disseminating knowledge about this heritage and about ways to safeguard it among the inhabitants of our country. The National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage is serving this purpose (available at [niematerialne.nid.pl](http://niematerialne.nid.pl)), launched in 2013. Currently (as of November 2021), it encompasses more than 50 entries from all over Poland. The List is informative and includes a description of each element of heritage, its history, location and significance to the communities that practice it, as well as photographic materials.

Inclusion on the List is based on an application submitted by the interested community. However, the applicants must first conduct public consultations and obtain the practising community’s consent to take action. After the application has been formally checked by the Intangible Heritage Office of the National Heritage Board, it undergoes substantive assessment. The assessment is performed by the Council for Intangible Cultural Heritage, an advisory body to the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, composed of experts representing various specialisations related to intangible heritage and academic centres from all over the country. A positive recommendation by the Council results in a decision by the Minister responsible for culture to inscribe a given element of intangible heritage on the National List. Since 2018, there is also a National Register of Good Safeguarding Practices for Intangible Cultural Heritage. Currently, it includes five entries.



- ◀ The Nativity Scene (*szopka*) tradition in Kraków, © Andrzej Janikowski / Historical Museum of the City of Kraków, 2012, courtesy of UNESCO

**In Polish cities, intangible cultural heritage is still in the process of being identified. However, it is worth remembering that the first Polish inscription on the Representative List, namely Kraków's tradition of making Nativity Scenes (*szopki*), is one of an urban nature.**

# Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Warsaw



▲ All Saints' Day fundraising at Old Powązki Cemetery. Photo: T. Rogala

The new Cultural Policy of the City of Warsaw, adopted in 2020 as part of the #Warsaw2030 Strategy, identifies responsibility, openness, diversity, rootedness and freedom as key values for the sustainable development of our city. This corresponds with the definition of intangible heritage in the 2003 UNESCO Convention, according to which it involves:



- co-responsibility and co-determination of what is important for the identity of communities, groups and individuals – the bearers of intangible heritage
- openness to other communities, groups and individuals, willingness to engage in inclusive dialogue based on mutual respect and desire to share knowledge about heritage
- respect for the diversity of people and the practices, customs and traditions that are important to them, none of which are considered superior to the others
- rootedness that gives a sense of identity and continuity
- freedom, which in the case of intangible heritage also means accepting change, understanding the dynamics of living practices and not interfering in a top-down or unilateral manner with the meanings that a community gives to its heritage





In February 2020, the city's mayor also appointed the Commission for the Intangible Heritage of Warsaw, which operates at the Culture Department. It consists of varsavianists, musicians, ethnographers, lawyers, historians and literary scholars who are passionate about Warsaw and want to safeguard the intangible heritage of our city. The Commission's tasks include:



▲ Watersports docks on the Vistula River, Warsaw, early 20th c.  
Photo: polona.pl

- **identifying institutions, associations, foundations, researchers and cultural practitioners involved in studying and documenting intangible cultural heritage phenomena in Warsaw**
- **recommending to the Mayor of Warsaw systemic and institutional solutions ensuring the implementation of the objectives of the 2003 UNESCO Convention**
- **cooperating with the relevant authorities in Warsaw's district offices, cultural institutions, research and academic centres, and NGOs in defining and identifying various elements of the intangible cultural heritage of Warsaw**

- 
- **recommending solutions and educational programmes aimed at respecting and promoting the intangible cultural heritage of Warsaw**
  - **recommending support for research initiatives concerned with the intangible cultural heritage of the city**
  - **international cooperation with relevant bodies operating in cities all over the world in order to exchange experiences about adopted solutions in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in urban areas**
  - **substantive support of applications for inclusion of elements of Warsaw's intangible heritage on the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage or the National Register of Good Safeguarding Practices for Intangible Cultural Heritage**
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In its activity, the Commission follows the Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by UNESCO in 2015. They draw attention to the importance of mutually respectful collaboration with diverse communities, groups and individuals in managing their intangible cultural heritage.

One of the first outcomes of the Commission's work is a lengthy report on the intangible cultural heritage of Warsaw, which aims to open a discussion on the topic and contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena included in the conventional definition of intangible heritage and their significance to the city.

The full report is available at:

**[kultura.um.warszawa.pl](http://kultura.um.warszawa.pl)**





**The richness of Warsaw’s intangible heritage reflects both its complex history and its diversity. It contributes to the identity of Varsovians, their sense of belonging to the local communities of the district or neighbourhood, and their feeling of being “at home” despite the changing reality. Warsaw wants to nurture a sense of community and include in its “bloodstream” both those born in the city and those who settled here later in life, including those arriving from other countries.**

**By giving you this short story about the intangible heritage of Warsaw, we would like to invite you not only to discover it but also to share with us your traditions, practices and customs.**

**We look forward to meeting you in the streets, squares, housing estates and parks of our city!**



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**What makes us feel at home somewhere?  
A familiar view from the window? The fact that we  
know the melody played by the clock on a nearby  
tower? Or maybe that it was our initiative to paint  
a mural on the wall of a nearby garage? Is it  
childhood memories, in which the fragrance of  
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