

National Inventory of Active Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements

- extract -

I. Domain:

- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- social practices, rituals, and festive events.

II. Name of the intangible cultural heritage element:

The standard term: The tradition of Breeding Lipizzan Horses in Romania (*Tradiția creșterii cailor de rasă lipițană din România*)

Local/ regional names: Breeding Lipizzan horses / breeding Lipizzans

Geographical location of the element:

The tradition of breeding Lipizzan horses is preserved in two important communities at the national level: two state stud farms administered by the National Forestry Association – Directorate of Breeding, Exploitation and Improving Horses: the Sâmbăta de Jos Stud Farm, located in the village Sâmbăta de Jos – Voila, Brașov county, and the Beclean Stud Farm situated in the town of Beclean – Bistrița Năsăud county. In the counties surrounding these two stud farms, as well as in many localities in Transylvania, there are many private breeders of Lipizzan horses, and also there are many inhabitants of these localities who use breeding stallions offered freely by the state stud farms. There are also other important localities where the tradition is actively preserved: Ucea de Jos, Lisa, Făgăraș (Brașov county), Bodoc, Chișiș, Întorsura Buzăului (Covasna county), Oșorhei and Cubulcut (Bihor county), Gheorgheni (Harghita county), Târgu Mureș (Mureș county), Huedin (Cluj county).

Besides the Transylvanian region, other stallion preserves or private breeders are found in localities situated in other Romanian provinces, such as: Piatra Neamț, Târgu Neamț, Timișești (Neamț county), Botoșani (Botoșani county), Galați (Galați county), Râmnicelu (Brăila county), Mangalia and Constanța (Constanța county), Ștefănești (Argeș county), Slatina (Olt county), Comana (Giurgiu county), etc.



Brief description:

This example of intangible cultural heritage is represented by a body of knowledge, practices and skills connected to the breeding, care and training of the Lipizzan horses in Romania, transmitted mostly orally and from one generation to the next through direct experience. In addition to these, the communities around the Lipizzan horses developed a series of cultural and social practices as part of their rituals, festive events, equestrian competitions (endurance riding, carriage-driving and dressage), and specific traditional crafts (makers of horseshoes, pads, harnesses) that also include the presentation and promotion of this horse breed.

According to historical documents, towards the beginning of the modern era on the territory inhabited by Romanians, the purebred horse was not owned by the small rural farmers in order to be used in equine-based labor, but only on the local aristocrats' domains, which used it for saddling, warfare, carriage, and especially to highlight their power, rank and political allegiances. These historical sources mention royal horses, used in parades, heavily ornamented, and identified according to their geographical origin, their look, hair colour, size and strength. In time, the purebred horses also started to be owned by the lower social classes, and horse carts started to replace the older bullock carts, used regularly by Romanian peasants in the past. Despite the lower profile given to purebred horses, these animals' prestige gained due to their century-long connection with the aristocracy, and military-based horsemanship did not fully disappear from the collective consciousness. The elegant and imposing demeanour of purebred horses, their endurance, intelligence and devotion to their owner – qualities also pointed out by ancient hippomorphic symbols of magical function – arise again within the folk imagery through the horse's presentation as a companion for displaying the skills and courage of young men in calendric and family rituals; in folktales and folk ballads, the horse is represented as a protagonist of supernatural powers and a mediator between the sky and the earth.



The Lipizzan breed as a modern horse breed was created in 1580, in Lipizza, a locality in the south of the Hapsburg Empire (today, Lipica, in Slovenia), but the earliest ancestors of the horses lived as early as the 8th century. This is a unique European horse breed, one of the most important of its kind in the central-east part of the continent, and its preservation for such a long time proves implicitly the transmission of specific breeding knowledge, practices and

techniques. The specialized documents and the tradition of the community of bearers proves that this is an enduring phenomenon and it has created a particular type of culture specific to these communities where the Lipizzan breed was preserved and promoted. In Romania, the Lipizzan horses have a distinctive place in the national hippic inventory and within the communities of private horse breeders, and it plays a strategic role – the role of a cultural horse breed – within the state stud farm system.

The tradition of Lipizzan horse breeding began on the territory of today's Romania in the 18th century, with the diffusion of Lipizzan stallions through the imperial stud farms and the military horse stocks of the Habsburg Empire. The role of these reserves was reproduction and distribution of work horses (especially carriage horses) to different military and public organizations -- the army, town halls, postal service -- but also to the local aristocracy and bourgeoisie. The specifically Romanian tradition of the breed began in 1874, together with the imperial decision moving the entire horse population of the imperial stud farm in Mezőhegyes (in today's Hungary). This transfer was decided because the Lipizzan breed line did not seem to prosper in the climate of the Hungarian plain – an agro-ecosystem totally different from its origin in the Karst Mountains. The imperial stud farm was therefore located in a providence belonging to the Empire, at Sâmbăta de Jos, comprising 3200 ha on the middle part of the river Olt. The new location also benefited from the existing infrastructure of an older stud farm owned by the Count Jozef von Brukenthal (1750-1848), who obtained the property from Empress Maria Tereza for 99 years.



The horse experts of that time noticed that the Făgăraș County offered a series of climatic conditions that were considered favourable to the welfare of a horse population, such as: an ecosystem similar with that of the Karst Mountains, and the presence in southern Transylvania of an indigenous horse population genetically similar to the breed about to be transferred. At that time, the role of the stud farm was to produce viable stallions for the horse stocks in Homorod and Sf. Gheorghe, and indirectly to genetically improve the locally bred horses in the former counties of Făgăraș, Târnava Mică, Târnava Mare and Trei Scăune.



In 1913, in a political and historic context uncertain for the Hungarian administration, the entire horse population of the stud farm was evacuated and moved to Babolna (in today's Hungary). On 18 October 1920, the Romanian State created the Sâmbăta de Jos Stud Farm, using mostly Lipizzan horses bought from small owners inhabiting the villages surrounding the farm. The spread of this horse breed and its breeding tradition from the imperial stud farm towards the rural practitioners inhabiting Făgăraș County around it proves its viability at this small local level. Today, at Sâmbăta de Jos 7 of the 8 existing lines of the Lipizzan breed are bred, a fact that transforms this Romanian stud farm into one of the most important of its class in the world.

At the Beclean Stud Farm – the second most important community for the preservation of this tradition – the breeding of Lipizzan horses started in 1802, when the Incitato stallion, the foundation sire of its line, was born at the stud farm of Count Bethlen on the territory of today's Beclean (in the county of Bistrita Nasaud). Today, the Beclean Stud Farm is the only place in the world where the black Lipizzan horse is systematically bred.

The Lipizzan horse is a noble horse, with an elegant pace and conformation, with athletic movements, intelligent, capable of intense effort, and it is an excellent breed for dressage. In the breeding communities, this horse attracts attention due to the special qualities that made it very popular in parades and festive events. Given their independent spirit and energy, the breeding and training of these horses need to be done by qualified personnel. However, the majority of the stable staff in both state stud farms and private facilities did not gain their knowledge through formal animal science education. It was spontaneously transmitted from one generation to the next, the transmission often made within the family. This was documented through interviews with the stable staff, the majority being inhabitants of the villages surrounding the stud farm. The caretakers of the horses possess practical knowledge and a popular terminology, also using empirical veterinary medicine for treating afflictions or traditional horshoeing and farriery. The close relationship between the Lipizzan horse and its owner was also encouraged by the temperament of this particular equine, but also by the satisfaction felt by the human whenever he achieves the desired outcome in modelling the horse's behavior. The tradition involves all aspects of breeding horses: feeding, mucking, turnout, grooming, blanketing/unblanketing, tacking/untacking, hand walking, keeping stable and tack room clean, bandaging and clipping/braiding.

The main organizations perpetuating this tradition are: the National Forestry Association – Directorate of Breeding, Exploitation and Improving Horses that administers the Sâmbăta de Jos Stud Farm, the Beclean Stud Farm, four reserve stocks of stallions and ten within other state stud farms, sub-directions of the National Forestry Association – Directorate of Breeding, Exploitation and Horses (Romsilva – D.C.E.A.C. R.A.), The National Association of Private Breeders of Lipizzan Horses (created in 2004), the Romanian Equestrian Federation, and other unaffiliated private owners and individual breeders.

The corresponding activities of caring, selective breeding, genetic conservation and promotion of this breed in Romania, that are guaranteed by zootechnical institutions of the State (R.N.P. – Romsilva – D.C.E.A.C. R.A., “Prof. Dr. G. K. Constantinescu” National Agency for Animal Science, Romanian Equestrian Federation), regulated continuously through law and managed by public authorities -- a context that determined the safeguarding of this national genetic heritage and its financing -- had an important role in the continuation of this tradition since the beginning of the 20th century and assured the genetic competitiveness of these horses. The success of this task was confirmed by the remarkable results obtained by these Romanian horses at national and international competitions (organized by the International Equestrian Federation and under the auspices of the Romanian Equestrian Federation), as well as by the international community of Lipizzan breeders.





In the regions where these horses are bred, regions of high cultural and touristic importance, the Lipizzan horses are part of the promotion strategies of the area and mentioned in touristic guides of local development groups (Făgăraș Country, Hajduc Country). It is very important for the promotion of this breed that those specific areas are also relevant to the national tangible cultural heritage, i.e. the Brukenthal Castle on the Sâmbăta de Jos estate-stud (built in 1750-1760) and the castles – historical monuments, former residences of the Bethlen family situated nearby the Beclean Stud Farm. The Lipizzan horses at Sâmbăta de Jos became in time real landmarks of the cultural and biological heritage of the old medieval citadel of Făgăraș, and the ones from Beclean are used in equestrian tourism around the archeological site of Băile Figa and in the Rodnei Mountains National Park.

Especially relevant are those in communities around the Lipizzan stud farms (Sâmbăta de Jos și Beclean), who realize the value of this breed, and they promote it through incorporating it into local festivities and holidays, in rural development programs and agritourism. On a national and international level, the pastures on which the Lipizzan horses are fed belong to an area of a rich biodiversity and are therefore protected against natural and man-made pollution.



Thanks to their elegant aspect, the Lipizzan horses also participate in local parades, such as “The Festival of the Lipizzan Horse” organized yearly at the Adormition of the Virgin Mary by the Sâmbăta de Jos Stud Farm, the town day of Făgăraș, the town days of Beclean (the coat of arms of Beclean includes a levade horse), the Youngmen of Brașov, the celebration days of different villages in the Făgăraș Country (Lisa, Sâmbăta de Sus), the town days of Bodoc (Covasna county), the town days of Oșorhei (Bihor county), hipico-religious ceremonies organized according to the folk calendar (the blessing of the horses after the Epiphany church service, ritual riding demonstrations).

Another important context for the promotion of the Lipizzan horses is their inclusion into the “celebration of the Youngmen from Brașov”. According to this century-old custom, held on Wednesday after Easter, hundreds of horse riders gather in the Piața Prundului, where some ride Lipizzan horses that they own or borrow from their neighbours in Făgăraș Country. The rich ornamentation of the rider with national and military symbols and of the horse with special wreaths of flowers, locally called “prestine,” performing controlled rearing, makes this yearly parade highly attractive to the crowd.

Practitioners – communities, groups, individuals: animal science specialists, veterinarians, stable staff of the localities where the main stud farms are situated, riding instructors accredited by the Romanian Equestrian Federation, private owners, others who care for horses in other places or institutions where these horses are being bred, teachers, students, professors in educational institutions where classes of animal science are taught. Riding lessons are taken by women, men, and children from all over the country, because many hippic clubs around Romania have bought and use horses of this breed.



Every year, the National Forestry Association - Directorate of Breeding, Exploitation and Improving Horses organizes within stud farms and stallion reserves stocks, with the expertise of the Romanian Equestrian Federation, classes of horse riding and, together with the “Prof. Dr. G. K. Constantinescu” National Animal Science Agency, classes for stud personnel. Students of agricultural high schools around the main stud farm area, and also students at universities of animal science, complete their practicum at the stud farms.

The community of Lipizzan horse breeders from the public system, as well as those within the private system, is a well-defined one and constantly reaffirmed through meetings, exchange of good practices, and equestrian sports competitions.

Age category: 6-70 years old

Gender: women and men

Socio-professional categories: hippologists, zootechnics, veterinarians, engineers, jockeys, any social and professional category of people which visits the stud farms, takes riding lessons, watches equestrian demonstrations.

Nationality: Romanian, Hungarian, Roma

Current status of the element (viability, dangers):

The knowledge and breeding techniques of the Lipizzan horses represent a living tradition of the national and international cultural heritage, given the integration of this horse breed within an important European cultural network which supports and promotes it. Therefore, ensuring its viability requires a series of actions to preserve an important European tradition. The stud farms – as institutions of national importance for the preservation of horse breeds according to national and international standards -- represent the only guarantee of their existence over a long time period. Despite the importance of this cultural horse breed, awareness of its value tends to be limited to the circle of experts, owners, and the communities surrounding the main stud farms and the important private owners. The promotion of this national tradition to the largest audience is the only guarantee of its long-term viability.

Safeguarding/protective measures:

1) The legislative framework: The National Program on Safeguarding, Protecting and Valuing the Intangible Cultural Heritage is approved by Order of the Minister of Culture, no. 2436/8.07.2008. The National Commission for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage working under the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, published the first volume of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Romania, published in a bilingual Romanian-French edition in 2009, containing the chapter “Customs which are connected with traditional occupations”: B. “Animal breeding and its connection with local identity and religious holidays” (*The National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage*, vol. I, Bucharest, CIMEC – Institute of Cultural Memory, 2008, pp. 76-77), and “The relationships of humans with the animal world – beliefs and practices – Knowledge and practices on the use of animals – Knowledge on domestic animal breeding” and “The utility of domestic animals” (*The Intangible Cultural Heritage in Romania. Inventory*. II.A, Bucharest, Etnologica Publisher, 2014, pp. 95-97).



2) Expected safeguard/ protection measures :

- transmitting the knowledge and practices connected with this element within the organized context of the state stud farms and of the institutions that administer them, and also through the communication networks of private breeders groups and associations

- the proposal and application of a strategy of promoting this horse breed at the general public level through nonformal education and mass-media

- the implementation of a series of actions to raise awareness of the cultural importance of this breed at the level of private breeders in order to ensure the transmission of this tradition from one generation to the next

- the development of integrated touristic strategies, with the support of local and central administrations, that would connect this intangible cultural heritage with the tangible cultural heritage



and the natural heritage (i.e., mixed sites: natural and cultural) within the most important localities where these horses are bred (Făgăraș Country, the Someș Valley, the protected areas in the Mountains Rodnei, etc.)

- encouragement to organize further local events and celebrations that promote the presentation of these horses

- more careful research

undertaken by specialists (ethnographers, folklorists, experts in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage) in order to document the integration of this tradition within the ethnocultural and biogeographical landscapes of the regions where the main stud farms are situated, creating a national database with the regions and localities that represent this tradition, publishing research on the topic

- the development of institutional partnerships between animal science experts (the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forestry, the National Forestry Association – Directorate of Breeding, Exploitation and Improving Horses, R.A.) and specialists in the cultural heritage (Ministry of Culture, research institutions, museums, local directorates of culture)

3) The contribution of communities, individuals, institutions and NGOs:

The community of bearers and practitioners, supported by NGOs of private Lipizzan horse

breeders, as well as by local authorities and state institutions, inventoried this tradition, described it, and registered it through lengthy specialized research debuting at the end of the 19th century. Other cultural institutions which support and promote this cultural breed through the inclusion of Lipizzan horses within their specific activities include: the Golești Museum of Winery and Pomology, the Cultural Association of Youngmen from Brașov, the Association of Șcheii Brașovului. Owners of agrotouristic businesses from the localities of the main stud farms, specialized guides working in these areas of great touristic potential recommend the stud farms to their customers for visits and riding lessons.

The fieldwork of documenting and inventorying this tradition was undertaken by the Department of Ethnology of the A. Philippide Institute of Romanian Philology, Romanian Academy – Iași Branch, under the coordination of the National Commission for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, with the technical expertise offered by the National Forestry Association – Directorate of Breeding, Exploitation and Improving Horses, R.A. Other contributions: TVR, "Prof. Dr. G.K. Constantinescu", Museum of Ethnography in Brașov, the Golești Museum of Winery and Pomology, Ethnographic Museum of Moldavia.



4) Data collecting, the community involvement and consent:

The public authorities collaborated with specialists contributing the collection of data and field-work (Ing. Michail Lechkun, the director of the technical office at the Directorate of Breeding, Exploitation and Improving Horses, veterinary doctor Cosmin Drăgan, director of Sâmbăta de Jos Stud Farm), and the private breeders affiliated with the Association of Private Breeders of Lipizzan Horses in Romania (veterinary doctor Tiberiu Hermenean) were consulted on the inscription of *The tradition of breeding Lipizzan horses in Romania* on the National Inventory and the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



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