



CONCLUSIONS

8th Working Meeting on the Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property Stolen in Central and Eastern Europe St Petersburg, Russia, 14-16 November 2016

The participants at the 8th Working Meeting on the Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property Stolen in Central and Eastern Europe, held in St Petersburg, Russia, from 14 to 16 November 2016:

ACKNOWLEDGING the conclusions of the 7th Working Meeting on the Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property Stolen in Central and Eastern Europe, held in Jurmala, Latvia, from 8 to 10 October 2013,

AWARE that the Central and Eastern European countries are not only transit areas for stolen and illegally exported cultural items, but also source and destination countries,

ALSO AWARE of the severe long-term threat to cultural heritage due to natural disasters, civil unrest, armed conflicts or terrorist attacks, and of the increasing number of cases of theft and looting, leading to increased illicit trafficking in cultural property in many regions of the world, especially in the Middle East and North Africa region,

TAKING into consideration United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2199 and 2253 (2015) and the fact that all countries are called upon to take appropriate steps to prevent the trade in Iraqi and Syrian cultural property illegally removed from Iraq and Syria,

RECOGNIZING the importance of the new Customs Co-Operation Council (WCO) Resolution on the role of customs in preventing illicit trafficking in cultural objects, adopted in Brussels in July 2016,

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the benefits and importance of the UNESCO 1970 and UNIDROIT 1995 Conventions as a legal basis in the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property, as well as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the exchanges of best practices, and of increased operational cooperation to fight the illicit traffic in cultural property, in particular between law enforcement agencies and INTERPOL, UNESCO, UNIDROIT, UNODC, the WCO and ICOM,

ENCOURAGE INTERPOL's member countries to:

CONTINUE their efforts to implement the requirements of UN Security Council Resolutions 2199 and 2253 (2015) concerning cultural property and other items of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific and religious importance illegally removed from Iraq since 6 August 1990 and from Syria since 15 March 2011;

IMPROVE the protection of underwater archaeological sites and remains, in accordance with the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage;

RAISE AWARENESS among national stakeholders in cultural heritage – including art dealers, auction houses, Internet companies and providers, etc. – by organizing regular meetings to exchange information on the consequences of the illicit trade in cultural property, in particular the risk of terrorism financing, and encourage them to systematically use INTERPOL’s Stolen Works of Art Database to check cultural items seized or offered for sale;

IMPROVE their activities in fighting the increasing number of counterfeit works of art on the market, while looking for new technologies or new expertise, also in the private sector, to assist in carrying out investigations and operations;

SEND annual statistics to the General Secretariat about crime against cultural property, and theft reports on a regular basis in order to update the INTERPOL database in real time;

RECOMMEND that INTERPOL and its partner organizations:

PROVIDE ALSO, in line with their respective roles, assistance to raise awareness and build capacity for appropriate officials, including customs, police, intelligence, prosecution and judicial services, and include a component on the possible links between trafficking in cultural property and terrorism financing;

ENCOURAGE the creation, where it does not exist, of a specialized police unit with a national database interconnected with the INTERPOL database, as well as the maintenance or reinforcement of existing specialized units;

RECOMMEND that the INTERPOL General Secretariat:

EXPLORE the possibility of deploying an INTERPOL Incident Response Team (IRT) for the Protection of Cultural Heritage to support its member countries facing different crisis situations, in order to update the INTERPOL Stolen Works of Art Database;

CONSIDER the possibility of giving public visibility to all items stored in the INTERPOL Stolen Works of Art Database in order to facilitate the due diligence process, in application of the UNIDROIT Convention 1995 (Article 4, paragraph 4);

CONTINUE developing innovative technologies (mobile applications, etc.) to support law enforcement agencies in identifying the provenance of cultural artefacts.
