

BULGARIA

NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1970 CONVENTION ON THE MEANS OF PROHIBITING AND PREVENTING THE ILLICIT IMPORT, EXPORT AND TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

2011 - 2015

I. Information on the application of 1970 UNESCO Convention (indicating its provisions)

1. Convention ratification

The Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property is ratified by the Republic of Bulgaria with Decree No 1179 from 30.06.1971 by the Presidium of the National Assembly.

2. Application in the national legal system and in establishing of offices

1. Cultural Heritage Act. Preservation and conservation of cultural heritage and cultural values is introduced as a fundamental principle and function of the State with the adoption of the Cultural Heritage Act (in force as of 10.04.2009);

2. Ordinance No 2 on the arrangements for the issuing of export, temporary export and temporary removal of movable cultural values and of the certificate under Art. 128, para. 3 of the Cultural Heritage Act for removal and temporary removal issued by the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Finance, 2014;

3. Ordinance for export and temporary export of movable cultural monuments, 2004 (in effect until 2014).

4. Ordinance No N-3 on the arrangements regulating the identification and keeping the Register of Movable Cultural Objects, 2009.

5. Ordinance No N-4 on the conditions and order for presentation of cultural values, 2013.

The Cultural Heritage Act introduces two main terms: cultural heritage and cultural values.

Cultural heritage includes intangible and tangible heritage as an aggregate of cultural values, which bear historical value, national identity and are of scientific or cultural importance.

Cultural heritage encompasses:

1. surface, underground and underwater archaeological sites and reserves;
2. historical sites and compounds;
3. architectural sites and compounds;
4. ethnographic sites and compounds;
5. specimens of garden art and landscape architecture;
6. natural values (specimens), including anthropological remains, discovered in site surveys and palaeontological zoological remains and remains of cultivated plants;
7. industrial heritage;
8. works of fine and applied arts;
9. folk crafts;
10. documentary heritage;
11. audio-visual heritage;
12. oral tradition and language;
13. script and literary values;
14. customs, rites, festivals, rituals and beliefs;
15. music, songs and dances;
16. folk medicine;
17. culinary and oenological traditions;

18. folk games and sports.

In turn, tangible cultural heritage is considered movable or immovable. Immovable cultural heritage includes cultural values permanently fixed to the ground, including under water as well as their adjacent environment. Movable cultural heritage includes all other cultural values, including under water, the importance of which does not change depending on their location.

Cultural value

Cultural value refers to intangible or tangible evidence of human presence and activity, natural sight or phenomenon, which is significant for the individual, the community or society as a whole, and has scientific or cultural value.

A cultural value may also refer to intangible or tangible evidence of human presence and activity, which has scientific or cultural value and is of importance for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and other registered religious institutions.

Cultural values shall also be considered fragments of archeological or other objects, which are in disintegrated form, comprise small part of the authentic whole of the original object, are largely defaced, devoid of any significant cultural, scientific or artistic value, and can be defined as bulk material. They are not subject to identification, but are included in the auxiliary research stock of museums, where necessary.

Subject to a proposal by the Minister of Culture, objects having significant historical, cultural or scientific importance may also be identified as cultural values.

In 2011 the Cultural Heritage Act was subject to substantial amendments in order to overcome some restrictions in the identification and registration of movable cultural values, arranging the status of museum/ public collections. Stricter control has been introduced in the production, dissemination and use of special technical means, in order to guarantee more efficient counter-action to organized crime and prevent their use in committing illegal archeological studies. Stricter administrative-penal liability has been provided for the persons conducting commercial activity without the relevant permit and for the persons reproducing a cultural value or elements thereof in photographic, computer, video or other representation for commercial or advertising means without the consent of the owner of the cultural value.

Since 2004 a specialized unit named "Inspectorate on the preservation of cultural heritage" has been established within the Ministry of Culture, with two departments on movable and immovable heritage and regional structures in the six districts of the country. The specialized unit performs control for compliance with the requirements of the special legislation and coordination with other bodies and specialized structures engaged in the preservation of cultural heritage. Such specialized units are also created within the Public Prosecution Office of the Republic of Bulgaria and the authorities of the Ministry of Interior at a central level and in the regional structures of the police authorities. A separate unit was established in the specialized police forces fighting against organized crime.

The Ministry of Culture through DG IPCH maintains constant contact with the relevant specialized structures within the MoI and the Supreme Public Prosecution Office on the issues related to: search of stolen cultural values from other countries, stolen cultural values on the territory of the country from museums or other cultural institutions and citizens caught during attempted theft or persons committing illegal excavations, etc. The established regional inspectorates within DG IPCH, in turn, maintain contact and cooperate with the District police directorates and assist the cultural institutions. Similar is the cooperation with

the Customs Agency in case of seized cultural values being taken out of the country, or in case of seizure of undeclared import of movable cultural values. Where necessary, officers of the Customs Agency may exercise administrative cooperation with the customs administrations of other countries.

Interinstitutional cooperation agreement is made between the Ministry of Culture, the Customs Agency (2011), as well as an Instruction for cooperation between the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecution Office of the Republic of Bulgaria against the criminal offences having as their object the cultural values (2012). The parties cooperate to reveal and prevent offences of the customs, currency and excise duty law and of the border regime, in particular in terms of cooperation to prevent and reveal illegal transactions and illegal international traffic of cultural objects, valuable historical findings and works of art. The parties to the instruction shall determine officers (points of contact) to perform coordination and cooperation with other police authorities, customs officers, officers of the Ministry of Culture, etc. in relation to the work on each individual case. The establishment of interinstitutional committee has been regulated which shall meet regularly to study, process and analyze the information on criminal offences against cultural values, perform the coordination between structure and initiate amendments in laws.

3. Inventory and identification

According to the requirements of the legal documents, the most valuable objects kept in museums shall be included in the main fund, while their description in the inventory book shall cover all the characteristics required for subsequent identification of the object in case of potential theft. For all objects listed in the main fund a scientific passport shall be prepared containing detailed information in twenty six items, including photographs. The inventory of museum funds shall be made with different regularity (overall – once in every 5 years, annual – of the National Museum Fund, of precious metals and precious stones and using the representative method - annually). Inventories are made by comparing the entries in the inventory books and the available movable cultural values. Protocol evidencing the results of the inventory is established. Such system ensures possibility for control over the condition and availability of the fund.

Cultural values of crucial importance for science, nature or technical progress, the demolition, harm or loss of which constitutes an irreparable loss for society, may receive the status of national treasure.

The Cultural Heritage Act contains the arrangements for granting the status of “national treasure” to movable cultural [values]. The status of national treasure is granted by the Minister of Culture, while the Ministry of Culture keeps a register of movable cultural values to which the status of national treasure has been granted. In the register the cultural values – national treasure are entered, which are: state or municipal property, collection owned by individuals or legal entities. The cultural value entered in the register is given a sequence registration number.

The cultural objects included in the inventories of the main and exchange funds of the museums are granted the status of national treasure. In the museums registries of the movable cultural values identified by them are created and maintained. The archeological cultural values inventoried in the museum funds are state ownership. The Minister of Culture exercises the right of state ownership over the cultural values.

In terms of the extent of compliance of the definition of “cultural value” regulated nationally to the definition of cultural value regulated in the Convention (Article 1 and Article 4 of the Convention):

Considering the definition for cultural value as provided for by the Convention as well the legal definitions for cultural value regulated in the Cultural Heritage Act, we hereby enclose the following table of compliance of the legal provisions.

CONVENTION on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property	Cultural Heritage Act	Comment on compliance
<p>Article 1 For the purposes of this Convention, the term ‘cultural property’ means property which, on religious or secular grounds, is specifically designated by each State as being of importance for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science and which belongs to the following categories:</p> <p>(a) Rare collections and specimens of fauna, flora, minerals and anatomy, and objects of palaeontological interest;</p> <p>(b) property relating to history, including the history of science and technology and military and social history, to the life of national leaders, thinkers, scientists and artist and to events of national importance;</p> <p>(c) products of archaeological excavations (including regular and clandestine) or of archaeological discoveries;</p> <p>(d) elements of artistic or historical monuments or archaeological sites which have been dismembered;</p> <p>(e) antiquities more than one hundred years old, such as inscriptions, coins and engraved seals;</p> <p>(f) objects of ethnological interest;</p> <p>(g) property of artistic interest, such as:</p> <p>(i) pictures, paintings and drawings produced entirely by hand on any support and in any material (excluding industrial designs and manu-factured articles decorated by hand);</p> <p>(ii) original works of statuary art and sculpture in any material;</p> <p>(iii) original engravings, prints and lithographs;</p>	<p>Art. 6. As cultural heritage are considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. surface, underground and underwater archaeological sites and reserves; 2. historical sites and compounds; 3. architectural sites and compounds; 4. ethnographic sites and compounds; 5. specimens of garden art and landscape architecture; 6. natural values (specimens), including anthropological remains, discovered in site surveys and palaeontological zoological remains and remains of cultivated plants; 7. industrial heritage; 8. works of fine and applied arts; 9. folk crafts; 10. documentary heritage; 11. audio-visual heritage; 12. oral tradition and language; 13. script and literary values; 14. customs, rites, festivities, rituals and beliefs; 15. music, songs and dances; 16. folk medicine; 17. culinary and oenological traditions; 18. folk games and sports. <p>Art. 7. (1) Cultural value shall mean an intangible or tangible evidence of human presence and activity, natural sight or phenomenon, which is significant for the individual, the community or society as a whole, and has scientific or cultural value.</p> <p>(2) A cultural value may also be an intangible or tangible evidence of human presence and activity, which has scientific or cultural value and is of importance for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and other registered religious denominations.</p> <p>(3) Cultural values shall also be considered</p>	<p>There is a compliance of categories indicated in Art. 1 of the Convention with Art. 6 and Art. 53 of the Cultural Heritage Act</p>

<p>(iv) original artistic assemblages and montages in any material;</p> <p>(h) rare manuscripts and incunabula, old books, documents and publications of special interest (historical, artistic, scientific, literary, etc.) singly or in collections;</p> <p>(i) postage, revenue and similar stamps, singly or in collections;</p> <p>(j) archives, including sound, photographic and cinematographic archives;</p> <p>(k) articles of furniture more than one hundred years old and old musical instruments.</p>	<p>fragments of archeological or other objects, which are in disintegrated form, comprise small part of the authentic whole of the original object, are largely defaced, devoid of any significant cultural, scientific or artistic value, and can be defined as bulk material. They are not subject to identification, but are to be included in the auxiliary research stock of museums, where necessary.</p> <p>Art. 53. In terms of the research and cultural field to which they pertain, movable cultural values shall be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. archaeological: movable objects discovered in the ground, on its surface or underwater, and testifying to epochs and civilizations studied by archaeology; 2. ethnographic: movable objects testifying to the lifestyle and work, traditions, customs, rituals, beliefs and craftsmanship, which enable the study of ethnic characteristics and changes in the tangible and intangible culture; 3. historical: movable objects related to historic events and to the life and activity of prominent persons; 4. artistic: works of fine arts in all their techniques and varieties, including philatelic specimens; 5. natural: specimens of the flora, fauna, paleontological and mineral formations; 6. technical: products of technical culture; 7. archives: documents of cultural and scientific importance regardless of the time, location, medium and technique of their execution; 8. script: manuscript cultural values dating before the end of the 18th century, old printed rare and valuable editions of scientific, cultural, polygraph or bibliographic importance; 9. literary: documentary and physical cultural values related to the overall history of literature. 	
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Cultural values included in the main, exchange and scientific auxiliary fund are subject to passportisation. The format of the scientific passport is approved with a regulation, and contains 26 items entirely covering the positions set out in the Passportisation Standard. The same requirements are set out in the identification forms, which is a mandatory procedure in cases where business activity or export outside the territory of the country of an object having the characteristics of a cultural value is being carried out.

Every year the Ministry of Culture organizes national methodological meetings - "Best Practices" - with museum experts, which shall include issues related to the preservation of cultural values included in the museum funds. To ensure the safety of cultural values stored in the museum buildings, a draft Ordinance on the design, implementation and maintenance of buildings for public services in the field of education and science, health and culture and arts is a process of coordination.

4. Archeological excavations

Archeological studies in Bulgaria are regulated by the Cultural Heritage Act and a specialized Ordinance for carrying out archeological excavations.

All archeological values (movable and immovable) hold the status, respectively, of national importance or national treasure until their study. Their study is a process that begins with an authorization procedure by the Minister of Culture based on an expert opinion by the Council for Fieldwork Studies. The person to whom such authorization is granted shall meet the requirements set out in the Cultural Heritage Act and the Ordinance for carrying out archeological excavations.

For the purpose of accepting completed archeological studies or a completed stage thereof, the Minister of Culture appoints an expert committee, which prescribes actions and provisional measures for the conservation of archeological values.

The movable archeological values found during fieldwork are handed over to the state or municipal museum that undertook the fieldwork, or to the state or municipal museum nearest to the place of their opening, where there are conditions for their preservation.

The information from archeological studies is included in an Automated information system "Archeological Map of Bulgaria". The database contains registration maps for each archeological site and is governed by national and regional administrators.

In Bulgaria, one of the main problems related to the preservation of cultural heritage are the illegal excavations in search for cultural values. The problem has existed for decades and, despite the efforts of the police authorities, illegal excavations still happen across the entire country. Looters are the first section of the entire criminal network, whereas from them the cultural values pass into the hands of local and national dealers, then the objects are exported abroad to be resold at auctions and to collectors.

Officials of Interpol, Directorate General "Border Police", the Ministry of Culture, museum experts and the Customs Agency cooperate in connection with the efforts to combat the trade with cultural values. Various surveillance events over traders with cultural values and places where such items are offered are carried out. Awareness and preventive talks with traders of cultural values throughout the country and with collectors of such items are being carried out in order to obtain prompt information in the event of incriminated objects of cultural heritage.

5. Monitoring the export and import of cultural values

Illegal export is a persistent problem. The reasons refer to the lack of financial means for the socialization of discovered and studied sites, for the study of still conserved sites, the lack of financial and human resources to safeguard the sites, which is further hampered by the remoteness from settlement of most of them. Legislation regulates the area, but offences are too numerous to be covered by security and judicial authorities.

We do not have detailed information regarding the scale of illegal export or import of cultural values. The customs authorities report that, in recent years, no significant decrease or increase in the cases of attempts of illicit trafficking of movable cultural values prevented by the customs officers is noted.

Over the past two years there is a tendency to increase the number of small thefts and attempts to penetrate museum institutions.

Movable cultural values are subject to customs control exercised in compliance with customs and specific legislation, assigning control functions to the customs authorities – at domestic and European level.

Pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 116/2009 on the export of cultural goods order were established arrangements for the control of export of movable cultural values from the EU within the scope of the Annex thereto. At the national level, the provisions of the Cultural Heritage Act and Ordinance No 2 from 25 February 2014 on the arrangements for issue of export, temporary export and temporary removal of movable cultural values and of certificate under Art. 128, para. 3 of the Cultural Heritage Act for removal and temporary removal shall apply.

Under the Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property and Council Directive 93/7/EEC of 15 March 1993 on the return of cultural objects, the Bulgarian state has committed itself to returning the illegally imported cultural values from other countries.

A major problem is proving the origin of the cultural value illegally exported from Bulgaria, when it is the product of illegal excavations. In some cases it is difficult to prove the process of re-purchase and change of ownership, until the actual offenders are reached. This is due to differences in the national legislations of the member states.

6. System for exchange, acquisition, ownership and transfer of cultural values

The legal market of cultural values in the Republic of Bulgaria is not very active. The requirements of the Bulgarian legislation with regards to the market of cultural values create difficulties which are complex - on the one hand, the market is not used to the constraints imposed since 2009, while on the other - the requirements to traders in some cases actually constitute an objective obstacle to the competitiveness of the market of cultural values.

During the last four year, the officially registered auctioneers are nine. Auctions are also held on the Internet. The Ministry of Culture keeps a register of traders of movable cultural values (antique shops, galleries). The Ministry of Culture has no information on the turnover of the auction houses and registered traders.

In Bulgaria there is a large internal market for illegally acquired movable cultural values. The efforts of the police authorities are directed towards the investigation of unregistered "collectors" and traders of cultural values committing crimes under the Criminal Code effective in the country - illegal transactions and illegal possession of cultural values.

Trade with cultural values is performed by registered traders, which in turn must keep records of sold cultural values. The cultural values themselves must be identified before the transaction. The procedure shall also include a full description, characterization and evaluation of the quality of the object, providing also information about its origin and acquisition. In 2014 the Ministry of Interior in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and the Customs Agency worked on a project for the building and development of an information system for missing cultural values, where incriminated cultural values are included, including such from other countries. Access to a part of the information recorded will be granted to professionals, collectors, traders, etc.

Preservation of cultural heritage is a systematic process of discovering, studying, identification, documentation, registration, conservation, restoration and adaptation. State, regional and municipal museums must carry out identification when acquiring an article which may be defined as a cultural value. When carrying out the procedure a document is required regarding the origin and method of acquiring the article. The Minister of Culture

does not issue an order for granting national treasure status, and the director of the museum does not issue a certificate if there is evidence to suggest that the article – subject to identification have been illegally acquired. In such cases, they must notify the Ministry of the Interior and the Prosecution Office.

A Memorandum for cooperation and interaction between the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Culture, the Supreme Cassation Public Prosecution Office, the Customs Agency, the Union of collectors in Bulgaria and the Association of traders of artwork has been signed. The purpose of the memorandum is to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in the field of heritage protection by implementing a common approach and optimization of activities related to prevention, detection and investigation of crimes having as object cultural values.

Principle of irrevocability

According to Bulgarian legislation cultural values are publicly available and are protected by the state and municipal authorities to the interest of the citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria. They may be public and private property. They may be owned by the state, municipalities, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and other registered religious institutions, as well as of individuals and legal entities. Archaeological sites have only the status of public state property.

There are no special rules regarding the content of the acts whereby ownership of cultural values is transferred.

Status of undiscovered cultural values, of cultural values discovered by chance and of archaeological artefacts found during legal or illegal excavations

Archaeological artefacts found during legal and illegal excavations have the status of cultural values by virtue of the law (Cultural Heritage Act) until conducting an identification procedure to confirm such status.

Currently effective due diligence requirements (study of the legal status of an object / legal check)

The Cultural Heritage Act introduces requirements related to the transfer transactions made against consideration. In order to make such a transaction with a cultural value, the latter must be identified.

Besides that, the Minister of Culture must be informed, if it comes out that the cultural value constitutes a national treasure. If these requirements are not complied with, transactions are treated as null and void.

7. Bilateral agreements

Bilateral agreements concluded with other countries related to the import, export and return of cultural values:

- Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the United States of America concerning the imposition of import restrictions on categories of archaeological and ecclesiastical ethnological material of the Republic of Bulgaria, signed on January 14, 2014
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey to prohibit and prevent the illicit import, export, transit transportation and transfer of ownership of cultural values, signed on August 28, 2012 in Istanbul;
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities of the Italian Republic to prevent theft, illegal excavation and illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of

movable cultural values, and to promote their return and restoration will be signed on July 6, 2015 in Sofia

Within the period 2011-2014 the Republic of Bulgaria has signed bilateral memoranda of understanding and partnership agreements in the field of culture, where problems associated with the interaction for the protection of movable and immovable cultural values with the following countries: China, Cyprus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, were also covered.

Bulgaria has signed bilateral agreements for customs cooperation and mutual assistance with Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Turkey and Serbia. The agreements provide for actions against illegal trafficking of goods of particular importance, while the customs administrations at their own initiative or upon request shall provide each other with information about organized activities which violate or may violate customs legislation of one of the Contracting Parties. The agreements constitute legal grounds for providing assistance in specific case of illegal export / import of movable cultural values.

II. Code of ethics, raising awareness and training

Ethical standards

The International Code of Ethics of UNESCO for traders with cultural values and that of ICOM for museums are not sufficiently popular and are not widely applied in the relevant areas of professional relations.

Raising awareness and training

There is not sufficient information on the extent of spread of the series "One hundred missing values" and ICOM's Red Lists among professionals.

Experts inform themselves individually or through the representative office of ICOM for Bulgaria. In most museums are conducted educational programs with children, but the topic is not covered enough. The National Commission of UNESCO for Bulgaria could help by developing joint projects with museums and galleries to prepare a special program introducing the problem of illegal excavations.

In order to increase the effectiveness of combating crimes related to cultural values, and strengthening the administrative capacity of the staff working in this area, in 2014 employees of the Customs Agency took part in a training seminar, forming part of the project "Increasing the administrative capacity of the staff of the Ministry of Interior for the prevention and investigation of crimes related to the cultural heritage of the Republic of Bulgaria, organized by the Directorate General "Criminal Police" within the Ministry of Interior. The seminar was attended by representatives of other law enforcement agencies, the Ministry of Culture, museums, the Union collectors in Bulgaria and the Association of traders of artwork.

On the intranet page of the Customs Agency information on stolen or missing movable cultural values, obtained from the Ministry of Culture, Interpol and the Red Lists of threatened cultural values prepared by the International Council of Museums is published. Also, information for citizens and businesses related to the applicable restrictions and prohibitions, including in cases of import and export of cultural values is updated.

III. Cooperation with other international and regional agencies

Police

During the period 2012 - 2014, the specialized sector combating organized crime conducted several police operations concerning crossing of channels of illegal trafficking of antiquities being part of the world cultural heritage, some of which are related to the territory of the Middle East. Besides that, the sector regularly prepares a list of all signals caught operationally including pictures of cultural values, for which there are data to have been obtained from areas with local military conflicts, including such associated with terrorist organizations. In each of the cases specific administrative and penal measures were taken, and in some cases coercive administrative measures were imposed - expulsion from the country of foreign nationals and prohibition to enter the territory of the EU. In other cases, pre-trial proceedings submitted to the competent prosecution office and court were have been instigated.

Generally, the cooperation of the Bulgarian services with Interpol is good. In each individual case, cooperation with the officer of Interpol-Bulgaria in charge of tasks related to the preservation of cultural heritage, is carried out. The Interpol officer joins the implementation of all initiatives related to the building of database of incriminated cultural values.

In recent years, seminars and trainings for the preservation of cultural heritage were organized involving police officers from all regional directorates of the Ministry of Interior. Such trainings were organized in connection with the commissioning of the database of incriminated cultural values.

Customs

Cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO) is carried out by the Customs Agency. The agency's staff has access to WCO's database for the cases of illicit trafficking of movable cultural values established by the customs authorities. The customs authorities participate in joint customs operations at the initiative of WCO, with the aim of preserving the world's cultural heritage and combating the illicit trafficking of movable cultural values.

The actions of the customs authorities for preserving the cultural heritage forms part of the program in the basic training course for employees of the specialized administration of the Customs Agency. The topic is further covered in the workshops and subsequent training customs officers locally.

The Ministry of Culture issues export permits in compliance with the forms contained in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1081/2012 for the purposes of Council Regulation (EC) No 116/2009 on the export of cultural goods (codification).

European Union

Council Directive 93/7/EEC of 15 March 1993 on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State was introduced in Bulgarian law with the adoption of the Cultural Heritage Act in force as of 10.04.2010.

The procedure of introducing the requirements of Directive 2014/60/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 (Recast) is currently in place. The deadline for transposing the directive is 18 December 2015. A

forthcoming event in June 2015 is the adoption of a Law for amendment and supplement to the Cultural Heritage Act by the Council of Ministers with the main objective being the transposition of Directive 2014/60/EU.

IV. Contingencies and cultural heritage at risk

The state organizes the preservation of cultural heritage from natural disasters and armed conflicts. The activities for preservation of cultural values, property of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and other registered religious institutions, are carried out with their participation. The preservation of cultural values in these cases is carried out in accordance with arrangements determined in a Ordinance of the Council of Ministers based on a proposal of the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Defence and the Minister of the Interior, which is currently at the stage of a draft.

The Council of Ministers adopted a strategy to reduce the risk of disasters for the period 2014 - 2020. The main strategic objective and priorities for reducing the risk of disasters as determined with the document are to prevent and/or mitigate the adverse effects on human health, socio-economic environment, environment and cultural heritage in Bulgaria, due to natural disasters and such caused by man.

Since the beginning of 2013, the specialized police unit for combating organized crime works on all signals for international trafficking of antiquities, which are subject to criminal offence from archaeological sites and museums, including such located on the territory of Syria and Iraq. The latter include cases where there is a doubt that illicit trafficking is linked to schemes for money laundering or for the direct financing of organized criminal groups or terrorist organizations. Work is carried out in constant communication with partner agencies operating in Europe, the US and other countries.

To discourage the mentioned offences and international trafficking of antiquities, various measures are taken: in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, projects to assist the operational services with various museums both in the country and abroad are successfully developed. These measures include the digitalization of museum collections, creation of operational channels for fast communication, collaboration in the work on specific signals, as well as drafting a list of database for each case visualizing illegal offences against world or national heritage. Data from such list that is not subject to prosecutor's investigation will be selected and provided to Interpol and ICOM's Red List.

V. Other legislative, legal and administrative measures undertaken by the State

Bulgaria has not yet ratified the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on stolen or illegally exported cultural objects. Currently, a process of practical and legal preparation for the signing and ratification of the Convention is underway.

UNESCO Database of acts concerning national cultural heritage

UNESCO Database of acts concerning the national cultural heritage includes all currently effective acts and amendments thereof. Bylaws are not published.