

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

## THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE INITIATIVES AND THE VALLETTA CONVENTION (1992)

Tracking down the traces to understand the present



The interpretation of the past, whether distant or recent, has been on occasion the victim of speculative respective territorial or linguistic recuperation as well as ethnic and nationalist claims.

The Council of Europe aims at an area of peace, democracy and cohesion at the level of the whole continent: its cultural co-operation programme contributes to the prevention and overcoming of conflicts through the development of inter-community dialogue and the mutual recognition of cultural diversity. The archaeological heritage is a major field in this programme. It constitutes an outstanding instrument for a better knowledge of the past and for emphasising the cultural diversity that has emerged in the course of history within any given territory, irrespective of the present-day political context.

By its very nature, archaeological research advances by destroying the level it analyses. This means particular attention should be paid to the conservation of what is found. The Council of Europe has drawn up guidelines for the preservation of archaeological material.

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE ACTION FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE



## 1969

### The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (London, May 1969)

The 1969 Convention is mainly concerned with archaeological excavations and the extraction of information from these excavations. It entered into force in 1970.

The main thrust is that the parties undertake to prevent illicit excavations, to take the necessary measures to ensure that excavations are authorised and entrusted only to qualified persons, as well as to control and protect the results obtained. The parties accept to take those steps necessary for scientific

publication concerning excavation and discoveries, to facilitate the circulation of archaeological objects for scientific, cultural, and educational purposes. The Convention was ratified by twenty-four European countries.

Pressure for revision of the Convention came in the late 1970s from the Parliamentary Assembly which was concerned with underwater archaeology and the illegal trade in antiquities.



## 1980s

By the 1980s new threats had however emerged concerning the impact of large-scale construction projects resulting from pressure from an increasing population and rising standards of living (motorways, underground railways and high-speed trains, replanning of historic centres, car parks etc.) and due to physical planning schemes (reforestation, land consolidation etc.). A Recommendation on the pro-

tection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage in the context of town and country planning operations was adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 1989. It drew on practice that had evolved over previous years and advocated new working methods in the context of major development operations.

## 1990s

The proposal to draw up a revised Convention was endorsed by the Steering Committee for the Integrated Conservation of the Historic Heritage (CDPH) and later on by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. The revision was taken up by a Select

Committee of Experts on Archaeology and Planning. The revised Convention was opened for signature on 16 January 1992 at the 3rd European Conference of Ministers responsible for the Cultural Heritage held in Valletta, Malta.



# THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE (revised) (valletta, january 1992)



The Valletta Convention picks up some of the main points of the Amsterdam Declaration (1975) and the Convention for the Protection of Architectural Heritage (Granada, 1985). The new text makes conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage one of the goals of urban and regional planning policies.

Managers and developers, authorities and researchers are invited to analyse how to associate protection and planning. The Valletta Convention insisted also on the creation of administrative structures to integrate archaeological data into development projects.

## Key points

### Definition of the archaeological heritage

The aim of the Convention is to protect the archaeological heritage as a source of European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study. All remains and objects and any other traces of humankind from past times are considered elements of the archaeological heritage.

The notion of archaeological heritage includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other kinds as well as their context, whether situated on land or under water.

### Identification of the heritage and measures for protection

The countries parties to the Convention are required:

- to institute, by appropriate means, a legal system to protect the archaeological heritage, including the maintenance of an inventory and the designation of protected monuments and areas;
- to establish archaeological reserves, even without any visible remains on the ground or under water, for the preservation of material evidence to be studied by next generations;
- to institute the mandatory reporting to the competent authorities by finders of chance discoveries of elements of the archaeological heritage and making them available for examination;
- to apply procedures for the authorisation and supervision of excavation and other archaeological activities in such a way as:
  - to prevent any illicit excavation or removal of elements of the archaeological heritage;
  - to ensure that archaeological excavations and prospecting are undertaken in a scientific manner;
- to ensure that excavations and other potentially destructive techniques are carried out only by qualified and authorised persons;
- to submit for prior authorisation, whenever foreseen by domestic law, the use of metal detectors and other detection equipment;
- to implement measures for the physical protection of the archaeological heritage, making provision:
  - for the acquisition or protection, by appropriate means, by the authorities of areas intended to constitute archaeological reserves;
  - for the conservation and maintenance of the archaeological heritage, preferably *in situ*;
  - for appropriate storage places for archaeological remains which have been removed from their original location.





## Integrated conservation of the archaeological heritage

States are invited to reconcile and combine the respective requirements of archaeology and development plans by:

- ensuring that archaeologists participate in planning policies designed to ensure well-balanced strategies for the protection, conservation and enhancement of sites of archaeological interest;
- assuring the allocation of sufficient time and resources for an appropriate scientific study to be made on such sites and for the findings to be published.

## Promotion of public awareness

States are encouraged to conduct educational campaigns with a view to developing public awareness of the value of the archaeological heritage in order to understand the past and the threats to this heritage.

## Prevention of the illicit circulation of elements of the archaeological heritage

States are invited to:

- arrange for the relevant public authorities and for scientific institutions to pool information on any known illicit excavations;
- inform the competent authorities in the State of origin of any offer of an object suspected of coming either from illicit excavations or unlawfully from official excavations;
- provide the necessary details thereof.

# Highlights of the Valletta Convention

## Implementation

The Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage (CDPAT) is responsible for the follow-up of the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) (1992), also called the Valletta Convention.

## Signatures and ratifications (as of June 2002)

Signed by 39 countries.  
Ratified by 27 countries.

### Member states parties to the Convention:

Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom.

### Non member states parties to the Convention:

Holy See, Monaco.



# THE EUROPEAN PLAN FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

Launched as a follow up to the Valletta Convention, the "European Plan for Archaeology" has developed five activities for a five year period.

- The organisation of a **Campaign** to increase public awareness of the value and significance of the archaeological heritage, based on the theme of "**The Bronze Age**" and complemented by a multi-lingual glossary of archaeological terminology, European Bronze Age Monuments. An **art exhibition** on the theme "**Gods and Heroes of the bronze age – Europe at the time of Ulysses**" was organised in 1998 by the Council of Europe.
- Launching a **thematic network of the ancient places of performance** suitable for contemporary entertainment and performances. As a result of several international colloquies, the Verona Charter on the Use of ancient places of performance was adopted in 1997 and disseminated in member countries.

The idea is to promote an intersectorial working method involving archaeologists, architects, performance organisers and specialists in local development aimed at the better protection and use of ancient theatres, amphitheatres and circuses.

- Adoption of a "**Core data standard for archaeological sites and monuments**" closely modelled on the Council of Europe's architectural data standard in order to facilitate communication between national and international bodies for recording and protecting the archaeological heritage also to facilitate research.
- Report on the situation of **urban archaeology in Europe**: a comparative study focused on archaeology in urban centres in various European countries when they coincide with historic and ancient cities and towns overlying populated prehistoric landscapes. This study also covers the approaches taken by countries to improve their inventories and documentation on historic towns, as well as the relations between archaeology and urban planning.
- Publication of a European Code of Good Practice entitled "**Archaeology and the Urban project**", adopted in 2000, aimed to enhance the protection of the European urban archaeological heritage by facilitating co-operation between planners, archaeologists and developers.

## Technical and professional co-operation

- The Council of Europe **technical assistance and co-operation programme** has published several working tools: "Guidelines for the protection of the archaeological heritage", "Guidelines for the protection of the movable heritage" and "Guidelines on the development of legislation and administration systems in the field of Cultural Heritage".
- As regards the intergovernmental co-operation programme, **the European Foundation for Heritage Skills (FEMP)** has developed several projects for further training. With the support of the European

Union Raphael programme, the AGESA project (European workshop on the management of archaeological sites) has drawn up a methodology for the multidisciplinary management of archaeological sites. Guidelines are also suggested on the aims and structure of further training schemes for archaeological site managers. This work has since been developed in the framework of the PISA project (part of EU's Euromed-Heritage Programme) dealing with the integrated programming of cultural sites management.

## Further action

A seminar on the implementation of the Convention from 1992 to 2002 will take place on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Valletta Convention (Strasbourg 9 October 2002). Ways and means to improve the dissemination and implementation of

the text and proposals for a better exchange of information and good practice have been suggested. The website [www.european-heritage.net](http://www.european-heritage.net) constitutes a working tool for the follow up of the Convention.

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE PUBLICATIONS AND KEY TEXTS



*European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (London, 6 May 1969) (ETS No. 66) and explanatory report.

*Recommendation 849 of the Parliamentary Assembly on the underwater cultural heritage* (1978).

*Recommendation 921 of the Parliamentary Assembly on metal detectors and archaeology* (1981).

*Archaeology and planning* – Florence Colloquy, Italy, 1984 (1987). Architectural Heritage Series No. 5. ISBN 92-871-1012-3

*Archaeology and major public works – “The law and its application”*: comparative study on the situation in several European countries, 1987.

*Recommendation 1072 of the Parliamentary Assembly on the international protection of cultural property and the circulation of works of art* (1988).

*Archaeology and major public works* – Nice Colloquy, France, 1987 (1989). Architectural Heritage Series No. 12. ISBN 92-871-1671-7

*Recommendation No. R (89) 5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States concerning the protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage in the context of town and country planning operations.*

*European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised)* (Valletta, 16 January 1992) (ETS No. 143) and explanatory report. ISBN 92-871-2125-7

*Third European Conference of Ministers responsible for the Cultural Heritage*: proceedings, Malta, 16-17 January 1992, 1993. ISBN 92-871-2310-1

*Verona Charter on the Use of Ancient Places of Performance, adopted at the International Colloquy held in Verona, Italy, August 1997.*

*Man and environment in Bronze Age Europe*, 1997. ISBN 3-9804 322-2-X

*Pipeline of archaeological treasures*, 1998. ISBN 83-908 606-0-0

*Recommendation 1372 of the Parliamentary Assembly on the Unidroit Convention on stolen or illegally exported cultural property* (1998).

*Archaeology and protection of nature in the Federsee Bog*, 1999.

*Report on the situation of the urban archaeology in Europe*, 1999. ISBN 92-871-3671-8

*Core data standard for archaeological sites and monuments*, 1999. ISBN 92-871-3816-8

*European Bronze Age monuments*: glossary, 1999. ISBN 92-871-3712-9

*Archaeology and the urban project*: A European code of good practice, adopted by the Cultural Heritage Committee at its 15th plenary session (8-10 March 2000).

*European Landscape Convention* (Florence, 20 October 2000) (ETS No. 176) and explanatory report.

*Recommendation 1486 (2000) of the Parliamentary Assembly on maritime and fluvial cultural heritage and reply from the Committee of Ministers adopted on 18 July 2001.*

*Guidance on the development of legislation and administration systems in the field of cultural heritage*, 2000. ISBN 92-871-4292-0

*Guidelines for the protection of the archaeological heritage*, 2000. ISBN 92-871-4293-9

*Fifth European Conference of Ministers responsible for the Cultural Heritage* (Portoroz, 6-7 April 2001): Resolution No. 2

*European cultural heritage: (Volume I) – Intergovernmental co-operation*: collected texts, 2002. ISBN 92-871-4864-3

*European cultural heritage: (Volume II) – A review of policies and practice*, 2002. ISBN 92-871-4867-8

*Archeological sites in Europe: conservation, maintenance and enhancement*: proceedings of the Conimbriga Colloquy (Portugal) 1990 (1992) – Architectural Heritage Series No. 22. ISBN 92-871-2047-1

*Management of public access to the heritage landscape*: proceedings of the Dublin Colloquy (Ireland) 1991 (1992) – Architectural Heritage Series No. 24. ISBN 92-871-2145-1

*AGESA European workshops on the management of archaeological heritage*, FEMP, 2001.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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### Relevant websites:

Portal: <http://www.coe.int>

European Cultural Co-operation: <http://www.coe.int/DGIV/>

Committee of Ministers: <http://cm.coe.int>

Parliamentary Assembly: <http://assembly.coe.int>

Treaty Office: <http://conventions.coe.int>

Heritage policies in Europe: [www.european-heritage.net](http://www.european-heritage.net)

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