

Krakow Recommendation on the Protection of Cultural Heritage

We, the participants of the international conference on “The Cultural Heritage in the Face of Modern Threats and Challenges. Programmes and Action Plans”, held in Krakow on November 23-24, 2016,

Expressing our gratitude to the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland for the organization of the conference,

Recalling the provisions of the UNESCO Conventions, particularly the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict together with its two (1954 and 1999) Protocols, and, in particular the 1999 Second Protocol, the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,

Recalling Resolutions 2199 (2015) of the United Nations Security Council and in particular its paragraphs 15-17, which strongly condemn the systematic destruction of cultural heritage and property in Iraq and Syria, while emphasising the side consequences of this destruction, namely the looting of antiquities and their illicit trafficking and trade in the illegal market,

Welcoming the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/76 on the Return or Restitution of Cultural Property to the Countries of Origin,

Taking note of the ICOM Resolution No. 3 entitled “Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage During and After Armed Conflict, Acts of Terrorism, Revolutions and Civil Strife” adopted on 9 July 2016 in Milan, as well as chapter two of the UNESCO Shenzhen Declaration on Museums and Collections adopted on 12 November 2016 on the role of museums in the protection of heritage in times of peace and conflict, as well as of the other documents referred to the security of cultural heritage issued by international organizations and bodies,

Affirming that both tangible and intangible cultural heritage is essential to the knowledge of the history of human civilization,

Deeply concerned about the fact that the destruction of cultural heritage, which is deliberately used as a weapon of war, destabilizes populations and harms societies at their core, a tendency increasing in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere;

Noting also the initiative of the French Republic and the United Arab Emirates to create a network of “safe havens” for the protection of cultural property in conflict areas and to establish an international fund for the protection of cultural property threatened by armed conflicts and terrorism,

Recognising that the protection of endangered cultural heritage, in armed conflicts and in peacetime requires the widest possible enhanced cooperation at national, regional and international level, to address the challenges related to the destruction and illegal trafficking of cultural property and other offences, as well establishment of proper models of management of endangered sites,

Recommend that all the stakeholders responsible for the protection of cultural heritage:

1. Establish regional, national and international funds for protection of heritage in case of threats, as well as funds for creation of a network of “safe havens”, also contributing to the existing ones, founded under the aegis of UNESCO and in the framework of international treaties and agreements.

2. Adopt, where appropriate proper legislative measures, especially by the ratification of the UNESCO conventions, to counter all type of offences against cultural heritage and to introduce the systems of its protection on the highest level.
3. Create programmes and strategies for the protection of cultural heritage and their practical implementation on the local, national and international level, especially in cooperation with local communities. Prepare *a priori* proper documentation (inventories) on immovable and movable objects of heritage, museums', archives', libraries' collections and other endangered sites. Invest in capacity building and training initiatives dedicated to the first aid to the cultural heritage and others.
4. Create integrated networks gathering and sharing information and data on good practices and experiences concerning the security of cultural heritage, whenever it would concern the threats caused by natural disasters, climate changes, armed conflicts, as well as acts of terrorism and illegal trafficking of cultural goods. These processes may lead to establishment of an early warning and monitoring system, which would involve museums, archives, libraries and other relevant institutions and services on regional and international level.
- 5 Create and expand, where possible, educational programmes, beginning with actions at the basic education level up to advanced specialist programmes concerning the necessity of protection of cultural heritage and also building awareness regarding the illicit trafficking of cultural property and the ways of its prevention.