

Dražen Jelavić, PhD.

PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF AMATEUR ART IN THE
CONTEXT OF PROGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA:
ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE (2015-2017) AND STRATEGIC
PERSPECTIVES

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to cultural and artistic associations

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ABSTRACT

The paper evaluates the existing state of amateur art in the Republic of Croatia. Data from the scope of legislation, financing and planning, practice and needs, organization and international cultural cooperation are analyzed and provided a detailed insight into the current situation, essential for creating a strategy for preservation and development of amateur art in the Republic of Croatia. The strategy assumes solutions to problems encountered by cultural and artistic associations in everyday life and work. The solutions to these problems are presented in the form of proposed legislation with the explanation of its potential in the preservation and development of amateur art in the Republic of Croatia because since the formation of the Republic of Croatia to date, a similar legal framework has not been established. Since the paper belongs to the field of applied ethnomusicology, it provides examples of developing new situational "frames" for musical and other amateur art performances in the territory of individual counties. To this end, in the paper are presented initiatives and participation of the author in the project of the establishment of the *Community of Cultural Associations of Požega-Slavonia County*, as well as in the revitalization and starting county festivals and the national *Meeting of Croatian tamburitza orchestras and ensembles*.

Key words: evaluation of the state, strategy, preservation and development, amateur art, proposed legislation, applied ethnomusicology, situational "frame".

Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. AMATEUR ART	3
3. ASPECTS OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	4
3.1. Research Goals and Hypotheses.....	4
3.2. Methods applied	5
4. ASSESSEMENT OF THE EXISTING STATE OF AMATEUR ART IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA ...	8
5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC LEGAL FRAMEWORK	31
5.1. Proposal of the <i>Act on Amateur Culture</i>	32
6. CONCLUSION	39
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	52
8. ABBREVIATIONS	54

1. INTRODUCTION

In previous researches, music amateur art has been mainly studied for the purpose of still current ethnomusicological paradigm - analysis of folk music of a particular community. For this reason, its overall context, functions and meanings are mostly unexplored and unjustifiably neglected in the same way in today's ethnomusicological researches, and in particular are lacking the ones of national character.

However, in order to find the necessary and socially and politically applicable strategy that assumes solutions to the problems encountered by music and other cultural-artistic associations, it was necessary to explore the context, functions and meanings to a significantly greater extent and to critically evaluate the existing state of both music and overall amateur art.

The contribution of the research topic lies in a critical review of the past solutions for preservation and development of amateur art, as well as in the creation of models for the development of strategic legislation. They provide solutions, and some of those solutions we have theoretically replicated in practice, that would ensure the realization of goals of the activity, including systematic and even preserving and enhancing both music and overall amateur art in the Republic of Croatia. Additionally, their application would represent a significant transformational impulse towards largely passive cultural policy based on granting state aid. Since these solutions are based on the strategies of applied ethnomusicology, they will enable the improvement of music and other amateur art practices, quality of people's life and Croatian and international ethnomusicology.

This paper, due to lack of funds necessary for translation into English, is an extremely concise version of the Ph.D. Thesis titled *The Existing State and Strategy for the Preservation and Development of Music Amateur Art in the Republic of Croatia*, defended on September 15, 2017 at the Arts Academy of the University of Split, under the mentorship of full professor Anči Leburić, PhD. For this reason, it is lost the essential integrity of the paper, particularly in the aspect of methodology, and all this in order to present the research results that can contribute to the discussion with the goal of finding the best solutions for the preservation and development of amateur culture at EU level which could help all its members.

The paper is divided into four chapters, according to the different thematic contents. Chapter One, *Amateur Art*, provides the explanation of the abbreviated form *music amateur*

art, which will be the topic of the research paper, and proposes its new reflection that could as well be used in other branches of this activity for the purpose of revaluation.

Chapter Two, *Aspects of Research Methodology*, presents research goals and hypotheses, as well as the applied case study research method.

The central part of the paper entitled *Critical Assessment of the Existing State of Amateur Art in the Republic of Croatia* has been structured as an evaluation of empirical material obtained by applying 5 focus groups held in 2015 and 2016 in Virovitica, Slavonski Brod (two), Pleternica and Novi Vinodolski, i.e., in the four Croatian counties: Virovitica-Podravina, Brod-Posavina, Požega-Slavonia and Primorje-Gorski Kotar, with 146 participants, of which 137 representatives of associations and 12 representatives of local and regional self-government units. Here will also be presented the author's initiation of the establishment and participation in the work of the *Community of Cultural Associations of Požega-Slavonia County*.

It is complemented by Chapter 4, *Developing the Strategic Legal Framework*, presenting the strategy, an integral solution to the problem of amateur art in the form of a model act, the Amateur Culture Act.

The *Conclusion* is followed by *Bibliography*, and the *Abbreviations*.

2. AMATEUR ART

Rudi Supek believes that true amateurism - "that spontaneous cultural activity, is called amateur because it does not exist with the motive of acquiring means for life but is the expression of intrinsic motivation and the human need for action, for cultural and artistic expression, but expression not only for inner need, but also for social need" (Supek, 1974, 8).

The music amateur art certainly has a numerical advantage over other types of amateur art such as theatre, literature and fine arts. This fact is closely related to the function of music because "the deeper you go into the past of mankind, the more you reveal that music is not merely an entertainment or a manifestation of a purely artistic nature, but an element of social life connected with the everyday life of human individuals and groups." (Supičić, 1964, 40) Therefore, for the music of amateur¹ musicians or music lovers who are not educated or

¹ The word amateur comes from the French word *amateur*, and means a lover (Preger, 1971, 44).

professional musicians, within today's registered² associations and their performing bodies such as choirs, small vocal groups, tamburitza, mandolin and accordion orchestras, we will use the abbreviated form, music amateur art, and those will be the paper topic, as well as associations of other performing bodies, while dropping out of sight not less important individual, unorganized or spontaneous amateur artistic activity.

In the narrow and for us less interesting sense, musicking will continue to refer to an active participation in the music performance which by its nature can be both vocal and vocal-instrumental, as well as instrumental. But, for a better understanding of this amateur creativity in the broader sense, we will use the definition of the verb *musicking* proposed by Christopher Small: "To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing." (Small, 1998, 9). Using the verb *musicking* in such a different way "we are reminded that all these different activities add up to a single event, whose nature is affected by the ways in which all of them are carried out, and we have a tool by means of which we can begin to explore the meanings that the event as a whole is generating" (Ibid., 10). Such observing of amateur music in the broader sense, in its totality where the significance of participation in music performance and other non-performing activities and their meanings are synergistically fused, has influenced our research and enabled us to gain a better understanding and insight into the music amateur art, but the overall amateur art as well.

3. ASPECTS OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Goals and Hypotheses

The general goal of this research is to contribute to the field of applied ethnomusicology which promotes music and other amateur art practices and people's lives.

The specific goal of the research is to evaluate the current state of amateur art in the Republic of Croatia and to adopt a strategy for its preservation and development.

Hypotheses:

² The term "registered association" implies that the association, based on the decision of the competent body, is registered in the Register of Associations at the State Administration Office in the county or at the City Office of the City of Zagreb competent for general administration affairs, according to the seat of the association (Article 22, paragraph 3 of the Act on Associations).

1. If in the society is present an unsatisfactory state and crisis of amateur art, it is very likely a threat to its sustainability, functionality, organization and development.
2. If the research reveals the unsatisfactory state and crisis of amateur art in Croatia, it will probably prove necessary the planning and development of a strategy that will:
 - ensure the preservation and development of amateur art in the Republic of Croatia,
 - transform the overall cultural policy, as well as the cultural system and,
 - enable the more intense development of applied ethnomusicology.

3.2. Methods applied

In the research has been applied a case study research method. Leburíć considers that "in determining the CS method, the most important is to examine the individual phenomenon on the one hand, and on the other, the context in which this phenomenon occurs" (Tomić-Koludrović, Leburíć, 2002, 231-232). Therefore, as a unit of analysis are defined the associations of amateur art, and their umbrella organizations have been selected subunits of analysis (Yin, 2009, 52), Croatian Cultural Association (CCA) at the national level, and the community of cultural and artistic associations at the level of regional self-government units. In the analysis we have also included contextual conditions of activity common to all of them.

On the basis of in such manner defined unit of analysis with the constructed subunits of analysis, we have defined the theory, questions and logical research plan, the so-called embedded case study design (Ibid., 50). According to the typology of the case study research, it is explanatory or causal (Ibid., 21) since it explains the causes and their consequences that have influenced the position of the CCA as a social institution, as well as the reputation and the social role of amateur art as a social phenomenon. The main cause of the resulting consequences, analytically generalized in Chapter *Critical Assessment of the Existing State of Amateur Art in the Republic of Croatia*, is the change of the cultural paradigm set up in 1948 which placed the amateur art in the focus of cultural policy for the purposes of the then ideology, organizing its functioning and funding at national level.

Today's cultural paradigm looks at amateur creativity in a different way, without any ideological perception, shifting it from the focus on the margins of national cultural policy and leaving the care for it to local and regional self-government units, and thus without any will to regulate its functioning, organization and funding at the national level. Nevertheless, it is in principle included in its strategic plan, in a generalized and unelaborated manner, providing only the possibility of exceptionally low and insufficient financial support.

Therefore, our explanatory case study as well develops a problem-solving theory (Yin, 2012, 46)³ of the amateur art crisis, which can be overcome only by legal regulations as a solution to its causes and consequences, especially due to its deepening conditioned by excessive fragmentation of Croatia⁴ and equally different (un)relations towards this activity.

For our case study we have used data from five sources: focus groups, documents and archive records, participant observation and direct observation (Yin, 2007, 103)

Yin believes that "every case study should have a general analytic strategy to define priorities for what to analyze and why" (Ibid., 127). Therefore, for our analytical strategy we have chosen the first and most desirable one - using theoretical assumptions (Ibid., 130). It has contributed to the creation and directioning towards analysis of precisely defined data types. The analysis of the collected data has been carried out through five exceptionally complex phases.

The first phase has encompassed an analysis of all data (expressed thoughts) in the transcripts of the focus groups held in Virovitica, Slavonski Brod, Pleternica and Novi Vinodolski, their coding due to extensive text and classification in the created matrix of categories.

The second phase of the analysis involved reading all data by categories of analysis, data analysis and additional recategorization which resulted in subcategories, data triangulation and analytical generalization by subcategories of the analysis.

In the third phase of the analysis, the analytical generalizations of the analysis subcategories have been semantically integrated in a consistent text which is actually the empirical generalization of the individual categories of analysis.

The fourth phase involved drafting summaries of all the categorical thematic contents of the analysis which are oriented to their fundamental importance and the overall context.

Finally, the fifth phase logically determines the analytical arrangement of the categories of analysis.

The cross-referencing of empirical data has been carried out in Microsoft Excel 2010 program, and all analytical levels of data processing have been based on the principle of qualitative processing of the results of content analysis.

We have tried to provide a more valid justification of the research results, or rather, to illustrate their contents and their meanings as faithfully as possible. After a more complex

³ Problem-solving theory implies a researcher's task "to conduct the research needed to identify, test and assess alternative solutions to the problem" (Yin, 2012, 46).

⁴ The territorial organization of the Republic of Croatia and the functioning of its 576 units of local and regional self-government are the cause of excessive fragmentation of the state.

process of cross-referencing relevant data, in some analytical links we have observed more complex interactions and situations that could be illustrated as unsatisfactory states and crisis of amateur art in the Republic of Croatia.

In addition, the research is further reinforced by the realization of theoretical replication of the basic part of the proposed strategy in practice (establishing the communities of associations for counties). Thus, on the initiative and with the work and assistance of the author was established the *Community of Cultural Associations of Požega-Slavonia County*, whose members, evaluating the result of the establishing and four-year work of the Community, highlighted significant progress in the preservation and development of amateur art. The formation of the aforementioned Community during the research ultimately justifies our intentions as qualitative researchers since in the qualitative paradigm all the research that is being conducted does not actually begin, as in a quantitative paradigm, with some strong theoretical theses and statements, but the theory rather develops during the research process. The practicality and applicability of the empirical and theoretical have just been realized through the establishment of the aforementioned Community. By the realization of theoretical replication in other counties (where the communities of associations do not exist), ensured by the proposed legal framework, would be achieved the same results, as well as the proposed strategy of preservation and development of amateur art in the Republic of Croatia.

An additional contribution to the field of applied ethnomusicology which promotes music practice and people's lives, apart from being a part of the reasoned strategy on a theoretical basis, we have partially realized in practice by creating a new situational "frame" at the national level - the *Meeting of Croatian tamburitza orchestras and ensembles* and its six yearlong realization, which encouraged the establishment, revitalization and profiling of inclusive platforms for the performance of tamburitza orchestras and ensembles at the county level. In this way, we have shown the passivity of cultural policy at the national and regional level (manifested in leaving the activity to spontaneous happening) and the need for its change in the active policy in terms of monitoring the state, providing and implementing solutions to current problems and needs of amateur art.

4. CRITICAL ASSESSEMENT OF THE EXISTING STATE OF AMATEUR ART IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

The following text is structured as an evaluation of the empirical material that we have obtained in the research using focus groups. The following subchapters are arranged in logical order for the clarity of text and easier reader's understanding. Thus, we got the structure of our next analytical categories that represent the current state of amateur art in the Republic of Croatia.

Legislation; the work of bodies established on the basis of existing legislation; acts on activities and tender applications of associations

The representatives of associations generally provide negative evaluation of the new Associations Act, moreover, most of them hasn't been able to manage a huge amount of new regulations nor accurately identify their pressing problem, while only one of them emphasized the accounting of associations as a larger problem than the aforementioned Act. The bookkeeping of associations has proven to be a pressing problem of associations because the relevant Act⁵ significantly bureaucratizes, aggravates and "stifle" their work and raises the business costs (for approx. 400-500 euros per year), while has only to a lesser extent contributed to the regulation of finances in this field since many non-profit associations are not able to implement it (this is why they do not submit financial statements). We assume that the legislator wanted to regulate the finances of those organizations that, due to flawed legislation, have been avoiding paying various taxes by being registered as non-profit associations instead of companies or public limited company, what would be more appropriate in their business model. Instead of identifying them as so-called associations that should not have even been associations, correcting and converging their business model and preventing by provisions of the Associations Act (stricter selection) the entry of similar organizations into the non-profit sector, a line of least resistance was taken by adopting a set of new bookkeeping regulations due to which all associations, and especially those from the fields of culture as the least protected compared to those from the fields of sports and technical culture, got the short end of the stick.⁶ For them, this brings the increasing

⁵ *Act on Financial Operations and Accounting for Non-Profit Organizations (OG 121/2014).*

⁶ How else to explain the present circumstances in which under the same laws operate associations with an annual revenue of about ten thousand HRK, and almost half of it must spend on accounting, and GNK Dinamo Zagreb, a football club with a revenue of several hundred million of HRK.

impossibility of doing business under the aforementioned circumstances and, finally, the liquidation (especially for associations with small revenue or without it, but equally important for this sector) or illegal business activities, all of it exactly opposite to the intentions the valid legislation.

An additional financial burden has also been stipulated by the Copyright and Related Rights Act (OG 167/2003) which, although the traditional songs in their original form are not considered to be the subject of copyright, stipulates the payment of remuneration to the state budget for their communication to the public "as for the communication to the public of protected copyrighted works" (Ibid.). When this is accompanied by a rather belated *Ordinance on criteria and procedures for financing and contracting programs and projects of general interest performed by associations*,⁷ unevenly applied by the competent authorities, which in practice the use of funds from public sources has brought to absurdity because of the excessive and the unduly bureaucratization, the allegations of resorting of associations to liquidation and illegal business activities are even more justified. The *Act on Cultural Councils* as well does not support the activities of associations which, according to the participant's personal experience of working in the County Cultural Council, is a cover for autonomous allocation of budgetary resources of the elected political representatives (see Jelavić, 2014, 105-106).

Contrary to the thoughts of the association representatives on current legislation, the expert associate for the city social activities has, on the basis of the same, evaluated the existing acts on the activities and tender applications of associations. He gave fundamental the importance to the lack of strategic plans of associations, to the lack of their awareness of the need to write project proposals in order to obtain funds from EU and the competent ministries, which results in too many demands for insufficient city funds and in improper writing of project proposals. The allegations of lack of awareness, unwillingness and incompetence of associations to respond to today's application requirements are certainly true, but it is equally true that for such a state as well are responsible the authors of tenders and tenderers who could recognize these problems through their practice and solve them by organizing workshops. Instead, they are doing just the opposite by making tenders or public calls unreasonably complicated when using application and reporting forms and instructions which contain dozens of pages and a great number of appendices. So, the enthusiasts from

⁷ The Ordinance was adopted in 2015 (Official Gazette 26/2015), which indicates that there were no clear rules regarding the funding of the programs of associations since the establishment of the Republic of Croatia until the adoption of the Ordinance.

associations are being brought to an absurd and inadequate situation of an additional work of several hours or even days in order to meet various and inappropriate administrative requirements. One of such conditions is requiring the associations to develop strategic plans since the local and regional self-government units also do not have developed strategic plans for certain fields of their activity, e.g. for the field of culture.

Funding

The associations generate small and insufficient revenue, or no revenue at all, lacking funds particularly for work with artistic leaders, which for many of them, instead of cultural and arts activities, means dilettantism, i.e., unprofessional work and diminished artistic value. Only a few associations can boast of good and sufficient funding, which mainly isn't the result of a system, but the ability of the association itself, so these associations mostly achieve a higher cultural and artistic level. We very much doubt that the existing legal regulations will bring to the improvement of such a poor funding of amateur art. Moreover, some of those regulations, due to its complicated implementation, such as the *Ordinance on criteria and procedures for financing and contracting programs and projects of general interest performed by associations*, which was adopted with the sole purpose of regulating the procedure of public calls and tenders, will additionally discourage the associations from applying for those public calls, and finally for funding.

We assume that for many associations this will mean the exit from the registered system (the Registry of Associations of the Republic of Croatia), that is, their liquidation or, under the formal liquidation, further activity in unregistered or spontaneous form. For those associations that survive in the registered activity, this will mean self-financing and continued dependence on budgets (state and local) since, according to negative trends, the support of local entrepreneurs is not expected, partly due to their negative attitude towards amateur art, as well as adapting to new conditions among which we can rate negatively a complicated tender procedure, late announcement of the results of public calls and tenders and signing funding agreements with a number of inadequate provisions. Examples of positive practices of funding associations by self-governing units and ministries are expected to a lesser extent.

Field of activity of the amateur art associations/branches

The traditional folklore, as the associations call it, implying in the scientific discourse the traditional dance, which as the main component includes singing traditional songs and instrumental accompaniment as well as the visual aspect (folk costumes), is the core activity

of the most of associations included in the research, and in Croatia. This is also evident from the latest CBS survey⁸ which established that of the total number of active section-groups within associations (2620), most of them are folklore sections (836), which in comparison with other sections (theatre, fine arts, etc.) also have the largest number of members (25.209). When one of our interlocutors pointed out that the traditional folklore "is in danger of disappearing because all young artistic leaders want to make everything more cheerful", he stated only one of the existing trends the traditional dance distorting caused by stage adaptation. This research also points to many other reasons that are threats to the functioning of these associations, and consequently to their activity of preservation of the traditional folklore, which is certainly the best, or could be the best form of preservation of cultural heritage (due to the comprehensiveness and voluntarism) if provided with appropriate professional assistance or mentoring and organization.

It should also be clarified that each unit of regional and local self-government has one or even more cultural and artistic associations (comprehensiveness) whose members, free of charge as volunteers and enthusiasts, are actually valuable collectors and researchers, just like the first ethnomusicologists or folklorists, of traditional songs, dances, customs and costumes which they later perform, that is reconstruct by educating their members, achieving sometimes some serious artistic accomplishments. Here we must not forget that children make 43% of their members and that this is their first encounter with an active participation in some culture activity, i.e., with all the values that such participation involves.

Furthermore, for each of these units, the functioning of its cultural and artistic association brings together within itself a sort of research center, museum, educational institution, music school and some sort of artistic ensemble, that is, the entire cultural system. In that sense, it is unbelievable that the aforementioned associations are not provided with the minimum conditions for their gratuitous work for which, if performed by someone else, it would be necessary to provide a significantly higher amount of money. Unfortunately, the importance of these associations still hasn't been unrecognized in the Croatian society, which is why we are irretrievably losing the values and specific features of the Croatian cultural heritage, and thus of the Croatian culture.

⁸ The last survey of the CBS concerning the amateur art associations was conducted in the season 2009/2010.

Years of establishing

The monitoring of the activities of associations in culture and their continuity should be the task of a particular public body for two reasons: for archiving, with the aim of documenting their cultural and artistic achievements, and operational, focusing on solving the problems of continuous operation. This also stems from the fact that the monitoring of this sector is not legally regulated in terms of both archiving and operation, except by the institutions such as tax administrations or the state administration bodies in order to register and inspect the work of associations. In the counties with established Communities of Associations, the continuity and the operational problems of associations are being monitored, but only of their members, in the same way the CCA monitors their members.

Moreover, the only existing research and collection of data on cultural associations, conducted by CBS at the state level every third year, has been cancelled, according to Matija Škegro Vdović "as a result of the reduction of budgetary resources for research and the impossibility to employ new staff" (Škegro Vdović, 2015, e-mail a.). The last CBS report was released in 2011, concerning the amateur art associations in the season 2009/2010. From then on, there is no current data on their total number in the Republic of Croatia and its counties, the number of sections and members, events, paid staff, etc. All these are indicators of lack of interest, both at national and regional-local level, which necessarily results in increasing "gray" zones (insufficient knowledge) of this sector, as well as the inability of its monitoring.

Administrative bodies of associations

Information on the composition and responsibilities of the administrative bodies of associations (general assembly and board) can be found in the provisions of the Associations Act. But, there is not much practical information on their functioning. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that the functioning of the association general assembly, as its highest body, in accordance with the legal provisions is essential for the successful functioning of associations in culture, in particular the functioning of its board as the executive, i.e., the operating body of the general assembly. The functioning of these bodies will ensure that all members of association consume all those characteristics or virtues of civil society, such as the democratic right to joint decision making and activity, pluralistic thinking, responsibility and independence. In that case, the interests of associations will be above the particular interests of individuals, which will certainly contribute to the improved and more responsible work, as well as the reputation and social role of associations, while preventing individuals,

such as artistic leaders as paid staff and others, to convert the multidimensional and socially beneficial activity of the association into a simple tool for someone's personal gain.

Membership of associations

The number of members in the associations is about fifty, which indicates a massive form of the social organizing. With regard to the age structure of the membership, it is usually a range of different age groups, from kindergarten age, to those of the age of 80, that sometimes participate together, which should be in particular taken into when hiring artistic leaders and on occasions of mutual socializing of members (setting a good example). In terms of the membership education, it has been emphasized that their children attend two schools, high school and music school, which leads us to the conclusion that they have achieved a higher level of general and music education, they are engaged in some quality activities in their free time, they are hardworking and have well developed organizational skills.

Members operate within sections, organizational components of associations, and in accordance with their personal affinities for certain branches of amateur art. If there are enough members, one section, e.g. folklore, can be divided, according to the age of the members, to two children's folklore ensembles, the preparatory ensemble, the first or representative ensemble and the veteran ensemble. Such division of the section is educational with the aim of ensuring the quality and sufficient inflow of members into the representative ensemble. In one association we have recorded a reduction of the number of sections (from 5 to 2), in another two associations one of their sections ceased their activities, while in only two associations we have recorded a growth of the number of sections, from one to three new ones, that is, the creation of a new group of 25 children.

The association representatives (17) have given the fundamental importance to the general lack of members, while only one association has emphasized their satisfaction with the response and the number of members, although it has also been noted a slight stagnation of membership. There is an evident lack of male members and musicians, as well as the loss of the older generation needed for transferring knowledge to younger generations, i.e., for the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage (way of dressing, hairstyles and making traditional equipment), which is somewhat compensated by information from old photographs. The reasons for the lack of membership are: the problem of rejuvenation and young people leaving for studying or work, after which they do not return; becoming professional tamburitza player (leaving the association for playing for money); membership dispersion; loss of the older generation; lack for interest for folklore; lack of free time

(working Saturdays and Sundays); absence from guest performances; lack of equipment; affinity of young people for modern dances (where they are drinking) and computer games; and changes of the artistic leader and thus pedagogical approaches to the children.

The associations proposed solutions to increase membership: when lacking musicians, they are accompanied by a single tambura player; good work and good communication of the artistic leader; attracting children with public and guest performances; training (seminars) of the young members of associations for work with children as methodically qualified artistic leaders; formation of the sections of school-age children with the aim of filling regular sections of adults; greater engagement with the aim of finding male members; organization of children's folklore through optional activities at school; gathering members from multiple villages and sharing the same musicians within more associations.

Finally, it is relevant to conclude that, in terms of membership, the situation is poor due to deficient number of members, which for many associations means the inability to achieve the optimal conditions for quality production and creative work and a diminished social role, and only in exceptional cases achieving significant artistic achievements. Some of the above reasons for the deficit of membership, the associations can affect by their own activities in order to reduce their negative impact and increase membership, but on many of them the associations do not have any impact, it is required a significant change in the social attitude as a consequence of the adoption of special legal regulation.

Artistic leaders

Under the term artistic leader, an association considers an expert, external and paid professional who trains members of an association to perform a particular cultural and artistic program. Knowing that knowledge is "what can get them out of a difficult situation, what they lack most", they give the fundamental importance to the problem of artistic leadership because of the lack of artistic leaders in their environment, as well as the funds for their engagement. The number of associations that have artistic leaders (one of them doubts its expertise) and those who do not have it is about the same, so the latter decide to engage members with such affinities and provide them with further training through various seminars (organized by the *Gatalinka Center, the Community of Cultural Associations of Požega-Slavonia County* or CCA). Unfortunately, the number of such opportunities for training in the association's vicinity is very small, so it should be noted that in some counties since their establishment it hasn't been held a single seminar intended to cultural associations, and those

free of charge organized by CCA at national level, for many associations are not affordable due to travel and hotel costs.

Positive and negative characteristics of the artistic leader were presented. One of the positive traits is younger age because they more easily adapt to work with children, and children are more willing to work with them, while the negative ones are negligence at work and lack of authority, questionable education, lack of pedagogical approach (yelling at children), the problem of conflicts between the leaders (raise a conflict between associations because of their egoistic goals).

By evaluating the current state of the artistic leadership, we can conclude that it is bad because of the deficit of professionally trained staff and the lack of funds, which for a large number of associations, instead of cultural and artistic work, means an unprofessional and non-pedagogical work and diminished cultural and artistic values. We see the solution in the training of the members of association to become artistic leaders, provided that the associations, by creating the communities of associations, create the conditions for securing funds intended for professional training programs.

Facilities / equipment archives

Most associations are not the owners of the facilities in which they operate, except in very rare cases, as a legacy of initiatives of certain societies in the past, raised by donations of the citizens. The premises assigned for use by the city, schools or firefighters generally do not meet the minimum technical requirements (no water, toilets, heating, cooling, collapsing, flooded), let alone the artistic conditions in terms of adaptation to specific artistic expressions (dance on ballet floor instead of concrete), or the conditions for preserving their equipment and archives, which is often the reason for their destruction. Furthermore, since they share the facilities with other associations, they are as well insufficient in terms of their use for the work with all groups throughout the seven days of the week. However, for the use of such inadequate facilities, they pay utilities and a rent, which represents their biggest problem, or have an obligation of maintenance, which every day becomes more and more difficult.

It appears from the above that local and regional self-government units mostly have not recognized the potential of cultural associations that can convert their ordinary and often lifeless facilities into the cultural, educational and social centers of those same units, so instead of providing them with adequate facilities for overall social progress or with funds for them, the assigned premises, rather than incentives, for the associations represent only an additional weight or even the biggest problem in their activity.

Equipment for performing activities

Purchasing costumes and other equipment, including *opanci* (traditional leather peasant shoes), instruments, choreographies (and accompanying music scores of cover versions) is a significant challenge for all the associations. Of the above-mentioned equipment, the purchase of costumes, original or reconstructed, is the most significant problem for most associations. We have recorded an equal number of associations that do not own the costumes and those who have their own costume collection as a result of their own sewing, purchasing or collecting. The reasons for the lack of original or reconstructed costumes are the insufficient funds, the lack of original costumes caused by war damage and inadequate care, keeping the last costumes in houses for sentimental and material reasons or lack of materials for making an adequate reconstruction. When it comes to reconstruction of folk costumes, sometimes they are not of the same quality in terms of similarity to the original due to choosing an unprofessional costume tailor, so the association is exposed to the criticism of the experts, which affects them. In the same way they perceive critics of experts who, at the round tables when selecting associations for higher ranked events, strongly criticize the costumes of an association, not knowing that they perform in the costumes they were able to obtain or in "second hand" costumes, and that they mix old and new ones in order to enable all its members to perform.

Opanci are much easier to acquire as they are more accessible since many craftsmen produce them well, but in this case as well the number of the associations that do not have them and in those where *opanci* are the only thing the association can provide for their members is about the same. The interviewed associations have not highlighted the problem of procurement of instruments, moreover, they have praised the positive experience of the procurement through the public call of the Ministry of Culture. We have recorded only four associations that have choreographies, probably due to their high purchase price (from approx. 700.00 to 2700.00 euros net), as well as the need to purchase costumes from other regions in order to perform them.

Assessing the current state of the association's equipment, we can point out that it is poor and ultimately will mean less potential for joining new members, low quality work, demotivation of members, diminished opportunities to expand program from the traditional to the one adapted to stage, and therefore for new guest performances and a more dynamic work and engagement of members, and finally, nurturing of the mainly traditional dance.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals, artistic or technical, are recognized by associations as an essential component for their successful work. They are rehearsing in their centers in order to prepare programs for performances or as part of the event, at the exact time set by the organizer, to adapt their programs in artistic and technical terms to new stage and sound circumstances. In spite of the numerous aggravating circumstances (long journeys and early arrivals), the ensemble never misses rehearsals, giving them a special meaning. For this reason, they often replace technical rehearsal or sound check with standard rehearsing of the program, best known by organizers who regularly have problems to "remove" them from the stage. Regarding rehearsing in their centers, the following problems have been identified: lack of members due to seasonal jobs, inadequate conditions in the facilities (cold), lack of artistic leaders in their immediate neighborhood for regular rehearsing and negligence of the artistic leaders. In such restrictive circumstances, it is impossible to conduct successful rehearsals or expect significant work results.

Guest performances in Croatia and abroad

Guest performances of associations in Croatia and abroad, contrary to socially accepted attitude, do not represent luxury nor are touristic excursions, but, as the associations have articulated, the essential need "because they connect people and stimulate the arrival of young members in the ensemble", and retain those young people in the ensemble. Thus, the associations have mentioned the number of their guest performances ranging from 0 to even incredible 46. Examples of good practice have also been highlighted: participation of parents in accompanying children, joint guest performances with other associations for sharing costs, obtaining financial support from a farmer and guest performance in France, for which the organizer provided 150 euros and paid accommodation. But, there are some problems as well: decrease in their number to almost half compared to before due to more and more difficult realization and lack of funds, and the reduced possibilities of host associations, self-financing by the members of associations, guest performances within the municipality (lack of "bigger" performances), the inability to organize guest performances in return that represent a threat to the existing ones, unrealisation due to the lack of tamburitza players as a dance accompaniment and extinguished county festivals as an example of value-added performances.

These problems represent a negative trend and a poor state that marks this activity as well. It may represent less cohesive force for joining new members, losing the existing membership, a

sort of isolation when performing within own municipality, diminished quality of work, lack of county (and thus regional and national) cultural identity and even social cohesion, less successful amateur events in the Republic of Croatia, and at international level, lack of international cultural cooperation, intercultural dialogue and representing of Croatian cultural identity. Within the existing financial situation, it is possible to change this negative trend at national level by building a hierarchical system of clearly networked and well-organized festivals (municipal, city, county, inter-county and national), which can become a more significant initiator of guest performances (amongst other things, for competitiveness), and the most successful associations at those festivals, supported by organized stimulation, can continue to perform at the international level.

Activities of associations (except guest performances)

By organizing fundamentally important festival, the associations present their organizational skills and hence their higher status to other associations, it "gives them additional breadth, acquaintances, connects them with other similar associations, facilitates finding other events where they can perform, but as well more attractive travels." The associations organize internal festivals to which they invite their friendly associations or festivals of greater social significance, e.g. at the county or state level. But, here as well exist some problems. Thus, due to the lack of funds and the obligation to buy sandwiches and beverages for the participants of the festival, the organizer of the festival can invite only 2 to 3 companies, which results in a decrease of the number of guest associations by as much as 80% compared to past festivals with 10 to 15 participating associations, so the festival was renamed to concert. The inability to buy sandwiches and beverages for the participants is partly the result of the decision of the competent Ministry, and now every day more of the decisions of the local and regional self-government units not to allocate funds to the associations for covering such costs. On the other hand, where the abovementioned organize similar events, the cost of meals and beverages is justified or allowed (up to 15% of the approved amount) within their other activities. Possible background to such a misunderstanding might lie in the conditions of their public calls adapted to professionals employed in the culture sector, where such cost represents a waste of budgetary resources, since the professionals receive remuneration for their work.

In addition to the festivals, the associations organize concerts, humanitarian projects, various educational workshops, publishing activities, even participate in cultural industry in the sense

of producing and selling original souvenirs (e.g. straw baskets), at the same time reviving Croatian intangible cultural heritage (knitting skills).

The activities of these associations are of great importance to the Republic of Croatia in the fields of culture and heritage, arts, upbringing and education, society, health (prevention), economy (employment for artistic leaders), foreign affairs (best ambassadors), tourism and construction (investors in the construction of facilities). Therefore, it is even more surprising that no one is in charge of measuring this significance at the national level in order to perceive, determine, monitor and encourage this specific human activity. Without such basic documents, it is difficult to assume the overall significance and totality of their activity, but for associations this fact as well can be an indication of the necessity of forming communities with other associations in order to strengthen their positions and status in society.

Quality of work of associations

The quality of work of a particular association depends on the quality and compatibility of its main components. The higher the quality of its components and its mutual compatibility, the higher is the quality of association, and likewise, all its components will contribute to a decrease in quality of work. The quality work and winning prizes implies ensuring high-quality human and logistical potentials and mutual compatibility of members, which is not that easy at all. In order to confirm the quality of their work and gain acknowledgement for it, the associations are happy to participate in various competitions with the goal of winning prizes, which are mostly in the form of acknowledgement. Thus, the associations (4) have found important to point out that they won prizes at one of the festivals, and just one has reported the quality progress achieved over the past two years.

Participants in the focus groups have pointed out problems affecting the quality of work of associations: young and exclusively female members so the singing is not adequate, inability to train the members, lack of work programs and negligent artistic leader. The employee of the city office for culture during his work with cultural associations has noticed that the associations are very closed, without the need to change the current situation which prevents progress, which is still possible with the existing resources, but under the condition of changes of the association development strategy which would set as a main goal a professional and educated person who would run the association.

Comparing the quality of work of associations of the same county, one renowned expert has compared it with the situation of 20 to 30 years ago when they had top ensembles they no longer have, and one artistic leader (amateur) has stated that they "were lagging 100% behind

the Osijek-Baranja County in terms of singing, dancing and costumes" because for ten years now they haven't got a roundtable discussion with the commission after the festival in order to get feedback. It is relevant to conclude that in the said county the quality of work of associations has declined compared the situation of 20 to 30 years ago, but as well compared to another county. It should be emphasized that in the latter county, where allegedly the activity of associations is at a higher level of quality, it is not the result of the strategy of its cultural policy towards amateur art since such policy does not exist, but is more likely a reflection of the enthusiasm of associations (both as organizers and participants). The mentioned decline in quality of work is the consequence of the lack of appropriate legal regulations which would stipulate minimum solutions of uniform practice or standards for preservation and development of amateur art and Croatian heritage and culture at national level and the level of local and regional self-government units.

In the case of further absence of appropriate legal regulation, we can expect further decline in the quality of work of associations due to excessive fragmentation of the state (576 units of local and regional self-government), low funding of those units and various (not existing) practices of the heritage and culture preservation. A contribution to the aforementioned legal regulation with the aim of improving the quality of work of associations, and one of its solutions, could be communities of cultural and artistic associations whose tasks would include, among others, festivals of various branches of amateur art with expert panels and roundtable discussions with the aim of exchanging information and knowledge and providing advice for further work of associations.

Collaboration with other legal entities

The associations provided positive examples of collaboration with other legal entities and their representatives. They have collaborated with the museum staff, pastor, city tourist board, international organization CIOFF and CCA. In addition, they have underlined the lack of collaboration with music and elementary school. Thus, the music school did not want to help the association, even with financial support, and adapt its program in order to train students in music accompaniment for the choreography of the association. The elementary school and its teachers as well refused to help another association.

All cases of the positive collaboration of the associations with the music and elementary schools were mostly the result and the success of responsible individuals on both sides, the enthusiasm of the association as the initiator and the school, and not of some cultural or educational policies. As much as we can look forward to the mentioned fact, at the same time

we can be sad since it is an indication of the absence of strategic documents that would foresee exceptionally positive results of the collaboration of associations with elementary and music schools, as well as with other educational institutions with the aim of incorporating cultural and artistic content into their programs. Without these strategic documents, we cannot expect the mentioned cross-sectoral collaboration or the mutual cooperation of the associations, so we cannot be surprised by the words of the expert associate for social activities of the City of Slavonski Brod about the lack of willingness of the associations for collaboration on joint projects, among other, and incoherence and competitive relationship between associations with the aim of obtaining funds.

In addition, to the lack of collaboration, incoherence and competitive relationship between associations regularly contribute public calls for proposing programs of public needs in culture which fundamentally support the partnership, but in most cases the allocation of funds ends in a manner "each association for itself". Of course, that would not be a problem if there were joint projects of associations with the purpose of development of their amateur art activities, but we are still witnessing different practices. It is relevant to conclude that precisely this incoherence and lack of coordination between associations generate a multitude of problems in this sector.

Attitude towards active county Community of Associations and its programs

After returning to the county in which the author participated in the initiation and establishment of the *Community of Cultural Associations of Požega-Slavonia County*, it is relevant to conclude that the association representatives have confirmed the assumptions of the need for its establishment, expressing a positive attitude towards their county Community, arising from the results of its work. In its work achievements they have counted in: investing in education (engaging professors for a seminar) instead of eating and drinking, which was the case before establishing the Community; non existing financial obligations towards artistic leaders since through the seminars organized by the Community, three young girls have been trained to work with children in the amateur art group; coordination of amateur work at the Community level and bottom-up hierarchy; starting their own festival - *County Cultural Mosaic* where they can present themselves and get acquainted with each other, held each year in another place with the aim of generating a sense of belonging to the same Community; organizing meetings where they can talk, get to know each other better, talk about their problems and "feel relieved"; and incorporating new members into the Community.

Furthermore, most of the representatives have mentioned (in a positive context) the experts engaged by the Community for the work in the expert panel of the *County Cultural Mosaic*. They believe that experts, through their remarks, help further work by warning them what needs to be changed, what is not appropriate, and as a result of that, after four years of holding the Mosaic, there are significant improvements.

Only a representative of one association pointed to the "harsh" criticism of the expert panel regarding the performance of her association within the Mosaic. This kind of incidence, regardless of whether it is based on an objective or subjective viewpoint, occurs to a much lesser extent as a result of roundtable discussions of representatives and experts, organized within festivals. It should actually be a reminder that discussions between professionals and amateurs must be properly prepared, organized and guided, rather than left to chance. Roundtables should be the place of encounter of the profession and the "field", a place of mutual learning and exchange of information in the atmosphere of mutual respect and goodwill.

The representatives of associations have also made some suggestions regarding the preparation of *Calendar of Events* at the county level in order to avoid overlaps because of the associations - participants, but also because of the audience (to avoid sharing), and as well for promoting the benefits of Community in local communities since some people have a negative opinion about it, wondering what they are getting from it. Furthermore, it has been noted a negative attitude of the mayor towards the association whose artistic leader worked on the establishment of the aforesaid county Community only because the county prefect was a member of different political party, indicating the complexity of the circumstances in which the associations operate in their communities since their socially beneficial activities may accidentally displease political leaders.

Attitude towards inactive county Community of Associations and its programs

Representatives of associations have articulated the necessity of the existence of the county Community of Cultural Associations, but in the moment of holding focus groups, the Community was deeply inactive, which was in contradiction to their attitude, and this has been the case for second time over the last ten years. During the conversation, the representatives have kept mentioning, in different ways, the membership fees for the same Community, which actually should not have been the focus of their attention to such an extent, given the amount of the fee (€ 27.00 per association). It seems that members of some associations have not progressed in the way of thinking and responsibility for the functioning

of their umbrella organizations compared to their predecessors since the *Croatian Singing Association*, founded in 1875, recorded the same irrelevant discussions and difficulties with charging membership fees, which was the cause of the problems regarding the realization of its programs.

However, the former Community president, the fundamental importance of the Community's failure has explained using the phrase "it was no more than empty talk", implying that only a few participants were involved in the work of the Community who eventually got tired and quit the work, with no one to take over. Besides that, there was no financial support and understanding of the competent County, which are a prerequisite for any significant activity of the Community since the practice has shown that the funds collected from membership fees and other sources are exceptionally modest contributions. The lack of understanding and financial support of the County for the work of this Community is also reflected in the response of the office of the then prefect who, to the request of the CCA that the County as well provides the equal amount of € 675.00 for holding seminars for folklore artistic leaders, responded the following: "Although we welcome your efforts to revitalize the work of the county community through examples of good practice, we can not support you financially due to the complex budgetary situation that unfortunately has continued this year as well." (Office of the prefect, 2015, letter) It is difficult to believe that the County has no € 675.00 for the revitalization of the community and the realization of seminars⁹ which, according to the representative, have not been held in the county for a long time, as well as the County Folklore Festival (2013-2015).

It is relevant to conclude that the associations, at least declaratively, generally support the work of their communities. But it seems that the only difference, in most cases between those 11 communities that are active in Croatia compared to those 10 that do not exist, is primarily the human factor, i.e. the enthusiasm of their presidents, secretaries or boards who invest their free time in their work, realizing the full significance of the community, and as a result of these efforts, they also obtain understanding of the competent counties which are then providing them with the funds in order to enable their work.¹⁰ In almost half of the Croatian

⁹ Moreover, in the focus groups, two representatives of the local self-government units have emphasized that each municipality can provide funds for seminars, so that imposes the question why one significantly larger and wealthier unit of regional self-government can't. It is more accurate to conclude that the County has not recognized the values that would be result from granting minimum funds of € 675.00 for the revitalization of the Community and the realization of seminar.

¹⁰ The financial support of the mentioned counties in most cases is sufficient only for community programs, and only in few cases for the engagement of a professional. Several counties have recognized the scope of the activity of communities, so one of their employees has been entrusted with work on the organization and

counties, there are no such individuals or critical mass who would assume on a voluntary basis this extremely complicated job of managing a particular community. Even if there are such individuals, before the community comes to life and its members learn to work together, they get tired and leave the community due to workload and the misunderstanding of county representatives. We can conclude that in these self-governing units it is not to be expected, neither from elected political representatives, nor from representatives of associations, the establishment of communities, that is, bodies that could provide organized care for amateur art, unless such establishment is regulated by the law.

Attitude towards county Community of Associations in the process of establishing and its programs

In this case as well, on the occasion of the re-establishment or the second establishment of the Community, since it was established for the first time 12 or 13 years ago and did not come to life, the representatives have absolutely or 100% declaratively supported (total of 42 representatives) the establishment of the *Community of Cultural and Artistic Associations of the Brod-Posavina County* with many reasons for its establishment. Moreover, its establishment was declaratively supported by the competent County, arguing that such community is extremely necessary and that it is necessary make arrangements for founding assembly. Unfortunately, there were no other results arising from these conclusions made more than three years ago, although the associations agreed on the protocol for establishing the Community. Namely, the designated coordinator and working group were supposed to draft a proposal of the community statute and submit it to the founding assembly.

Once again it has been proven that the whole idea of the establishment and later work of the Community is largely based on one key person, in this case on the mentioned coordinator, who hasn't been persistent in performing the accepted task. In fact, it is irrational to expect from the enthusiast, who already to a significant extent volunteers managing his or her association, to assume a complex job such as establishing and managing the Community on a voluntary basis, and then base on it the development of this activity. What surprises is the disinterest of the competent County to stimulate by its capacities either the establishment of the Community, which has declaratively supported, or anything else that would lead to the creation of joint programs of the associations as a result of their cooperation and the

realization of the program, and subsequently appointed as the secretary of the community (praiseworthy symbiosis of the civil sector and the competent authorities).

development of amateur art activities, all the more so because from a significant number of attitudes of the association's representatives could be perceived the state of the undeveloped, inadequate or immature civil society unwilling to collaborate, which does not know the basics of functioning, organizing and funding of non-governmental sector, and as such, it cannot really be an initiator of social changes and prosperity.

Relations with Croatian Cultural Association (collaboration, inquiries, vision)

Mutual relations between associations and CCA are at a satisfactory level. Since the associations benefit from the CCA,¹¹ there is no lack of communication between them, hence they are members of the CCA and their representatives form the General Assembly and the Board of the CCA, which can be inferred from the statements of most representatives. In this way, based on the "field", i.e., associations, the current merits of the CCA's basic activities, adopted when established in the late 1948, have been confirmed, and these basic activities include: organization of seminars and events of national importance and publishing.

An exceptionally small number of the representatives of associations has mentioned some misunderstandings and issues regarding the selection for events organized by the CCA (theater and folklore), which are in fact the result of attempts to organize and popularize amateur art and the dependence on granted funds, and not the ignoring of their needs. In addition, it has been noticed the lack of understanding of the *Ministry of Culture* for CCA, as is apparent from the allocation of less funds for the CCA events, although organized at national level compared to the events of other associations of mostly regional character. Other representatives have been asking questions about the possibility of CCA acting as so-called "agencies for support" in order to highlight the work of individual associations in the tender process, or as a participant in a public discussion with a topic of the incorporation of a preliminary design for the association's premises into the municipal strategy. Other representatives were focused on CCA's vision as "a way to fix the situation at least a little bit" and an advocate towards ministries for bigger investments into the education of associations. The absence of most representatives of local and regional self-government units (77%) from the meetings represents a negative and indifferent attitude towards the proposed topic of

¹¹ By being members of the CCA, associations and their members exercise various rights such as professional and organizational support, attendance of free seminars, candidacy of the most successful associations in county festivals for the events organized by CCA, use of the Information Center of the CCA members, lower prices for procurement of publications (even donated copies of the manuals for work with folklore groups at request of the Community of Cultural Associations of the Požega-Slavonia County), use of music for performances (music copyright protection), rental of premises owned by the CCA, awarding, etc. (HSK, 2017).

Improvement of amateur art, the field for which they are legally competent, and thus towards associations and their umbrella organization, the CCA. Fortunately, a smaller number of these representatives responded to an invitation, and two of them assessed them as a "great thing" and a contribution to a better insight into the problems of the associations with the purpose of better understanding of their work. From the aforementioned can be noticed a duality in a way of functioning of the mentioned self-governing units, those who are not interested in the culture, and those concerned with culture and already mentioned need for the protection of amateur art by legal regulations.

Attitude towards education programs (of the CCA and others)

The associations have expressed a positive attitude towards education programs, seminars, bringing them in correlation with training of their members for the role of artistic leaders or having trained players and dancers. Only one of the representatives believes that the seminars are not adequate for her, since she has already attended them, or for her little amateur art group, and finds them more adequate for those of higher level that participate in festivals. The lack of participation of artistic leaders in seminars organized by the CCA means that leaders have a similar attitude and consider that there is no need for professional training, which is regularly contrary to the quality of their association's presentation or their conducting at the events organized by the CCA. Representatives of associations from counties with nonworking communities of cultural associations, the Brod-Posavina County and the Virovitica-Podravina County, have expressed their enthusiasm and support to the free seminars organized by the CCA, emphasizing that such seminars haven't been organized in their counties for a long time.

Moreover, representatives of associations from the Brod-Posavina County have pointed out a very long period of absence such seminars that varies from the organization of seminars by the Community of Cultural and Artistic Associations of the Municipality of Slavonski Brod, which was active in the 1980s, up to the last 10 years. On the other hand, a representative of one of the associations in the Požega-Slavonia County, where the county Community of Associations operates, stated that, thanks to the seminars organized by the Community, they were able to train three girls in work with children, releasing themselves of any financial obligations towards artistic leader. Nevertheless, in the same County has been stated a further need to educate the leaders of dancing, singing and playing instruments due to their deficiency.

Apart from the seminars organized by the CCA, it has been expressed a positive attitude towards the seminar organized in Vinkovci, as well as a criticism regarding the date of its holding at the end of August, when members of the association cannot attend it due to seasonal jobs so, despite its excellence and seven-day duration, there were only 15 participants from the Croatian Pannonian zone. We can assume that a weak response, besides the aforementioned date, is a consequence of costs, which includes the costs of tuition, traveling, overnight stays and food. That is why it is necessary to organize seminars in the counties for the purpose of cost rationalization and adaptation of the seminar programs to the specific field of the association activities.

Surprisingly positive have been the attitudes of even two representatives of local self-government units on the need to organize seminars and meetings with the aim of upgrading the work of associations in the city and reducing the deficiency of artistic leaders, while the same persons, being responsible participants in the work of their self-governing units, haven't ensured their implementation and funding, all the more so since they believe that each municipality could allocate funds for the seminars.

In such a constellation of events, where in two of the three counties covered by the research there is no organized and continuous training of artistic leaders provided by communities, regional self-government units or some third party, it is hard to expect the deficit reduction or continuous professional training. This will ultimately mean a diminished quality of the work of associations and, as a result of the lack of artistic leaders, the disappearance of specific folklore traditions and the spread of foreign traditions in the regions where the associations are managed by visiting, so-called "universal" leaders.

Relation of the local and regional self-government units and other public bodies towards association /associations¹²

Most of the association's representatives have highlighted a positive relation of the local self-government units (municipalities and cities) towards their associations, and only a few of them a lack of support and understanding of their problems. The generally positive description of the relation of cities and municipalities towards associations is the result of meeting their needs, i.e., complementing the city and municipal protocols with more cultural programs of associations in order to present their work, but as well to obtain funds for their

¹² In this category of analysis, no conclusions have been drawn based on the opinions of associations on the amount of allocated funds, but we have taken into account their explicit and implicit attitudes that accurately describe or imply the relations of the local and regional self-government units and other public bodies towards the associations.

basic costs. On the other hand, most of the representatives have pointed out an inadequate relation of the regional self-government units (counties) towards associations, and only one representative has stated that his association collaborates very well with the county. We assume that the generally inadequate relation of the regional self-government units towards associations is the consequence of a much lesser need of the counties to complement county protocols with cultural programs of associations. In this case as well there are exceptions, "favorite" associations that nurture a positive relationship with their counties. We believe that due to meeting the needs of both sides, the representative of the association has expressed a positive attitude towards the president of the *County Tourist Board*. The relation of the tourist boards of cities and municipalities towards the programs of the CCA is equally positive. Furthermore, we have also recorded the consequences of inadequate relations towards three associations whose representatives haven't explicitly name the sources of such relations, but they have pointed out the lack of visits, that they feel like a burden to society, rejected, as if they are not doing anything besides asking for money. According to the statements of the representatives, we can generally conclude that the relations towards associations are mostly inadequate.

Cultural and sociological significance of amateur art in the Republic of Croatia

The cultural and sociological significance, as we have already pointed out, are reflected in the work of cultural and artistic associations, i.e., in all their activities through which achieve their goals. We will only highlight cultural and sociological significance that the representatives of associations have recognized in their conversations as essential and relevant or have referred to certain problems in their work that point at such significance. As cultural significance of amateur art have been recognized: amateur art as the "incubator" of future professionals, possibility of music education and creativity, preservation and restoration of cultural heritage, raising awareness of the value of cultural heritage, studying of culture in phenomenological sense, enculturation, development audience and cultural offer, worldwide promotion of Croatian culture and intercultural dialogue. As sociological significance have been emphasized: meeting cultural (artistic) and social needs of individuals, aspect of motivation, upbringing and education, socialization, prevention of various addictions, therapeutic and rehabilitative effects, quality leisure time activities, personal development (awareness of identity, gaining experience, skills, emotional intelligence, respect for others, social behavior, positive worldview, sensibility, discipline and persistence, building the psychological characteristics of participants, positive self-image, self-confidence and

affirmation), humanity, social consistency (social nucleus) and condition for further stay in Croatia.

Proposals for improvement

The representatives of associations have presented proposals for the improvement of the state of amateur art aimed at solving the problems of associations at different levels, local (municipalities and cities), county and national, which stems from the practice of the activities of associations, thus on these levels should be based the overall reform, i.e. the model of the strategy for the development and preservation of amateur art. At the local and county level, it is relevant to conclude that most of the proposals presented by the representatives of associations and the units of local and regional self-government for the improvement of this activity can be realized using already existing model, within the community of associations, which in some way (not completely adequately) has already been applied in 11 Croatian counties. In this way, within the county and city communities of associations (where needed), could be realized a majority of the proposals presented which include: improving the quality of work of associations; having artistic leaders; strengthening the collaboration between associations; enriching the festival program in terms of collaboration on the organization of festival; turning to funding from other sources; reducing costs by organizing joint performances and guest performances; organizing of competitive county festivals in order to reward the most successful association with the county funds for guest performance and county support in the basic financing of associations.

At national level, the representatives have given the fundamental importance to the existence of the "top-down" support in the form of a system that would recognize the excellence of particular associations (as opposed to the lack of understanding and indifference of local authorities) or in the form of education and the restoration of local folk costumes and traditions. Furthermore, in their opinion, it is necessary to regulate a basic functioning of associations, since the international tenders are unattainable, as well as to raise awareness of project financing as a priority for the procurement of costumes and music instruments, and finally, to have more guest performances. These proposals at national, county and local levels imply and justify the need for an umbrella organization of cultural associations such as the CCA, with special authorities, given the totality of problems and the number of self-governing units, and with the aim of quality and consistent solutions.

General attitude; assessment of the state

The vast majority of the representatives of associations have described the state in which their associations work in a way that can be evaluated as a difficult or state of crisis, which implies a significant threat to sustainability, functionality, organization and meeting the needs of amateur art, preservation and development of Croatian culture, loss of tradition and identity as integrative factors of Croatian society. There are few representatives who have shown satisfaction with conditions or change of attitude towards associations.

Other

This category encompasses a number of different contents which, due to their extremely low frequency, could not be split up into separate categories. One representative has pointed out that, due to location on the border of the Virovitica-Podravina County, his association is more oriented to the Osijek-Baranja County and collaboration with the association from Donji Miholjac. This has raised the question of intercounty cultural collaboration, i.e., the necessity of the regions as self-governing bodies consisting of several counties. It is certain that there are projects of cultural importance for several counties, that is, a particular region, but they have not come to life as a result of the nonexistence of regions as self-governing units that could recognize and fund those projects, and as well due to nonexistence of bodies that would apply for public calls, or the inability of associations or individuals to do the same and realize those projects. Some of these inter-county or regional cultural projects could be regional competition festivals for all branches of amateur art in which could participate the most successful representatives from the county festivals, as is the case, for example, in Slovenia. We can assume that on the basis of such model, on the territory of approx. 4 or 5 regions could be created more than thirty regional festivals, which would ultimately contribute to the excellence of the events organized by the CCA, which at the moment the lack of regional selection festivals is unsuccessfully trying to replace with various solutions. We believe that the proposed legislation can offer an adequate solution through the work of the communities of associations of individual counties that would be in charge of collaboration with the communities of other counties on the organization of inter-county, that is, regional cultural and artistic programs with the aim of preservation and development of regional cultural particularities.

In addition, it has also been noticed a problem of media disinterest in Požega region, which is not an isolated phenomenon but the state of affairs, in relation to amateur art in the Republic of Croatia, which is unfortunately apparent and measurable from the indifference of Croatian

National Television towards programs of CCA, which are of national importance for this activity.

The non-existent inter-county or regional cultural and artistic programs, as well as the media disinterest in amateur art, represent negative contributions to the state of the sector.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Sheehy believes that "[o]n the part of its practitioners, applied ethnomusicology is perhaps most observable as an implacable tendency first to see opportunities for a better life for others through the use of music knowledge, and then immediately to begin devising cultural strategies to achieve those ends." (Sheehy, 1992, 324) Under the strategies he implies "the ways to solve a particular problem" (Ibid., 329), which in most cases "tried to date that are aimed at affecting the community of origin of a given music, however, may be viewed as having at least one of four basic qualities: (1) developing new *frames* for musical performance, (2) *feeding back* musical models to the communities that created them, (3) providing community members access to strategic models and conservation techniques, and (4) developing broad, structural solutions to broad problems" (Ibid., 330-331). The latter, "the fourth major strategy, devising broad structural means to work toward desired ends, is one that transcends and includes all the others", and one of its forms "is the creation of institutions that forward these goals" (Ibid., 334).

Our strategy, which according to Sheehy's categorization belongs to the aforementioned form of "the fourth major strategy" (Ibid.) of applied ethnomusicology, is the concentration of all our efforts in the PhD thesis, and comes down to the ultimate, applicable and practical result based on affirmative findings of the researcher and meticulous research results that we have obtained during the preparation of this paper. The strategy is presented in the author's PhD thesis in the form of two proposed laws: *The Act on Establishment of the Public Institution the Croatian Cultural Association* (in two variants, without or with branches) and *the Act on Amateur Culture*, presenting in this paper only the latter.

The aim of both proposed laws is the establishment of the aforementioned organizations; the aim of the first one is to establish the *Public Institution Croatian Cultural Association*, without or with regional branches,¹³ and of the second one, the establishment of the non-

¹³ In addition, the Law also regulates forming of the communities of cultural and artistic associations at the county and city level as non-governmental organizations, and the mentioned regional branches of the Public

governmental organization, the CCA, with authorities at the national level, and its cultural network in the form of twenty-one county non-governmental organizations (communities of associations), which does not require the provision of additional budgetary resources. All these organizations are oriented to communities, both at national and regional or county levels, as the carriers of the origin of certain music or other cultural phenomenon, and will affect them, enabling a better life for its members, including the realization of the above-mentioned Sheehy's "four basic qualities" (Ibid., 330). In this way, Croatian and international ethnomusicology will be enriched, virtually following and confirming Sheehy's definition of applied ethnomusicology as "*an approach to the approach to the study of the music of the world's peoples*" (Ibid., 323).

5.1. Proposal of the Act on Amateur Culture

PROPOSAL OF THE ACT ON AMATEUR CULTURE

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

This Act regulates the activities of amateur art, public needs in amateur culture, communities in amateur culture, financing, supervision and other issues of relevance to amateur culture.

Article 2

Amateur art is a significant social activity that generates basic cultural goals whose core activity is non-profit, cultural and sociological.

The activities of amateur art are performed by folklore ensembles, traditional folklore groups, dance ensembles, theatre groups, fine art and literary sections, wind orchestras, mandolin orchestras, tamburitza orchestras and ensembles, singing choirs, small vocal ensembles, *klapa*¹⁴ and other cultural associations.

The core goals of the activities are the organized preservation, fostering and development of amateur culture as factors of intangible cultural heritage, preservation of national, regional and local cultural particularities as an important element of sustainable development, promotion and encouraging of access and participation in art and culture, creativity, cultural diversity, social inclusion and cohesion, intercultural dialogue and improving the quality of life.

Article 3

The base of funding in the amateur culture are funds earned by their own activity, membership fees, donations or other sources in accordance with the law.

Institution Croatian Cultural Association would provide its members in the field with professional and organizational support in the development of the activities of amateur art.

¹⁴ *Klapa* is traditional Croatian *a cappella* group.

By the law and on the basis of law are regulated the activities in the amateur culture that represent public needs, which are funded, apart from funds referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, by the state, county and the City of Zagreb budgetary resources, which are planned and recorded as donations.

The activities of amateur culture are also funded by 10% of funds coming from the part of the income from games of chance.

II. PERFORMING OF THE ACTIVITIES OF AMATEUR CULTURE

Associations of amateur culture

Article 4

The associations of amateur culture are the form of free association of citizens, and their establishing, organization, activity and cease of activity is in accordance with the regulations regulating free association of citizens, unless otherwise provided by this Act for certain issues. Their organization and the way in which the association of amateur culture performs its activities is regulated by statute and other acts in accordance with the legal and other regulations.

The associations of amateur culture have the status of legal entity obtained by the entry into the Register of Associations at the competent state administrative body.

Article 5

The associations of amateur culture are non-profit legal entities.

The associations of amateur culture may, in order to achieve their goals and tasks, and for the purpose of obtaining funds, perform economic and other activities in accordance with the legal regulations.

The associations of amateur culture shall not pay a fee for the communication to the public of literary and artistic creations in their traditional form.

III. PUBLIC NEEDS IN THE FIELD OF AMATEUR ART

Article 6

The Republic of Croatia, the Counties and the City of Zagreb adopt programs of public needs in amateur culture, and for their implementation provide funds from their budgets, in accordance with this Law.

Article 7

The public needs of the Republic of Croatia in the amateur culture, funded by state budgetary resources, are the activities related to the activity of the CCA, as follows:

1. Provision of professional and organizational support for the development of the activities of amateur art,
2. Education and training of staff for professional work with the associations of amateur culture and the preservation of cultural particularities through the organization of seminars, workshops and programs of verified education,
3. Organization of national events, meetings and festivals of various forms of the activities of amateur art,
4. Monitoring and assessment of the state of amateur art,
5. Preservation, encouraging and promotion of all forms of amateur art,

6. International cultural cooperation,
7. Tenders for new works of art intended for the associations of amateur culture,
8. Development of publishing activities of interest for amateur art,
9. Provision of professional and organizational assistance to county communities of associations and to cultural and artistic associations,
10. Work on the further building of a comprehensive organization of amateur art on the territory of the Republic of Croatia,
11. Organization of guest performances of the best ensembles and sections,
12. Awarding cultural and artistic associations and their members.

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia (hereinafter referred to as MCRC), at the proposal of the Council for Amateur Art and other competent Councils of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, adopts the program of public needs referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article.

Article 8

The funds for the financing of public needs referred to in paragraph 1 of Article 7 of this Act shall be allocated from the state budget to the account and the disposal of the Ministry of Culture.

Article 9

The public needs of the regional self-government units in the amateur culture, funded by the County and City of Zagreb budgets, are the activities of local importance identified as their public needs related to the activities of the communities of cultural and artistic associations established for the county and the city of Zagreb, as follows:

1. Preservation, encouraging and promotion of all forms of amateur art,
2. Provision of professional and organizational support for the development of the activities of amateur art,
3. Coordination and interconnection of members with the aim of better collaboration and raising the quality of work,
4. Education and training of staff for professional work with the associations of amateur culture and the preservation of cultural particularities through seminars and workshops,
5. Organization of county cultural and artistic festival and events for the selection of participants in the events, meetings and festivals at national level,
6. Monitoring and assessment of the state and needs of amateur art,
7. Awarding cultural and artistic associations and their members,
8. Development of publishing activities of interest for amateur art,
9. Encouraging and organization of cultural activities that promote faster cultural development of the underdeveloped areas
10. Collaboration with the communities of other counties on the organization of interregional cultural and artistic festivals (events) with the aim of preserving interregional cultural particularities,
11. Management of the base membership of the associations of amateur culture.

The competent county body, that is, the City of Zagreb, at the proposal of the prefect or the mayor, adopts the program of public needs in the amateur culture referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, along with the annual budget.

Article 10

The funds for financing the public needs referred to in Article 9 of this Act shall be allocated from the budgets of the County and the City of Zagreb, on the account and disposal of the administrative body of those self-governing units competent for culture.

Article 11

MCRC, at the proposal of the CCA, will set out the criteria and deadlines for defining the program of public needs and the provision of funds referred to in Article 7, paragraph 1 of this Act, as well as the manner of allocation and the supervision of the use of funds.

The administrative bodies of the county and the City of Zagreb competent for cultural affairs, at the proposal of the community of cultural and artistic associations, shall set out the criteria and deadlines for defining the program of public needs program and the provision of funds referred to in Article 9, paragraph 1 of this Act, as well as the manner of allocation and the supervision of the use of funds.

Article 12

The county adopts the program of public needs in culture of common interest to municipalities and cities in its territory, i.e., the county as a whole, coordinates interests and undertakes activities for the even development of the amateur culture of municipalities and cities in the county, and the county as a whole, and determines the relations in the financing of amateur culture in the county.

The City of Zagreb adopts the program of public needs in culture of interest to the City of Zagreb as a whole.

The county or the City of Zagreb through its program of public needs in culture provides funds for communities and associations of amateur culture, as well as certain professional affairs related to the funding of amateur culture.

IV. COMMUNITIES AND ASSOCIATIONS OF AMATEUR CULTURE

Article 13

In order to meet the common needs and interests of the associations of amateur art and the overall activities in this area, the communities of cultural and artistic associations are established.

The communities of cultural and artistic associations are established at the level of the county and the City of Zagreb.

One community must be established for the territory of one county and the City of Zagreb.

The communities of cultural and artistic associations may also be established in other cities and municipalities if deemed necessary. The communities of cultural and artistic associations of cities and municipalities freely form the community of cultural and artistic associations of the county.

CCA acts as the highest body of amateur culture whose activity is of importance for the promotion of overall amateur culture in the Republic of Croatia.

Article 14

The communities of cultural and artistic associations referred to in Article 13, paragraph 2 of this Act have the status of a legal entity and are entered in the Registry of the associations of

the administrative body of the county, the City of Zagreb, i.e. the city competent for cultural affairs.

Article 15

Members of the community of cultural and artistic associations, in accordance with their statutes, may also be other legal entities who realize programs of amateur culture in accordance with this Law.

The associations of amateur culture in the county and the City of Zagreb freely form the communities of cultural and artistic associations.

The community of cultural and artistic associations of the county and the City of Zagreb is established if in the territory of the county or the City of Zagreb there are at least 15 active associations of amateur culture from the field of least three different amateur art branches.

Article 16

The communities of cultural and artistic associations encourage and promote the overall activities of amateur culture and the corresponding areas of amateur culture in the county, that is, the city of Zagreb, provide professional and organizational support to the development of the activities of amateur culture, coordinate and connect the members in the interest of better collaboration, raising the quality of work and activities of its members, organize education and training of staff for professional work with the associations of amateur culture and the preservation of cultural particularities through seminars and workshops, organize cultural and artistic events (festivals) for the selection of participants in the events (meetings and festivals) at national level, monitor and assess the state and the needs of amateur art, award the associations of amateur culture and their members, develop publishing activities of interest for amateur art, encourage and organize cultural activities that promote faster cultural development of the underdeveloped areas, collaborate with the communities of other counties on the organization of interregional cultural and artistic festivals (events) with the aim of preserving interregional cultural particularities, manage the base membership of the associations of amateur culture, collaborate with other equivalent and similar associations and organizations in the country and abroad and perform other tasks which contribute to the achievement of the community's goals.

Article 17

The CCA is the umbrella body of amateur culture freely formed by the communities of the associations of amateur art of the counties, the City of Zagreb, cities and municipalities, which within its activities promotes, develops and improves various forms of amateur art.

Article 18

The CCA statute defines its organization and manner of functioning, membership and manner of exercising the rights and obligations of members, and other issues related to the scope of activities and tasks of the CCA in accordance with the law.

The CCA performs the following tasks:

- Encourages and promotes all forms of amateur art,
- Organizes cultural activities in the Republic of Croatia,
- Organizes events, meetings and festivals of various forms of amateur art at national level,

- Educates and trains through seminars and verified education programs the artistic leaders of folklore, dance, theater, fine art, literary and other groups, conductors and all other experts for the professional and quality work of the associations of amateur art and the preservation of cultural particularities,
- Conducts tenders for new works of art intended for the associations of amateur culture, compensating in this way the lack of domestic works, modernizing the existing programs of associations and encouraging new artistic creativity,
- Its publishing activity, in particular publishing of music notations, folklore, drama, literary and fine art publications, supports the work of numerous singing choirs, orchestras, folklore, theatre and other groups, enriching and preserving Croatian cultural treasures,
- Publishes other publications in the field of its cultural and artistic activities,
- Maintains, nurtures and encourages cultural collaboration with Croats living abroad, above all their amateur art activities,
- Initiates and organizes cultural activities that promote faster cultural development of the underdeveloped areas in the Republic of Croatia,
- Selects ensembles and individuals participating in international amateur festivals outside the Republic of Croatia in collaboration with and at the invitation of the Ministry of Culture and other state bodies,
- Cooperates with related international organizations and associations,
- Awards the member associations and their members
- Performs other tasks defined by this Law and other regulations.

The CCA is governed by the Assembly made up of the representatives of member communities.

V. TOP ORGANIZATION IN THE FIELD OF AMATEUR CULTURE

Article 19

The request for obtaining the status of top organization in the field of amateur culture must be submitted to the competent Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia. It is submitted by the association if it has achieved the criteria for obtaining the status of a top organization in the field of amateur culture.

The status of a top organization in the field of amateur culture is obtained for two years.

Article 20

The criteria for obtaining the status of a top organization in the field of amateur culture is winning the Grand Prix of the CCA on national festivals organized by the CCA within a maximum period of three years.

The CCA awards the Grand Prix to one of the associations participating in the festivals at national level upon the recommendation of the three-member expert panel, and on the basis of the excellence of its performance.

VI. THE CCA NATIONAL AWARD

Article 21

For outstanding achievements in amateur culture, individuals and associations of amateur culture are awarded the CCA National Award.

Article 22

Once a year, the award is awarded to distinguished individuals and associations. The CCA National Award is awarded in the form of acknowledgement.

Article 23

The CCA State Prize is awarded by the CCA State Prize Board, which has a president and four members, and is appointed by the Board of the CCA, among the prominent cultural workers and connoisseurs of amateur culture.

Article 24

The Ordinance on the CCA National Award regulates more closely the terms and conditions for its awarding, the manner of the work of the CCA State Prize Board and other issues related to the Award.

The Ordinance on the CCA National Award is adopted by the Board of the CCA. Professional and administrative-financial affairs for the Board are performed by the CCA.

VII. SUPERVISION

Article 25

The professional supervision of the work of the communities of amateur cultural and artistic associations is carried out by the Board of the CCA.

The administrative supervision of the communities of amateur cultural and artistic associations is carried out by the administrative body of the county, the City of Zagreb or the city or municipality competent for cultural affairs.

The administrative supervision of the work of the CCA is carried out by the MCRC.

Article 26

If in the process of administrative and professional supervision is established that the legal and other conditions for performing the activities of amateur are not fulfilled, the administrative body referred to in Art. 25 of this Act or the CCA shall set a deadline for the amendment of identified deficiencies, and if these deficiencies are not amended, the competent body may issue a decision on prohibition of activities of amateur culture.

VIII. PENALTY PROVISIONS

Article 27

A fine of HRK 50,000.00 to 100,000.00 shall be imposed to the county representative body and the City of Zagreb if they fail to include in public needs the activities and affairs related to the activities of the communities of cultural and artistic associations.

IX. TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 28

The existing communities, associations of amateur culture and the CCA will align their organization and acts with the provisions of this Act within 6 months from the date of its entry into force.

The Minister of Culture shall provide regulations for which is authorized by this Act within 60 days from its entry into force.

The administrative bodies of the county and the City of Zagreb competent for cultural affairs shall adopt the acts referred to in Article 11, paragraph 2 of this Act within 60 days from the date of its entry into force.

Article 29

This Act shall enter into force on the eighth day after the day of its publication in the Official Gazette.

6. CONCLUSION

From the very beginning of the relationship between ethnomusicology and music amateur art, set by former collectors who were writing it down during Illyrian movement, today's melographs, folklorists and ethnomusicologists, to this day, a common focus of interest or subject of research to all of them was mainly a creative product or an expression of cultural and artistic activities of humans, today's music amateurs. They encountered numerous difficulties in their work - from indifference towards their work (which is still present), to declaring the subject of their work sinful or performers, for example, *ladarice*,¹⁵ prohibited from singing by priests, with the threat of the soul's curse. Until the middle of the 20th century, they collected and analyzed the older and newer layers of folk songs from Croatia and neighboring South Slavic countries, small town songs, to a lesser extent church folk melodies, and very rarely instrumental music. All this in order to discover the particularity of the folk music of the South Slavs, that is, Croatians, that would help composers to create their national music or to delineate certain areas of Croatian folklore music.

Božidar Širola, while collecting the material and exploring Croatian music folklore, significantly extended the subject of ethnomusicological research to its only carriers - the branches of the society *Seljačka sloga*, their festivals and umbrella organization, *Središnjica Seljačke sloge*. His anthropologically-conceived ethnomusicology in Croatia was not furtherly developed by his successors Vinko Žganec and Stjepan Stepanov, as well as Jerko Bezić,

¹⁵ *Ladarice* are traditional Croatian female singers.

despite the latter's efforts to expand the subject of the previous ethnomusicological research by introducing a new paradigm - folk music (late 1970s) in order to understand the overall musical culture of a particular community (Bezić, 1980, 560). Moreover, such ethnomusicology was narrower than the anthropological because it continued to focus on the analysis of folk music phenomenon without studying the context, the specificities of performing, the functions and the meaning of folk music (Marošević, 2010, 23-24).

Music amateur art and its product - musicking, already defined by Jerko Bezić as a non-folklore activity that "indirectly influences local folklore music" (Bezić, 1981, 71), is therefore mainly studied for the purpose of the still current focus of its ethnomusicological paradigm - folk music of a particular social community. The products of music amateur art (except those of folklore character), and consequently its overall context, functions and meanings are still mainly unexplored and unjustifiably neglected by ethnomusicological research at national level.

His organized and uninterrupted continuity in our region for nearly two centuries, despite the unfavorable social conditions, also speaks in favor of the need for these researches. Since the beginnings of organizing of amateur societies and their coherent umbrella organizations, up to the second decade of the third millennium, music amateurs stand out as the unique carriers (and initiators) of cultural actions and cultural identity precisely because of the continuity of their activity, functioning even in the places with non-existent cultural activity, number of actions and participants involved. They have significantly contributed and still are contributing to the Croatian, as well as to the overall music culture, and to the preservation and development of Croatian identity. Some of their actions have stayed written in golden letters in Croatian history, such as the composing of the first Croatian national opera *Love and Malice* by Vatroslav Lisinski and its first stage performance realized in reproductive terms mostly by amateurs (Blažeković, 1985, 117) in cooperation with professionals. In these initial actions, music amateurs successfully collaborated with professionals because of the then undeveloped professional scene. With its development, the need of professionals for such cooperation disappears, and appears the underestimating attitude of professional cultural awareness towards amateur culture (Šuvar, 1982, 99), which also contributes to the lack of interest of the society for amateur activity.

Despite of 93 years long continuity of Croatian umbrella amateur organizations¹⁶ and their 143 years long tradition,¹⁷ the need for their existence, much less the way its functioning, still hasn't been discussed in scientific, professional, social and political discourse, which contributes to a lower reputation and social role, and to disorganized music and overall amateur art in Croatia.

In order to reevaluate music, and thus the overall amateur art, and change of the abovementioned negative trends, a new reflection has been proposed. It implies amateur musicking in the broader sense, in its totality where the significance of participation in music performance or musical-dance performance and other non-performing activities and their meanings are synergistically fused. Such reflection has significantly influenced the selection of the topic of our research and marked it, and finally provided us with a better understanding and insight.

The current division of music amateur art in rural and urban (see Tomašek, 2009, 477) is not satisfactory due to practical exceptions, so it has been proposed a new one, according to the type of performing body (e.g., wind orchestras, choirs, etc.), and only then, and if necessary, according to the type of performed music, that is, the specific musical expression. Within this division it is possible to make subdivisions with the aim of qualitative and quantitative analysis and monitoring the development of some of the performing bodies, but such analysis at national level is quite remote due to disorganization of this sector.

Critical assessments of the research of the state of amateur art and the results of our research are presented in the following summaries:

1. The existing legal regulations significantly bureaucratizes, aggravates and "stifle" the work of associations and raises the business costs, contributing to the non-transparent spending of budgetary resources, while has only to a lesser extent contributed to the regulation this activity since many associations are not able to implement, and does not contribute at all to the creation of positive conditions for development. It is a major threat to activity, affects liquidation or illegal business activities, especially the associations with small revenue or no revenue at all. Although there is some knowledge about the lack of awareness, unwillingness and inability of associations to respond to the needs of today's tenders, what surprises is the indifference towards maintaining such a state of affairs, moreover, it has been furtherly

¹⁶ The society *Središnjica Seljačke sloge*, founded in 1925, at the annual assembly held on January 28, 1969, adopted the Decision on Integration with the Croatian Education Association, today's Croatian Culture Association.

¹⁷ The Croatian Singing Association was founded in 1875.

complicated by new administrative conditions. On the other hand, lacks an adequate legal framework that would ensure the organization and support to in that respect discriminated associations of amateur art and other cultural associations in the same or similar way in which is ensured for sports and technical associations in the Republic of Croatia.

2. The associations generate small and insufficient revenue, or no revenue at all, which is why the basic problem is paying the fees to artistic leaders, who indispensable. Existing laws and by-laws do not contribute to the improvement of such poorly funded amateur art, in fact, they even more discourage enthusiasts in the associations to apply for tenders and funding.

3. The core activity of most of the associations included in the research, thus in the Republic of Croatia, is the original folklore, assuming original or traditional dance. There is a danger of disappearance of the traditional dance due to omnipresent trend of inadequate stage adaptation, especially by younger artistic leaders, and due to taking over of the folklore of other regions at the expense of nurturing the specific and local one as a result of the influence of stronger emitting cultural areas or the work of "universal" leaders.

4. Any form of monitoring of the work of amateur associations at the national level in the Republic of Croatia, which implies collecting and analyzing data on their work and particularities, is non-existent, same as the relevant legal solutions, in order to permanently record cultural or artistic achievements of these associations or help in adapting the conditions for their work. The above-mentioned, as well as the relevant legal solutions, exists only for the purpose of their registration and inspection supervision over the work of associations.

5. Disturbances in the work of associations imply the development of a cult of conductor, artistic leader or some other member, subjecting the interests of the association to the particular interests of individuals, and the association becomes hostage to someone's personal interests, transforming its multidimensional and socially beneficial activity into a common tool for one's personal gain. The development of the management capacities of the association, which includes the functioning of the Assembly and the Board in accordance with the legal provisions, and the clear separation of the responsibilities and competence of the management from the responsibilities and competence of the working bodies of the association will amend the mentioned irregularities and ensure that all members of association consume all those characteristics or virtues of civil society.

6. The number of members in the associations is about fifty, which indicates a massive form of the social organizing. It is a place of a meeting of the members of different age, from kindergarten to 80 years old, who sometimes participate together, which is a significant feature of this activity. They operate within sections, organizational components of

associations, and in accordance with their personal affinities for certain branches of amateur art. The fundamental importance has been given to the general lack of members, especially male members and musicians, and then the members of older age.

7. The associations, aware of the value of knowledge which they currently lack the most, have given the fundamental importance to the problem of artistic leadership of associations due to the lack of artistic leaders in their surroundings and funds for their engagement. The number of associations that have artistic leaders and of those who do not have it is about the same. The latter are hiring their members with such affinity, training them through various seminars, which is not easy because in the vicinity of the association their number is quite small.

8. Most associations are not the owners of the facilities in which they operate, except in very rare cases, as a result of the initiatives of these societies in the past. The premises assigned for use by the city, schools or firefighters generally do not meet the minimum technical requirements, let alone the artistic conditions in terms of adaptation to specific artistic expressions, or the conditions for preserving their equipment and archives, which is often the reason for their destruction. Since they share the facilities with other associations, they are as well insufficient for the work with all sections throughout the week.

9. Purchasing costumes, original or reconstructed (from all the equipment) represents one of the major problems to most associations. The number of associations that do not own the costumes and those who have their own costumes is about equal. The reasons for the lack of costumes are: the insufficient funds, the lack of original costumes (caused by war damage and inadequate care), lack of materials for reconstruction and keeping the costumes in houses. Although the purchase of quality *opanci* is much easier, but in this case as well the number of the associations that do not have them and in those where *opanci*¹⁸ are the only thing the association can provide for their members is about the same. The procurement of instruments with the support of the Ministry of Culture has been praised, while only four associations emphasized that they have choreographies.

10. The associations recognize artistic or technical rehearsals as an essential component for their successful work. They are rehearsing in their centers in order to prepare programs for performances or as part of the event, where in spite of the numerous aggravating circumstances, they never miss them in order to adapt their programs in artistic and technical terms to new scene and acoustic circumstances. Regarding rehearsing in their centers, the following problems have been identified: lack of members due to seasonal jobs, lack of

¹⁸ *Opanci* (plural form) are traditional peasant shoes.

artistic leaders in their immediate neighborhood for regular rehearsing, inadequate conditions in the facilities and negligence of artistic leaders.

11. Guest performances in Croatia and abroad where associations present their cultural and artistic programs represent their essential need (despite the social identification with luxury), as they also encourage the arrival and retention of young members. Their number varies from 0 to even 46. And there also some problems: the reduction of their number to almost half due to difficult realization and the lack of funds or tamburitza players as a dance accompaniment and reduced possibilities of host associations, self-financing, closer destinations within the municipality instead of more distant, the inability to organize guest performances in return, which represents a threat to the future ones and extinguished county festivals as value-added destinations. On the other hand, the provisions of the *Act on Foreigners* unnecessarily financially burden the Croatian associations that invite foreign amateur associations from countries outside the EU, sometimes even when they are from the EU. They are therefore required to obtain work permits issued by the competent police department for all their guest members and to pay fees in the amount of approx. 14 euros per person, although they are amateurs as well, i.e. they do not receive compensation for their work.

12. The associations, along to cultural and artistic work, also produce festivals of different character and value (internal, county, national), showing higher status and organizational skills, which enable them to get acquainted and connect with others, find guest performances and go to more attractive travels. According to the organizer of the festival, the lack of funds for sandwiches and beverages for participants has resulted in a decrease of the number of guest associations by as much as 80% compared to past festivals, so he renamed it to the concert. Other organizers as well have the aforementioned problem, partly due to the provision of a public call from the competent Ministry, and now more and more due to decisions of local and regional self-government units that define the costs for food and beverage as unacceptable. In fact, this is the expression of the lack of understanding since sandwiches and beverages for participants (mostly children) in amateur are a necessity, as opposed to professional sector where budgetary resources are being wasted, since the professionals receive remuneration for their work. In addition to the festivals, the associations organize concerts, humanitarian projects, various educational workshops, publishing activities, even participate in cultural industry in the sense of producing and selling original souvenirs (e.g. straw baskets), at the same time reviving Croatian intangible cultural heritage (knitting skills).

13. Problems that negatively affect the quality of work of associations are: young and exclusively female members so the singing is not adequate, inability to train the members, lack of work programs, negligent artistic leader, associations that are very closed, without the need to change the current situation which prevents progress.

One Croatian county has recorded a qualitative decline of associations compared to the situation 20 to 30 years ago, and equally in relation to another county. All the above mentioned, the problems observed and the qualitative decline are the consequence of the lack of appropriate legal regulation that would stipulate minimum conditions, i.e. uniform practices or standards for the preservation and development of amateur art and Croatian heritage and culture at national level and the level of local and regional self-government units.

14. The associations provided positive examples of collaboration with other legal entities and their representatives, museum staff, pastor, city tourist board, CIOFF and CCA, but as well the lack of collaboration with music and elementary school. The examples of positive collaboration, mostly the result and the success of enthusiastic and responsible individuals on both sides, but of the lack of collaboration as well, are an indication of the absence of the policy and its strategic documents that would create conditions for cross-sectoral and sectoral cooperation with the aim of incorporating cultural and artistic contents into joint programs. In addition, to the lack of collaboration, incoherence and competitive relationship between associations regularly contribute public calls for proposing programs of public needs in culture which fundamentally support the partnership, but in most cases do not result in joint projects of the associations with the aim of the development of amateur art, but in a manner "each association for itself".

15. The assumptions and aims of the author's initiation and participation in the establishment of the *Community of Cultural Associations of the Požega-Slavonia County*, after five years of its activity, have been largely accomplished thanks to the enthusiastic staff of the County, which is visible from the presented achievements in meeting the needs of associations.

16. Although the representatives of associations have articulated the necessity of the existence of the *Community of Cultural and Artistic Associations of the Virovitica-Podravina County*, in the moment of holding focus group, the Community was deeply inactive, and this has been the case for second time over the last ten years. The reason for this is the fatigue of its small leadership and quitting the work, the lack of individuals or critical mass who would assume on a voluntary basis this extremely complicated job of managing a particular community and the lack of understanding and financial support of the County.

17. In the example of the *Community of Cultural and Artistic Associations of the Brod-Posavina County* that as well didn't come to life, the representatives of 42 associations emphasized the absolute declarative support to its reestablishment. Despite the designated coordinator and working group that were supposed to draft a proposal of the community statute and submit it to the founding assembly, the Community was not established since they did not persist on the accepted task. Thus, in this case the reasons for the failure to establish the Community are once again confirmed: the lack of individuals and critical mass and the indifference of the County. Therefore, it is not to be expected, neither from elected political representatives, nor from representatives of associations, the establishment and functioning of the mentioned communities in the 10 Croatian counties where they do not exist, nor the potential outcomes of their activities, unless such establishment is regulated by the law. On the contrary, without legislation, as we have seen in the example of the mentioned *Association of Cultural and Artistic Associations of the Virovitica-Podravina County*, the survival of the existing 11 county communities of cultural and artistic associations is questionable as well.

18. The relations of the associations - members of the CCA towards the *Croatian Cultural Association* is at a satisfactory level. It has been noted the lack of understanding of the Ministry of Culture towards the CCA from the results of the granted funds, which in several cases are significantly smaller for its events of national significance compared to the events of other associations at county level. The absence of most representatives of local and regional self-government units (77%) from the meetings represents a negative and indifferent attitude towards the proposed topic of *Improvement of amateur art*, the field for which they are legally competent, and thus towards their associations and the *Croatian Cultural Association*.

19. The associations have expressed a positive attitude towards free seminars and workshops organized by the CCA and the seminar held in Vinkovci, bringing them in correlation with training of their members for the role of artistic leaders, players and dancers. But, some artistic leaders have stated that they do not need seminars, which is regularly contrary to the quality of their association's presentation or to the quality of their conducting. In two out of three counties where communities are not active, the programs for training the association leaders have not been realized for a number of years, so it cannot be expected the reduction of their deficit or the continuation of their professional training. In the Požega-Slavonia County, as a result of functioning of the *Community of Cultural Associations* and its seminars (which are still needed due to the deficit of artistic leaders), the association has trained its young members to work with children, releasing themselves of any financial obligations towards artistic leader.

20. Most of the representatives of associations have highlighted a positive relation of the local self-government units (municipalities and cities) towards their associations, and only a few of them a lack of support and understanding of their problems. On the other hand, most of the representatives have pointed out an inadequate relation of the regional self-government units (counties) towards associations, and only one representative has stated that his association collaborates very well with the county. Furthermore, we have also recorded the consequences of inadequate relations towards three associations whose representatives have pointed out the lack of visits, that they "feel like a burden to society, rejected, as if they are not doing anything besides asking for money".

According to the statements of the representatives, the relations towards associations are mostly inadequate.

21. The cultural and sociological significance of amateur art reflects from the work of cultural and artistic associations. As cultural significance of amateur art have been recognized: amateur art as the "incubator" of professionals; possibility of music education and creativity; preservation and restoration and raising awareness of the value of cultural heritage, thus contributing to the building of individual, regional and national (cultural) identities; teaching of culture in phenomenological and anthropological (acculturation) sense; enculturation; development audience and cultural offer; worldwide promotion of Croatian culture and intercultural dialogue. The sociological significance includes: meeting cultural, artistic and social needs of individuals and hence contributing to their overall health, development of different personal skills, aspect of motivation, upbringing and education, socialization, social cohesion, social inclusion, prevention of addictions, therapeutic and rehabilitative effects, quality leisure time activities, humanity, social consistency (social nucleus) and condition for further stay in Croatia.

22. The presented proposals of the associations are aimed at solving their problems at different levels, local, regional and national. All of the above proposals of representatives can be realized within the framework of the functioning of the umbrella organizations (communities) at local and regional levels, and the CCA at national level, with significant change. Unlike the current state, and in order to find quality and consistent solutions, these organizations at different levels should have authorities that can only be assigned through the proposed legislation.

23. The general attitudes of most associations point to the difficult state or crisis.

24. The non-existent regional (inter-county) amateur festivals, as a result of the lack of regions and the inability of associations and individuals to realize them, as well as the media disinterest in amateur art, represent negative contributions to the state of this activity.

Using the knowledge of applied ethnomusicology and the method of ethnomusicological research, for the members of the tambura community we have created a new situational "frame" at national level - *Meeting of Croatian tamburitza orchestras and ensembles* that improves their music practice and quality of life on an annual basis. By giving the county festivals new meanings, that is, by defending them as places of selection where the selector, along with the selection of the most successful associations for the aforementioned Meeting, provides them with professional advice that improves their work, we have actually encouraged the establishment, revitalization and profiling of inclusive platforms for the performances of these ensembles of different musical expressions, which have not existed before, or they were extinguished or realized as a more relaxed program (performances without special preparation). As a chain reaction, these competitions have stimulated more engaged annual work of the ensembles, hence the qualitative improvement of their music, their gathering and increasing the number of participants (sometimes by double). The ensembles selected on county festivals, in the period of preparation for the national Meeting, additionally raise the quality of their musicking,¹⁹ while within the framework of the Meeting they are provided with professional assistance of the three-member expert panel (discussion and written reviews). The aforementioned Meeting and the county festivals as its replications are the sites of critical comparisons, self-assessment of participants, development of aesthetics of music and creativity. There, as well as in the process of preparation, are also being realized numerous sociological features that have contributed, along with cultural, to the possibilities of improving the quality of life of the members of this community. The upgrading of the music practices of these ensembles continues after the Meeting, giving the most successful ensembles new significance that is a strong incentive for their work, since by ensuring funds for a performance at some foreign or domestic event, they become ambassadors of amateur art of the Republic of Croatia. Applied partially at local level, this example can serve to the local and regional self-government units for the promotion of other amateur activities and linking the associations of national minorities with the associations of Croatian majority, thus calming

¹⁹ The renewed Croatian expert Ivan Potočnik explains the qualitative progress of the tamburitza ensemble musicking as a result of the cause and effect functioning of the county competitive festivals and the *Meeting of tamburitza orchestras and ensembles*.

down national tensions. The weak point of the Meeting is its dependence on its organizers, enthusiastic individuals or associations, which, in addition to its importance for the national tamburitza scene, confirms the need to adopt the proposed legislation.

Given the unsatisfactory state and crisis of amateur art, we have adopted a strategy that will ensure the preservation and development of amateur art. Our cultural strategy, in the form of two proposed laws: the *Act on Establishment of the Public Institution the Croatian Cultural Association* (in two variants, without or with branches) and the *Act on Amateur Culture*, according to Sheehy's categorization of the strategies of applied ethnomusicology²⁰ can be categorized as one of the forms of "the fourth major strategy" (Sheehy, 1992, 334). This form of the fourth strategy implies "devising broad structural means to work towards the desired ends" and "creation of institutions that forward these goals" (Ibid.).

Both proposed laws, as our general structural approach, are the basis for the creation of these organizations at national level and at the level of the regional self-government units, which will, by implementing the legal solutions, realize: the equal preservation and development of amateur art and other objectives of the activity, the more intensive development of the applied ethnomusicology and the transformation of overall cultural policy and cultural system.

Thus, the first proposal foresees the establishment of the *Public Institution the Croatian Cultural Association*, and the second one proposes the establishment of the non-governmental organization the *Croatian Cultural Association*, with the difference that the latter would also establish the authorities at regional level for the communities of cultural and artistic associations of all Croatian counties. It seems that the second proposed law, the *Act on Amateur Culture*, is more realistic and more applicable to current circumstances in Croatia, that is, to the extremely low funding of culture, since it does not require additional budgetary resources,²¹ but also more democratic, since it is based on the concept of organizing the amateur art through non-governmental and non-profit organizations. Assigning the authorities to the *Croatian Cultural Association* at national level and to the communities of cultural and artistic associations at county level would ensure basic conditions or *conditio sine qua non* for the implementation of the proposed strategy. This would mean that funds from the State

²⁰ The goals of the strategies of applied ethnomusicology are the realization of "opportunities for a better life for others through the use of music knowledge" (Sheehy, 1992, 324).

²¹ Additional funds for the implementation of the *Amateur Culture Act* are not required since the funds for its implementation will be provided within the existing funds for amateur art at the levels of the Republic of Croatia and the regional self-government units.

Budget must be provided for the activities of the CCA, which would automatically fall within the public needs of the Republic of Croatia. Likewise, funds from county budgets should be provided for the activities and affairs of the communities of cultural and artistic associations defined as the public needs of the same units, and where there are no communities, the counties would be obliged to establish them as non-governmental organizations. However, since the proposed law was drafted in a way that had to fit into the existing legislation, i.e., into the framework of the *Act on Cultural Councils*, the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian counties would still have the possibility of establishing their public needs in relation to the activities of the CCA and the communities of cultural and artistic associations, which can significantly contribute to the consensus on the need to adopt the Act. The same can be an interference to the low funding of this activity, but this would still be much better compared to the present, when there are no communities, so the funding of, for example, seminars for education and professional training of artistic leaders of these associations or other joint projects of associations such as county festivals is not possible. Even with low funds, all activities of the CCA and its cultural network - the communities, should be performed because, apart from the fact that the Act determines the public needs, they are explicitly stated therein, which would ensure their implementation.

Such organization of activities will ensure networking, coordination and association of amateur associations, both at national and local levels, in the interest of better collaboration and raising the quality of work, encouragement and promotion of all forms amateur art and realization of other goals of the activity, professional and organizational support to the development of amateur cultural activities, realization of training the artistic leaders and others in professional work in associations and preservation of cultural particularities, professional staff for work with associations, coordinated, networked and connected national, regional (inter-county) and county festivals of all forms of cultural and artistic creativity, monitoring and evaluation of the state and needs of this activity, publishing activities of interest to amateur associations, awarding the associations and individuals, and the public base of active the amateur associations. The encouraging and organizing of amateur activities will accelerate the cultural development of the underdeveloped areas in the Republic of Croatia. The realization of guest performances of the most successful amateur associations will ensure an appropriate presentation of the cultural and artistic creativity of the Republic of Croatia at festivals inside and outside the borders of the Republic of Croatia, exchange of top cultural and artistic production and collaboration with international organizations and

associations of Croatians abroad. Awarding the associations and individuals, as well as the status of a top amateur organization give new significance and incentive to the activity.

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8. ABBREVIATIONS

CIOFF	International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts
CS	Case study
CBS	Croatian Bureau of Statistics
EU	European Union
CCA	Croatian Cultural Association
GNK Dinamo	Građanski nogometni klub Dinamo Zagreb
MCRC	Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia
OG	Official Gazette
RH	Republic of Croatia

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