



## **THE EUROPEAN FOLK NETWORK**

The European Folk Network is a pan-European network of individuals and organizations involved and dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Europe's rich traditions of folk music, dance, storytelling, and performing arts, in their various forms and origins.

Through its activities, EFN will strive for the sustainable future of Europe's intangible cultural heritage and the recognition of the contribution of its members to Europe's cultural and creative sector.

## **THE EUROPEAN FOLK NETWORK'S PRIORITIES**

- The creation of a strong network
- Raising the profile and visibility of folk arts in Europe at local, regional, national, European and world levels
- Facilitating and supporting access and participation

*EFN's Manifesto and priorities acknowledge existing initiatives at European and international levels supporting cultural and language diversity, social justice and solidarity, and fostering civic participation in cultural heritage preservation and promotion.*



## **THE EUROPEAN FOLK NETWORK MANIFESTO - FOLK ARTS IN EUROPE**

The traditional arts of any community – whether an entire society, a nation, a region, a specific social group or locality - carry a unique wealth of shared knowledge and experience.

These arts – of music, song, dance and storytelling - are fundamental elements in the intangible cultural heritage and cultural identity of every society. The idea of intangible cultural heritage covers the histories, ideas, stories, human understanding, ceremonials, beliefs and philosophies of ordinary people, expressed informally and creatively in ways that underpin and complement formal structures and historical narratives.

They embody the collective memory and collective imagination of people and places, passed down and added to by each successive generation.

Conserving and promoting this heritage in various forms, both traditional and contemporary, is essential in preserving the countless nuances of cultural diversity in the face of globalization, helping to nurture mutual respect and intercultural dialogue.

In Europe, the rich diversity of traditional cultures and the myriad inter-relationships between them provide, as they always have, unique opportunities to understand one another and share our experiences whilst celebrating difference.

Tradition bearers and their artistic expressions thrive and flourish on diversity, migration, change and interaction with others. Healthy living traditions welcome and embrace new arrivals and outlive the imposition of sectarianism or nationalism.

It is impossible to restrict folk arts to narrow or finite definitions. They exist in a complex ecosystem, spreading out organically across geographical and human networks, drawing on the experience of people and their circumstances in each community, in every generation.

Traditional arts do not end with yesterday - they are a continuum, an ever-changing expression of how it is to live, love, cry, work, laugh, suffer, protest or celebrate. They tell us of our past, give us a voice in the present and inspiration for the future.

Whether anonymous or attributed, amateur or professional, revival or renewal, created today or in the mists of time, the living and evolving traditional folk arts of all our citizens, old and new, are vital to the health of the European family. They are the special identities of our individual communities and our collective cultural heritage and identity as Europeans.