



Cultural Heritage & Museums | Events | Latvia

## Council of Europe | The Nicosia Convention International Conference

# A multistakeholder approach to the Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property provisions.

The current situation in Ukraine, where cultural heritage has been deliberately targeted and looted artefacts may be illegally exported, unfortunately brings a renewed interest on protecting cultural heritage from damage and/or destruction. That situation highlights the relevance of Council of Europe's Convention on Offences related to Cultural Property, known as the Nicosia Convention, in the responses to the offences relating to cultural property in conflict and post conflict situations.

As a criminal-law treaty, the Nicosia Convention is the only legally binding instrument aimed at preventing and combating such crimes by strengthening criminal justice responses and, at the same time, fostering international cooperation. Opened for signature in 2017, the Nicosia Convention entered into force on 1 April 2022 and counts today with six Parties and another seven are signatories.

As one of these Parties, Latvia attaches great importance to the protection of cultural heritage and the prevention of illicit trafficking, damage, and destruction of cultural property. At the occasion of the Latvian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, an international conference on the adequate criminal justice response to these phenomena will be organized in Riga on the 15th and 16th June 2023.

The conference will bring together representatives from international organisations, relevant national authorities and eminent experts with the aim, through case-based presentations and fruitful exchanges, to improve international co-operation and thus provide an ever-growing level of protection to the world's cultural heritage.

Crimes against cultural property are a distinctly global problem requiring global solutions. It is accepted that the alienation and destruction of valuable artefacts affects everyone insofar as cultural property is not only the legacy of individual countries but of the whole humanity.

It is urgent to deal with this concern given the links between

cultural property offences and organised crime and terrorism. Policing the illicit flow of cultural heritage across national boundaries requires a high level of co-operation between all relevant states and actors. Consequently, joint efforts must be made to set up the mechanisms by which countries can share information, learn from each other's best practices, and achieve better law-enforcement co-ordination to prevent and combat these offences.

As a leader in legal co-operation, the Council of Europe benefits from a well-established network in Europe and beyond, and decades of experience creating international policy. As such, it is uniquely placed to promote a co-ordinated approach to the fight against cultural property offences.

Event: 15-16 June 2023 Riga, Latvia

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