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**STEERING COMMITTEE
FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE
(CDCPP)**

**Nicosia, Republic of Cyprus
24-26 October 2019**

Act for Heritage!

For information

**Promoting the Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating
to Cultural Property,
with governments and civil society**

Secretariat Memorandum
prepared by the
Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation
Culture, Nature and Heritage Department

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DRAFT VERSION



(picture may be changed at a later stage)

Draft Concept Note

Overview and objectives

The Commissioner for Volunteerism and Non-Governmental Organisations of the Republic of Cyprus, in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, the Council of Europe and the European Union is organising a two-day Conference on the Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property (the Nicosia Convention) on 24-26 October 2019.

The Conference will take place to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe, with a view to increasing the Organisation's visibility in Cyprus and in the wider geographic region, based on wide media coverage.

The primary aim of the Conference will be the promotion of the Nicosia Convention and its universality, as well as raising awareness on the topical issue of preventing offences relating to cultural property which is of concern to a large number of countries. The event will also feature findings from a new European study on trafficking of cultural property and links to organised crime, new regulation by the European Union on import of cultural goods as well as important on-going European research and action projects. Another focus will be to enhance co-operation and the joining of efforts between governments, civil society and the business sector in protecting cultural heritage.

The participants of the Conference (approximately 150, by invitation only) will include representatives of governments (crime prevention, culture, tourism, education) and civil society/NGOs from Council of Europe member States and Council of Europe Mediterranean neighbourhood countries, business representatives as well as representatives of the European Union, UNESCO, UNIDROIT, INGOs and other relevant stakeholders.

The event will be highly interactive and lead to a better understanding of what is at stake when we speak about offences relating to cultural property, and their public perception. It will combine specialists' points of view with those of more generalist heritage actors. Finally, based on in-depth debates in four working groups it will consolidate insights and formulate action proposals for working vigorously towards a culture of awareness and responsible handling of cultural property, empowering citizens and governments alike.

Conference questions

Questions for debate will include¹:

- What is cultural property according to the Nicosia Convention and what are the main risks it is exposed to?
- Why are we responsible for cultural property in far-away places?
- How does the Nicosia Convention address the challenges at stake, as compared to other legal tools in this area and how does it interact with these?
- What are the elements/provisions required for a functioning regulatory system?
- Why and how can the Nicosia Convention make trans-border co-operation more efficient? How can the Nicosia Convention and other standards challenge the unrestrained and uncontrolled free market ideology, including in cultural matters, in our present-day societies?
- What is the specific role of civil society/(I)NGOs in addressing the threats to cultural property?
- What should be done by crime prevention/cultural/heritage policy makers, civil society/NGOs and business -including, inter alia art and antique dealers and representatives of the tourism sector to

¹ Tentative list only

work towards a culture of awareness and responsible handling of cultural property and what are the priority actions?

- Is there a need for more arts/culture/heritage training and cultural awareness-raising in school curricula and informal education?
- How best can the Nicosia Convention be made known at global level?

Conference papers

Three conference input papers will introduce the subject from different perspectives and provide stimuli for debate, drawing insights from the most recent research and practice about the Convention's key topics and their implications for promoting and implementing it widely.

Side event/cultural visits (to be added by the Cyprus Partners)

Results and follow-up

The results of the workshops and conference debates will be assembled during the event into a set of proposals for action on how best the Convention, in interaction with other regulation, could be promoted in the short, medium and long term by civil society, government and business actors, and how their collaboration could be shaped to ensure best possible impact. These proposals may be fed into the Council of Europe's work programme 2020/21 in the sectors concerned and will also be reflected in the implementation of the EU's Action Plan on Cultural Heritage. A future CoE/EU Joint Project may be derived from the conference conclusions. In addition, these will hopefully inspire the action by civil society partners/(I)NGOs and the business sector, on promoting the Nicosia Convention and preventing offences relating to cultural property Through specialised intergovernmental bodies such as the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP), the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) and other Organisations' decision making structures, the proposals for action will find their way into the policy making systems (specialised Ministries) in Council of Europe member States and neighbouring countries. Specific attention will be given to enhancing education to foster cultural awareness in view of the global implications of offences relating to cultural property. A follow-up conference may be organised in 2021 in Cyprus to evaluate progress made and an interim event may take place in 2020, pending interest by a potential host country.

Conference budget

- The organisers in Cyprus will cover the operational costs of organising the Conference, as well as meals and a visit to cultural sites in Cyprus. They are also securing sufficient funding to cover accommodation costs for (I)NGOs/civil society representatives.
- Subject to the availability of funds in 2019, the Council of Europe will cover the costs related to the intervention of a number of speakers, the production of three Conference input papers in English and French, interpretation (English/French) at the event and missions for the Council of Europe Secretariat.

International Conference

"Act for Heritage"

Promoting the Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property, with governments and civil society

24-26 October 2019, Nicosia

PRELIMINARY DRAFT PROGRAMME

DATE	Time	
24/10/2019	19:45	Presidential Palace Arrivals
	20:00	Opening Ceremony in the Presence of the President of the Republic of Cyprus Formal reception
25/10/2019	9:00	Conference Center Beginning of Conference
	9:00 –10:30	Opening Speeches (5x 8-10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cyprus Authorities - Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, DSG, CoE - International Representative - EU - UNESCO - Presentation (15-20 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Nicosia Convention – by a member of the Council of Europe's European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC)
	10:30 –11:00	Coffee Break

	11:00 – 13:00	<p>Presentations continued (7x10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study on trafficking and its links to organised crime and the EU Regulation on import of cultural goods – by A.Kedziorek, EU - Presentation of the three conference background papers by their Authors - The NETCHER project - by V. Chankowski - The Pandora project ... (tbc)
	13:00 – 14:30	Lunch Break
	14:30 – 18:00	<p>Parallel Working Groups (with moderator and short presentations)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criminalizing Offences relating to Cultural Property and interaction with relevant European and International law 2. Role of Civil Society, business (incl. tourism) and governments in preventing offences related to Cultural Property 3. Practical cooperation of law enforcement agencies: Customs and cultural heritage police, cultural heritage agencies 4. Enhancing/Raising awareness on protecting cultural property through media and education
	20:30	Evening Excursion
26/10/2019	8:30– 10:00	<p>Conference Center</p> <p>Working Group presentations and agreed findings by the moderators</p> <p>Presentation of proposals for further action by the Cyprus Authorities and the CoE</p> <p>Optional excursion</p>
	11:00	Departures

Summary Overview

A. The Aims of the Conference:

1. To promote the "Nicosia Convention"
2. To enhance the cooperation and efforts between governments, civil society and business
3. To raise awareness about offences relating to cultural property
4. To issue proposals for further action

B. Proposals for Working Groups Topics:

1. Criminalizing offences relating to cultural property and interaction with relevant European and International law
2. Role of civil society, business (art and antiques dealers; tourism) and governments in preventing offences related to Cultural Property
3. Practical cooperation initiatives: customs and law enforcement bodies
4. Enhancing/raising awareness on protecting cultural property through media and education

C. Proposals for Background documents:

1. Mapping of (a) existing regulation on offences relating to cultural property and (b) elements/provisions required for a functioning regulatory system (by Alessandro Cechi, tbc)

2. Position paper by the business sector on preventing offences relating to cultural property (by Cinoa and possibly tourism actors)

3. Paper on awareness-raising campaigns addressed to the general public on protecting cultural property and the dangers posed by the crimes against it (by ICOMOS, tbc)