

**INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON THE FIGHT AGAINST
OFFENCES RELATING TO CULTURAL PROPERTY:**

**EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES AND SHARED
PRIORITIES**

CONCEPT NOTE AND DRAFT PROGRAMME

**20-21 June 2024
Pignatelli Building
Zaragoza (Spain)**

With the co-operation of:

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and Objectives of the International event

Crimes against cultural property are a global concern that require equally global solutions. The alienation and destruction of heritage objects affect everyone, insofar as cultural assets are not only the legacy of each country, but also of humanity as a whole.

Therefore, it is urgent to address this worrying situation, given the proven links between crimes against cultural property, organised crime and terrorism. Controlling the entire criminal chain, from looting to the illicit flow of cultural heritage across borders, requires a high level of cooperation between all states and actors involved. Consequently, joint efforts must be made to establish mechanisms through which countries can share information, learn from each other's best practices and achieve better coordination of law enforcement to prevent and combat these crimes.

In 2017, the Council of Europe opened for signature the [Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property](#), known as the **Nicosia Convention**, which entered into force on 1 April 2022. To date, six countries have ratified the Convention¹ and seven others have signed it². This criminal law treaty is the only legally binding instrument aimed at preventing and combating such crimes by strengthening criminal justice responses while promoting international cooperation.

Furthermore, the high-level meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, held in 2023 in Reykjavik, included in its [Declaration](#) considerations closely related to the Nicosia Convention: **the protection of cultural heritage**, the right of children to enjoy their own culture and the fight against organised crime³. Additionally, in 2024 the 70th anniversary of the [European Cultural Convention](#) of the Council of Europe is being celebrated, a cultural pillar aimed at safeguarding the common cultural heritage of Europe and promoting dialogue and mutual understanding.

As established by the Nicosia Convention, the exchange of information on the topics covered by the Convention is essential to achieve its objectives. In this context, and as a result of the spirit of mutual collaboration, the Council of Europe is organising an international seminar to be held on 20-21 June 2024 in Zaragoza, Spain, both addressed to all actors, at regional, national and international level, concerned with the Nicosia convention and aimed at gathering the contact points of the Nicosia Convention.

This international meeting will discuss the priority lines of work of the Nicosia Convention that may be developed in the near future to both set the basis of the work of the future Committee

¹ Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia and Mexico.

² Armenia, Montenegro, Portugal, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovenia and Ukraine.

³ Council of Europe, *Reykjavik Summit, 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe* (16-17 May 2023), Reykjavik Declaration - United around our values, p. 5.

of the Parties and advance in the implementation of the Convention. With this joint work, participants will have the opportunity to strengthen their national and international co-operation networks and thus increase the level of protection of world cultural heritage.

Aims of the International seminar


The objective of this event is to advance the fight against crimes related to cultural property by promoting the Nicosia Convention and to showcase the work that countries are carrying out to protect their cultural heritage from crimes covered by the Nicosia Convention. The main objectives are the following:

- ❖ Encourage States to sign and ratify the Nicosia Convention.
- ❖ Know the policies and practical actions that are being developed in this matter in the light of the Nicosia Convention.
- ❖ Raise awareness among criminal law, law-enforcement and cultural actors, NGOs, and professionals working in the field.
- ❖ Consider the added value of the Convention, as well as the challenges posed by its ratification.
- ❖ Highlight the importance of international cooperation to combat emerging challenges in this area.
- ❖ Provide a platform for the exchange of experiences and knowledge.
- ❖ Facilitate and strengthen national cooperation and synergies in the protection and preservation of cultural assets.

Target Audience

The target audience of the international seminar includes experts from the justice, law enforcement and the cultural sectors, as well as members of academic institutions and other actors related to the topic of the seminar.

Organisation

Venue		Pignatelli Building, Room: Hermanos Bayeu, Aragon Government, Headquarters, Zaragoza (Spain).
Interpretation		English/Spanish interpretation will be provided
Streaming		The link will be sent to the registered attendees before the meeting.
Cultural and social events		Cultural visit to the Roman Museums of Zaragoza (Forum, River Port, Public Baths and Theatre)

Background documents and useful links

www.coe.int/nicosia | www.coe.int/cultural-property

- The **Nicosia Convention** and its explanatory report ([En](#), [Fr](#), [Spa](#))
- **The Nicosia Convention in ten questions and answers** ([En](#), [Fr](#), [Spa](#))
- International Conference held in Riga, 2023 ([En](#))
- International Conference held in Nicosia, 2019 ([En](#))

TIMING:

Please note that times are in Central European Summer Time (CEST).

(DRAFT) PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, 20 June 2024

08:30 – 09:00 *Registration of participants*

09:00 – 09:30 **OPENING SESSION**

09:30 – 11:30 **SESSION I: POLICIES AROUND OFFENSES RELATED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Moderator: Ms Monica Redondo Álvarez.

- ✓ **The fight against criminal offenses related to cultural goods in the Aragon region.**
Mr Francisco ROMEO MARUGAN. Head of the Section for Prevention of Cultural Heritage of Aragon.
- ✓ **Instruments for the fight against illicit trafficking and cultural offences in Spain.**
Mr Carlos GONZALEZ-BARANDIARAN. Deputy Director of Register and Documentation of Cultural Heritage. Ministry of Culture, Spain.
- ✓ **The reform of crimes against cultural heritage in the Italian penal code.**
Roberta LICCI. Magistrate. Ministry of Justice, Italy (tbc).
- ✓ **The fight against criminal offenses related to cultural goods in Mexico.**
Maria José BUERBA ROMERO VALDES. Director for the restitution of Cultural Heritage. Secretary of Foreign Relations, Mexico.

- ✓ **European Union action against offences related to cultural heritage.**

Ms Angela BARDENHEWER-RATING, Senior Legal Officer, Directorate-General JUST-Criminal Justice, European Commission (EU).

- ✓ **Towards an international cooperation in the field of criminal offences related to cultural heritage.**

Mr Antonio ROMA. Chief District Attorney of Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain.

Discussion

11:30 – 12:00 *Coffee break*

12:00 – 14:15 **SESSION II – TACKLING A TRANSBORDER CRIME**

Moderator: Oscar Alarcón Jiménez.

- ✓ **A law-enforcement approach to combat cultural heritage crimes.**
Ms Montserrat DE PEDRO. Head of the Spanish Heritage Brigade.
- ✓ **A law-enforcement approach to combat cultural heritage crimes.**
Isabelle MESLIER. EUROPOL.
- ✓ **The Nicosia Convention and its potential to combat global antiquities trafficking.**
Simon MACKENZIE. Professor of Criminology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- ✓ **Criminal perspective from the Spanish legislation to the protection of cultural property.**
Javier Ignacio REYES LÓPEZ. Investigating Magistrate. Court no. 1 of Alcalá de Henares, Madrid.
- ✓ **How to raise awareness about the criminal nature of cultural property crimes.**
Ms Olaia FONTAL. Professor at the University of Valladolid and Director of the Spanish Observatory on Heritage Education.
- ✓ **The role of EUROJUST in combatting offences against cultural heritage.**
Lisette VOS. EUROJUST.
- ✓ **Recent case-law of the Strasbourg Court on unlawful exportation of cultural property as a reflection of common European approach to preservation of cultural heritage.**
Pavlo PUSHKAR. Head of Division - Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

Discussion

14:15 – 14.30 **Wrap-up Session**

14:30 **Lunch break**

16:30 – 18.00 On site study visit to the [Roman Museums of Zaragoza](#) (Forum, River Port, Public Baths and Theatre)

20:00 Informal dinner⁴ in “[El Tubo](#)” area

FRIDAY 21 June 2023

09:00 – 12:00 **RESTRICTED SESSION (CONTACT POINTS ONLY)**

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NICOSIA CONVENTION⁵

Moderators: Monica Redondo Álvarez, Oscar Alarcón Jiménez

- ✓ Round table on the implementation of the Nicosia Convention: legislation, priorities, difficulties.
 - Countries having ratified the Nicosia Convention
 - Countries having signed the Nicosia Convention
 - Other countries (neither signed nor ratified the Nicosia Convention)
- ✓ Coordination meeting among interested countries in the fight against offenses regarding cultural goods
 - National Co-operation: set-up of National Platforms
 - International Co-operation: Informal Network of Contact Points
 - Round table:
 1. ¿Is there a need of drafting a Strategy for the Nicosia Convention?
 2. Criminalisation and prevention / Coordination and monitoring of major international events.
 3. Capacity-Building needs.
 4. Other topics.

Discussion

12:00 – 12:30 **Wrap-up session and next steps**

12:30 – 14:00 **SESSION III – THREATS TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND ITS PROTECTION**

Moderator: Mr Francisco Romeo Marugan.

⁴ Participants are invited to join a “tapas tour” as an informal dinner at their own expense.

⁵ English language only.

- ✓ **Plundering of archaeological heritage: towards a paradigm shift.**
Dr Evelyne GODFREY. Director Uffington Heritage Watch and member of the European Association of Archeologist -Community on the illicit trade in cultural material.
- ✓ **Operation “Leona”. Expert report of the Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute (IPCE).**
Ms Miriam BUESO and Beatriz MAYANS. Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute-IPCE. Ministry of Culture.
- ✓ **ANCHISE PROJECT: new solutions for cultural heritage protection.**
Ms Irène ZAITSEV, Dr. Sorin HERMON. Ecole française d’Athènes.
- ✓ **Threats to archaeological heritage and its protection from a law-enforcement approach.**
Cap. Víctor Manuel VALERO GARCÍA. Nature Protection Service. Spanish Civil Garde.
- ✓ **The scientific study of archaeological looting. What the earth can tell us.**
Ms Mathilde MURA. Archaïos et UMR 7041 ArScAn-VEPMO.

Discussion

14:00 – 14:15 CLOSING SESSION – SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

<u>Autonomous Community of Aragón (Spain)</u>	<u>Council of Europe</u>
Mr. Francisco ROMEO MARUGÁN, Head of the Section for Prevention on Cultural Heritage, General Directorate of Culture and Heritage	Ms Monica REDONDO ÁLVAREZ, Culture and Heritage for Democracy Division, Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity. Dr. Oscar ALARCÓN-JIMÉNEZ, Department of Health, Detention and Addictions, Directorate General - Human Rights and Rule of Law.

