

UNESCO cultural heritage of the Netherlands extended

Summer carnival and meadow irrigation recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage

PRESS RELEASE, December 2023.

UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee has inscribed the Rotterdam Summer Carnival and the technique of meadow irrigation on the International Intangible Cultural Heritage List. This was decided on 6 December at the annual meeting of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee, which this time took place in Botswana. The so-called "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" includes traditions, customs and craftsmanship from all over the world that are worth passing on to new generations.

Summer carnival

The Summer Carnival made it onto the list because of the cultural diversity of its annual street parade through the centre of Rotterdam. This 5 km long parade with over 2,500 dancers in colourful costumes, 25 carnival groups and floats attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors from home and abroad every year. The colourful parade is reminiscent of carnival traditions from the Antilles, Cape Verde, Suriname and Spain. Groups from different backgrounds prepare for a year. Together they make costumes or floats and rehearse for the parade. This joint effort makes the summer carnival a "living heritage of humanity".

Grassland irrigation

The technique of grassland irrigation has also made it onto the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage. This type of irrigation is also used in Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg and Switzerland. Landscape conservationists and volunteers use this ingenious technique to allow river water to flow over a meadow via gullies. This adds water and nutrients to the soil, making it more fertile, less prone to drying out and more resistant to frost. At the same time, this also increases biodiversity because it creates more habitat for animals. In the Netherlands, grassland irrigation has been around since the Middle Ages. This technique is still used in parts of Overijssel and Noord-Brabant.

UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage

Like world cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage is also part of an international UNESCO list. This is the "International Representative List of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity". It includes traditions, rituals, customs and craftsmanship that people want to pass on to future generations. This requires a different approach than the protection of monuments or collections. In the case of intangible heritage, "protecting" therefore means keeping it alive by practising knowledge and skills and passing them on to new generations.

The miller's craft, corso culture and falconry are three forms of Dutch intangible cultural heritage that have already been included on this UNESCO list.

Note to editors - not for publication:

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See also: www.unesco.nl/nl, [UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Netherlands – from mills to limes - Holland.com](http://www.unesco.nl/nl/en/unesco-world-heritage-sites-in-the-netherlands-from-mills-to-limes-holland-com)
