



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 promoting and implementing 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, Coastguards, Police, Museums etc.), international organizations (INTERPOL, NATO etc.) and relevant NGOs¹ working with underwater cultural heritage as well as private entities and universities.

It focused on the issue of the identification and quantification of threats to underwater cultural heritage especially regarding pillage and commercial exploitation and on preventive measures to be taken. International experts presented their experiences, followed by a round table workshop, which allowed for the exchange of views regarding the effectiveness of the means used.

¹ 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), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), ICCROM-ATHAR Regional Conservation Centre, The Institute of Maritime History (IMH), Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (INRAP), the Lighthouse Archaeological Maritime Programme (LAMP)

The participants of the meeting:

1. Encourage the universal ratification and implementation of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage;
2. Recommend to improve efforts of all State Party authorities to achieve a wider implementation of the 2001 Convention in all waters, including in international waters, especially regarding the protection of submerged archaeological sites and the prevention of pillage and commercial exploitation of underwater cultural heritage;
3. Recommend that the protection of underwater cultural heritage sites and artifacts should become part of the efforts made in ocean surveillance activities of coast guards, port, security, defense, customs and police authorities as well as of international organizations, such as NATO;
4. Recommend that stronger efforts should be made to inventory underwater cultural heritage sites in view of their effective protection;
5. Recommend stronger cooperation of surveillance and research authorities in the protection and monitoring of underwater cultural heritage;
6. Strongly discourage museums from acquiring underwater cultural heritage objects coming 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 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 especially 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 agencies at the borders as well as

public prosecutors and judges concentrating on the protection of underwater cultural heritage;

10. Invite States to bring the issue of the protection of the underwater cultural heritage stronger to the attention of the United Nations as well as the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Union, NATO and similar organizations;
11. Encourage the creation of Red Lists for the underwater cultural heritage, especially drawing attention to endangered types of artefacts;
12. Encourage synergies with other legal instruments in the field of heritage conservation;
13. Strongly encourage States to create, where they do not exist yet, 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 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 to States Parties the obligation to monitor and sanction the actions of their nationals and vessels flying the State flag, when acting not in conformity with the Convention.