SECRETARIAT’S REPORT ON ITS ACTIVITIES
(OCTOBER 2016 - MAY 2017)

Fifth Session of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties to the
Convention concerning the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export
and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property
INTRODUCTION

- The Secretariat reports back to the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties to the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (hereafter referred to as “the 1970 Convention”), on the activities implemented since the close of the fourth session of the Subsidiary Committee (26-28 September 2016).
The Secretariat’s main task consists in providing support and technical expertise to the States Parties to the Convention at their request, in accordance with the Programme and Budget approved by the General Conference.

The 1970 Convention Secretariat currently comprises five permanent staff members:

- The Chief of Section;
- A Programme specialist;
- An Associate Programme specialist;
- A young professional;
- Secretarial Assistant; supported by two temporary members.
Extra budgetary resources: largely based on the support of a Regional Organization - European Union, and several States Parties - China, Greece, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Turkey.

Convention Fund: donation from the People’s Republic of China of 65,000 USD (in November 2016).

Continues to encourage Member States, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, private partners and other stakeholders to provide financial support in order to better face the new challenges.
The Secretariat was asked to send Rules of Procedure, to the Chairperson of the working group on governance, in accordance with Resolution 38C/101 of the General Conference.

Officially informed of in April 2017, as required.

Recommendation to the Meeting of States Parties to the 1970 Convention to amend Article 14.5 of its Rules of Procedure. This point is the subject of a specific document, reference C70/17/4.MSP/15.
Informal working group (10 to 13 March 2017) took on the island of Crete, Greece, to prepare the 5th Session of the Subsidiary Committee.

Various discussions were conducted on the role of proper documentation, due diligence and online sales of cultural goods.
NEW PARTNERSHIPS

- High-level enforcement meeting: integrated solutions for protection of cultural heritage took place at the University of Gibraltar in cooperation with the UNESCO office in Kabul.
- Attended by representatives of: Afghan Customs, UNCTAD in Afghanistan, INTERPOL, UNESCO (HQs and Office in Kabul), UNIDROIT, members of H.M Customs in Gibraltar as well as representatives of the Gibraltar Museum and the Gibraltar Heritage Trust.
- A joint campaign in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia (Spain) to raise awareness of the value of heritage and creativity, on social networks and in public spaces.
- Study under way into developing the initiative in Eastern Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa and Arab states.
Strategy for the reinforcement of UNESCO’s actions for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of an armed conflict

- Action Plan for the Strategy’s implementation presented to UNESCO’s Executive Board at its 201st session, and welcomed on that occasion. A number of activities included in this Action Plan are directly relevant to the Convention.

- Pursuant to the adoption of this Strategy, UNESCO held a series of capacity-building and advocacy workshops with partners.

- A second videoconference with the respective Heads of INTERPOL, the UNIDROIT, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) and with the Coordinator of the UNSC Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team was organized on 22 March 2017 to continue the follow-up on the implementation of UNSC Resolutions to fight against illicit trafficking in conflict areas and develop future joint actions.
United Nations Security Council Resolution 2347


Meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the Members of the G7 Countries

- 30-31 March 2017 - UNESCO Director-General participated in the G7 Ministers of Culture Meeting organized in Florence on “Culture as a Tool for Dialogue among Peoples”, dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage and the prevention of illicit trafficking.
- The meeting was concluded with the signature of the “Florence Declaration”.
Thanks to a contribution from the European Union, the Secretariat launched in March 2017 the implementation of a two-year project “Engaging the European art market in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property”.

The project aims at engaging European art market stakeholders in the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property, with a particular focus on - but not restricted to - objects originating from countries in a conflict situation or affected by natural disasters.

28 February 2017 - event on “Promoting and strengthening the international legal framework for the protection of cultural heritage – The 1995 Convention” took place at UN Headquarters, New York. It was jointly organized by the Missions of Cyprus and Italy to the UN in cooperation with UNIDROIT.

Main objective was to discuss synergies between international instruments, emphasizing the benefits of ratifying the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention as well as other international treaties.
INTERPOL

- INTERPOL, in collaboration with UNESCO, organized a two-days meeting on preventing the circulation and sale of illegally exported Iraqi and Syrian artefacts on the international market and their restitution. Held at the UNESCO Office in Beirut in December 2016, with the support of the Norwegian Embassy.

- Aimed to assess the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2199 (2015) in the Middle East.

UNODC

- 21-23 January 2017 - Secretariat participated in a workshop countering illicit trafficking of cultural property by terrorist groups organized by the UNODC Terrorism Prevention Branch, on Beirut, Lebanon, for a group of Iraqi officials.
NEW INITIATIVES

New Convention by the Council of Europe

- Aims at strengthening the fight against illicit traffic mainly through criminal law.
- First regional instrument to impose criminal sanctions. Will ensure harmonization of domestic laws regarding offences to cultural property in all Member States.
- Recent events in Iraq and Syria shed new light on the vulnerability of historic and archaeological sites.
- Deliberate destruction of cultural sites, trafficking and plundering of cultural property used to fund organized crime and source of money laundering affecting all European states.
Emergency actions, notably in **Iraq, Libya, Mali, Nepal, Syria and Yemen**.

Document C70/15/3.MSP/9 was prepared to report on the emergency actions undertaken by the Secretariat.

Subsidiary Committee adopted Decision 4.SC/6 (relevant paragraphs 6 to 9) at its fourth session that encouraged States Parties to share information with the Secretariat on its implementation.


The recommendations, while highlighting the strong cooperation between the Team and UNESCO, underlined the importance of sharing information between Member States, UNESCO and the Team (S/2017/35).

The main points referred to in the report:
- seized and fake artefacts,
- number of criminal cases,
- measures adopted by Member States,
- smuggling routes, and
- proposals for strengthening the implementation of UN Security Resolutions 2199 and 2253.
EMERGENCY ACTIONS

- Mobile application game, “Sarmad the Adventurer”, available in Arabic and English, developed with financial support from Norway, and disseminated in Iraqi primary schools.

- "Cultural Heritage Play Day" took place at Harshm Internally Displaced Person Camp in Erbil on 24 November 2016, where the app game was distributed. Two hundred primary school children participated.

- UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture of Iraq, organized an International Coordination Conference on the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Liberated Areas of Iraq, at its Headquarters in Paris from 23 to 24 February 2017.

- UNESCO Bamako Office, in order to strengthen the capacities of customs, police and gendarmerie, commissioned a research study, which will be shared with all relevant national stakeholders.

- Sub-regional workshop aiming at strengthening capacities on illicit trafficking, in collaboration with INTERPOL, will be organized by the Bamako Office in coordination with the Dakar Office in 2017, gathering museum professionals, law enforcement and judiciary staff from Mali, Senegal, Guinea and Niger.

- In the framework of the same project, an animation clip on prevention of illicit trafficking of Syrian cultural property was produced and launched during the Fourth Meeting of State Parties to the 1970 Convention.
The recent EXB has approved the involvement of UNESCO in the Fund ALIPH established by France.

This Fund is aligned with the Strategy for the Reinforcement of UNESCO’s Action for the Protection of Culture and Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflicts, adopted by the General Conference in 2015.

It is expected that this Fund will contribute as well to the Secretariat’s activities related to the fight against illicit traffic of cultural property.
During the period of October 2016 to May 2017, 8 training workshops were held for 100 participants representing 12 countries.
The Secretariat, in cooperation with the Subsidiary Committee and the Mexican government, will organize a meeting on the illicit trafficking of documentary heritage, according to the extrabudgetary funds available.

The meeting will be held in parallel with the Conference of the International Council on Archives/ Latin American Archives Association, in Mexico from 30 November to 1 December 2017.
A document C70/17/5.SC/9A was prepared for examination during this fifth session of the Subsidiary Committee.
Increasing number of alerts of stolen objects and cases of return/restitution published on the 1970 Convention webpage.

The 1970 Convention Website recorded over 20,000 visits per month during the period in question. Nearly double the volume of the previous period.
It currently registered 2,914 national cultural legislation from 189 countries. The statistics indicate that the page generates an average of 4,700 searches and 813,000 printouts per month.

In addition to the regular updates to the texts, the Secretariat monitors the translations requested by certain countries (from the original language into English). Four translation contracts have been concluded since 2012, with Honduras, Nicaragua, Mali and Tunisia. Eight countries also feature on the list of priorities established by the donor: Algeria, Bolivia, Ecuador, Libya, Morocco, Panama, El Salvador and Thailand.

A brochure presenting the database is available in the six languages of the Organization and is in the process of being updated.
WEB ALERTS IN THE EVENT OF THEFTS OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

- When the Secretariat is informed of theft of objects, it immediately alerts the specialist police units, as well as INTERPOL, major players in the art market and the main museums of the world, and asks its partners to send out the alert on their respective networks.

- Between September 2016 and March 2017, the Secretariat received 5 alerts from Greece, 1 from Ecuador, 3 from Peru and 1 from Syria. All of these have been published on the 1970 Convention website.
MOVABLE HERITAGE AND MUSEUMS SECTION
1970 Convention Unit
WWW.UNESCO.ORG/CULTURE/FR/ILlicitTrafficKING