



## **International Meeting on Underwater Cultural Heritage and Site Protection**

In support of the implementation of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage

*UNESCO Headquarters, 22 – 23 September 2016, Room II / IX, Fontenoy building*

### **Recommendations**

An International Meeting on Underwater Cultural Heritage Sites Protection was held on 22 and 23 September 2016 at UNESCO Headquarters in support of the promotion and implementation of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

The meeting brought together representatives of the States Parties to the UNESCO 2001 Convention and other UNESCO Member States, experts representing different national authorities (culture and foreign ministries, navies, customs agencies, coast guards, police, museums etc.), intergovernmental organizations (INTERPOL, NATO, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), etc.) and relevant NGOs<sup>1</sup> working with underwater cultural heritage, as well as private entities and universities.

The meeting focused on the issue of the identification and quantification of threats to underwater cultural heritage, in particular regarding pillaging and commercial exploitation, and on the preventive measures to be taken. International experts presented their experiences, and participated in a round table discussion, which allowed for the exchange of views regarding the effectiveness of current measures. The participants of the meeting:

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<sup>1</sup> ADRAMAR, Alliance for the Restoration of Cultural Heritage (ARCH), The Centre for Historical Archaeology (CHA), the International Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage (ICUCH) of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), ICCROM-ATHAR Regional Conservation Centre, The Institute of Maritime History (IMH), Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (INRAP), and the Lighthouse Archaeological Maritime Programme (LAMP)

1. Encourage the universal ratification and implementation of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage;
2. Recommend that all State Party authorities improve their efforts to achieve a wider implementation of the 2001 Convention in all waters, including in international waters, in particular regarding the protection of submerged archaeological sites and the prevention of the pillaging and commercial exploitation of underwater cultural heritage;
3. Recommend that the protection of underwater cultural heritage sites and artifacts should become part of the ocean surveillance activities of coast guards and port, security, defence, customs and police authorities, as well as of international organizations;
4. Recommend that stronger efforts should be made to inventory underwater cultural heritage sites in view of their effective protection;
5. Recommend stronger cooperation among surveillance and research authorities in the protection and monitoring of underwater cultural heritage;
6. Strongly discourage museums from acquiring underwater cultural heritage objects which come from commercially exploited or pillaged sites, and, if they already hold such objects, to ensure at a minimum that their presentation does not contribute to the encouragement of such unethical activities;
7. Encourage the seizure of underwater cultural heritage recovered in a manner contrary to the provisions of the 2001 Convention;
8. Encourage States Parties to the 2001 Convention to call upon the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body for scientific and technical advice and, particularly in emergency situations, and to nominate experts to it, as well as to provide funds for its work;
9. Encourage the organization of national and regional technical training workshops for law enforcement entities, customs and specialized border agencies and public prosecutors and judges concentrating on the protection of underwater cultural heritage;
10. Invite States to bring the issue of the protection of underwater cultural heritage stronger to the attention of the relevant United Nations organizations as well as the African

Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Union and similar organizations;

11. Encourage the creation of Red Lists for underwater cultural heritage, particularly drawing attention to endangered artefacts;
12. Encourage synergies with other legal instruments in the field of heritage conservation;
13. Strongly encourage States to create, where they do not yet exist , specialized police force units exclusively dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage;
14. Strongly encourage the creation of national databases for stolen objects of art that are regularly updated and connected with INTERPOL's Stolen Works of Art Database;
15. Encourage States to establish special underwater cultural heritage protection authorities in the spirit of Article 22 of the 2001 Convention;
16. Encourage States to recognize and enhance collaboration with local communities and groups in the preservation and protection of underwater cultural heritage;
17. Recall that States Parties are obliged to monitor and sanction the actions of their nationals and vessels flying the State flag, when acting not in conformity with the Convention.