THE RULES OF THE "OPEN STAGE" COMPETITION 2026

1. The 36th International Folk Music Festival "Mikołajki Folkowe" is organized by the Association of Folk Culture Animators (SARF) and the co-organizer is the Academic Centre for Culture and Media "Chatka Żaka" of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University. The aim of the Festival is to present folk music from all over the world, the ways of its creative interpretation and unconstrained adaptations departing from typical patterns. The “Open Stage” competition aims to present artistic phenomena associated with broadly understood folk music, including the ones that contribute to creating new definitions of this genre. It is important for us to show both traditional (reconstructed) music and original interpretation. We are looking for interesting musical propositions, new inspiration sources and ideas.

2. The Festival will take place on 10.12-13.12.2026 in the Academic Centre for Culture and Media "Chatka Żaka" of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland.

3. Individual artists and groups up to 10 members (adults) from Poland and abroad are eligible to participate in the "Open Stage" competition (11.12.2026). Recordings submitted and performances during the competition should not exceed 15 minutes.

4. For the competition can not apply a person who is an artist performing on the festival’s concerts or a person responsible for the festival’s workshops.

5. For the competition can not apply a winner of the first award from past years.

6. In order to apply to the competition:
- ill in a Google application form: CLICK HERE;
- send an audio file with the programme that will be performed during the competition and a technical rider showing the position of artists and equipment on stage (in the form of a picture or a drawing) – from 29 September to 8 November 2026 by e-mail to: mikolajki.folkowe@gmail.com - ATTENTION! Failure to send a rider shall result in rejection of the applicant.

If, for reasons beyond the control of the organizers, the competition cannot be held live, recordings sent by the artists shall be evaluated.

7. On the basis of the applications received, the Organization Committee will select artists to perform in the "Open Stage" competition. SARF discloses data of the applicants to members of the Organization Committee and obligates them to keep the data confidential. The list of selected artists will be published on the Festival website on 15.11.2026.

8. The winner of the “wild card” will also be admitted to the competition. This will be one of the applicants not admitted by the organizers who will win the open voting online. Detailed information on voting shall be provided at www.mikolajki.folk.pl (Open Stage tab).

9. A jury consisting of musicians, journalists and music promoters (organizers of concerts and festivals) will be appointed to evaluate presentations of artists participating in the competition. SARF discloses data of the participants to jurors and obligates them to keep the data confidential.

The evaluation will be based especially on the following criteria:

- the choice of repertoire, its originality and artistic value;
- the interpretation;
- the general artistic expression;
- the originality and innovativeness in approaching the tradition of folk music, including the use of unconventional instrumentation, arrangements, and the blending of genres;
- the freshness of perspective on the phenomenon of folk music – creative exploration, the introduction of new viewpoints and consideration of the current cultural context.

10 The jury shall grant the first, second and third award.

11. The Festival audience will vote for their award, which will be specified in separate Rules.

12. The jury can also grant two special awards:

- the Anna Kiełbusiewicz award for the best vocalist;
- special award for interpretation of traditional music in the participant's repertoire.

13. Value and form of the awards shall depend on financial means raised by the organizers. Decisions of the jury are final.

14. Participants of the competition are granted:

- free accommodation on 11/12 and 12/13.12;
- free entrance to all concerts of the Festival.

Organizers do not refund costs of travel and meals.

15. Winners of the competition are obliged to give a free performance during the "Concert for Saturday" (12.12.2026).

16. By applying for participation in the "Open Stage" competition and thus in the "Concert for Saturday", the artists agree that their musical programme presented shall be used (in the form of recordings and photographs) free of charge for marketing, promotional and advertising purposes, especially in publications connected with the competition (website, social media, press, etc. – wherever possible), without time, quantity and territorial limitations; and hence agree to transfer their copyright free of charge to the Association of Folk Culture Animators to use their musical programme in the fields of use specified in Article 50 of the Act on Copyright and Related Rights, for marketing and promotional purposes.

17. Artists applying for participation in the competition and thus in the "Concert for Saturday" give consent for their personal data to be processed by the Organizer for the purposes connected with the competition, and, based on their consent, for publication of the basic data and their use for informational and marketing purposes.

18. The consent given during application for the competition is valid during the competition and in the future, on condition that the purpose of data processing has not changed, objection to data processing has not been lodged, request for data deletion or cessation of data processing has not been made, and the consent has not been revoked.

19. Personal data are obtained from the applicants by SARF within the scope specified in the Application Form, for the purposes related to the organization of the competition.

20. Applicants for the competition are authorized to revoke their consent, object to data processing, demand to change data or to delete them from the database of SARF any time. However, in such a case, participation in the competition would not be possible. Revocation of consent will not affect the lawfulness of data processing prior to its revocation.

21. The administrator of data gathered in connection with the competition is SARF. Personal data (in accordance with the Application Form) are provided voluntarily by people concerned, as a necessary condition for participation in the competition. Data processing is based on the fact that a person concerned gave consent for their personal data to be processed for the purposes related to the organization of the competition (Article 6 section 1 item a of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), Official Journal of the European Union L 119 of 04.05.2016, p. 1). Data are gathered by SARF solely for their processing in the competition, on the basis of consent and while the consent lasts. Data shall not be processed further, profiled, or used for automated decision-making. Data shall not be made available to third parties, including third countries and international organizations. A person concerned has the right to access, correct, delete, limit the processing of data, lodge an objection to further processing of data, transfer data and revoke the consent any time, which shall result in deletion of data from the list of competition participants, or file a complaint with the supervisory body.

22. The right to interpret and, in certain cases, to depart from these Rules, is reserved only for the Organization Committee of the Festival.

23. By sending an application with recordings, the participant agrees to comply with the Rules of the Competition.

24. The organizers reserve the right to amend these rules and regulations.