



Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia

Amendments to the Latvian legislation to implement the Nicosia Convention

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Amendments to the special laws



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- Law on protection of cultural monuments (31 March 2022)
- Libraries law (31 March 2022)
- Archives law (25 March 2021)
- Museums law 18 March 2021)

Law on protection of cultural monuments



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- It is prohibited to destroy, damage, or desecrate cultural monuments.
- It is prohibited to alienate, store, or forward illegally acquired cultural monuments.
- It is prohibited to export illegally acquired cultural monuments from the Republic of Latvia and to import them into the Republic of Latvia.
- It is prohibited to export from the Republic of Latvia and to import into the Republic of Latvia illegally acquired art or antique articles, and also to store and trade them illegally. Procedures for the export from and import into the Republic of Latvia of art and antique articles shall be regulated by Cabinet regulations.

Law on protection of cultural monuments



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- Archaeological sites which have acquired the status of a State protected or newly discovered cultural monument, and also antiquities (dating back to the 17th century inclusive) found in the ground, above the ground, or in water in the protection zones thereof shall be under protection of and belong to the State and they shall be kept by public museums. This provision shall not apply to antiquities on which the person has reported to the National Heritage Board until 30 March 2013, as well as to antiquities the legal origin of which has been proved by the person after 30 March 2013 and has received a written certification from the National Heritage Board thereon.



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Libraries law

- Amended with legal definition of specially protected library collection – all documents printed in Latvian language before 1855 and in other languages before 1850; parts of the special holdings of libraries printed before 1950 (including materials printed in exile), documents in one copy (including both analogue and digital manuscripts, photos, photo negatives, audiovisual materials, drawings, graphic arts drawings, technical drawings, sketches, musical scores, maps and other materials), archival documents (including digital), documents with unique autographs and other manual notes, unique bindings, exlibris and stamps.



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Libraries law

- It is prohibited to include documents in the National Library Holdings which have been obtained illegally, including stolen in another country or brought out in violation of the legal acts of the country which has classified, defined, or specifically recognised them as a cultural value in accordance with the international commitments of the Republic of Latvia. Before including a document in the National Library Holdings, library shall check the publicly available registries of stolen cultural objects whether the document to be included in the National Library Holdings has not been obtained illegally.



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Libraries law

- It is prohibited:
 - To damage, destroy and illegally relocate, including by transfer, the specially protected documents of the National Library Holdings;
 - To alienate, as well as to buy or otherwise acquire illegally obtained specially protected documents of the National Library Holdings;
 - To take the specially protected documents of the National Library Holdings out of the Republic of Latvia without a permission of the competent state authority. It is permitted to take the specially protected documents of the National Library Holdings out of the Republic of Latvia only for a limited time in order to exhibit, restore or study the document, or for another purpose related to preservation and popularisation of the document.

Libraries law



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- A specially protected document of the National Library Holdings can be alienated only if its owner has announced his intent to alienate the document to the competent state authority.
- The National Library of Latvia has a right of first refusal on specially protected documents of the National Library Holdings.
- If a specially protected document of the National Library Holdings is illicitly traded or lost the custodian institution shall immediately inform the competent state authority.

Archives law



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- It is prohibited to include those records with archival value in the national documentary heritage which have been obtained illegally, including stolen in another country or brought out in violation of the legal acts of the country which has classified, defined, or specifically recognised them as a cultural value in accordance with the international commitments of the Republic of Latvia. Before including the record in the national documentary heritage, the National Archives of Latvia or an authority shall check the publicly available registries of stolen cultural objects whether the record to be included in the national documentary heritage has not been obtained illegally.
- A record shall be excluded from the national documentary heritage by a decision of the director of the National Archives of Latvia in accordance with the procedures specified by the Cabinet if it is found that the record has been obtained illegally.



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Museums law

- Museums may not alienate or withdraw objects of the National Holdings from a museum collection without the permission of the Ministry of Culture.
- In order to prevent the inclusion of illegally obtained and moved cultural and natural values in the National Holdings, museums shall establish and supplement the National Holdings in conformity with the Code of Ethics for Museums of the International Council of Museums and international agreements binding on the Republic of Latvia.
- An object may be withdrawn from the National Holdings if:
 - the object has been obtained illegally, including as a result of violating international agreements binding on the Republic of Latvia;
 - according to a court ruling (including on the basis of the research of the origin of the object), a new owner has been determined for the object and it has expressed the wish to withdraw the object from the National Holdings.



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Thank you!

