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The Protection of the
Underwater Cultural Heritage

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MONTENEGRO

National Report on underwater cultural heritage

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*Montenegro is a State Party of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection
of the Underwater Cultural Heritage*

Montenegro has started establishing and adapting laws that protect cultural heritage. The need to protect culture and cultural heritage, and to follow world standards, has led to the creation of new laws. The first of these were the Law of Monuments (“Official Gazette” number 40/08) 27. Jun 2008 and the Law of Culture (“Official Gazette” number 49/08) 15th of August 2008.

The *Law of Culture* confirms public interest in culture, organizes cultural institutions, defines the status of the artists and experts in the field of culture, supports the development of culture, and defines financial support in the field of culture.

The *Law of Monuments* designates places of important historic events, protects monuments that tell a story of heroes, human ideal cultural-historical tradition and gives honor to soldiers that fought for freedom and civil deaths during the wars.

A group of four laws (for the protection of cultural heritage, the Law for library activity, the Law for museum activity, and the Law for archive activity “Official Gazette” number 49/10) have gone through transparent public hearings in all three regions of the country and have recently passed through the Parliament of Montenegro, becoming authoritative on 21st of August 2010.



Largest bay, Boka Kotor bay

The previous Law for Protection of Cultural Monuments and the Law for rehabilitations and revalorization of old towns devastated in the earthquake of 15 April 1979 were subsequently cancelled. The Law for the Protection of Cultural Heritage protects cultural heritage and solves problems that might occur in connection with it. The Law also establishes types and categories of cultural heritage as well as the methodology of its protection, punishment methods, rights and responsibilities of the owner of some cultural heritage and other problems concerning cultural heritage. In the process of creation are 40 other sub-laws concerning cultural heritage.



Excavation at Maljevik and Bigovica © Dusan varda

Concerning underwater cultural heritage, Montenegro has many archaeological sites that are still *in situ* and protected by the law, and there are many more that have not yet been explored or discovered. There are two good examples of how unexplored our underwater cultural heritage is. Firstly, the recent discovery of two sunken ships in Boka bay, discovered during bottom mapping and bathymetry recordings of the bay in 2009, and secondly the discovery of the architectural remains of ancient temple capitals in Maljevik, also in 2009. In Maljevik this year the Local museum of Bar has conducted archaeological digs in partnership with Southampton University from UK and UCLA from USA. Some other recordings of underwater archaeology were done in the 1980s and 1990s but not many excavations were conducted as Montenegro did not have, and still does not have, staff and adequate equipment to meet professional and methodological standards.

Montenegro has two underwater archaeological sites that are protected by the law, the Bay of Bigovica in Bar and the under-ocean area between cape Strpački and cape Murove in Risan. However, there is a list of registered underwater archaeological sites which are not protected by the law, but whose cultural importance is recognized through a new group of Laws protecting cultural heritage. Their legal protection will be therefore re-evaluated:

- Njivice, Hercegnovski zaliv
- Malo rose
- Žanjice
- Uvala Žanjic
- Ostrvo Lastavica
- Karatoč
- Kumbor
- Zaliv Trašte
- Uvala Bigova
- Uvala Pržno
- Tivatski zaliv
- Otok Gospe od otoka
- Uvala Dobra luka
- Luka Budva
- Slovenska Plaža
- Katič
- Petrovac
- Luka Bar
- Rt Volujica
- Obala Velja Zabija
- Barski zaliv
- Uvala Malčjevik
- Stari ulcinj
- Uvala Valdanos
- Velika Plaža
- Ulcinj
- Hrid Đeran



Excavation at Maljevik and Bigovica © Dusan varda

Also, Montenegro is a State Party to the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, having ratified the Convention on 17th of July 2008. All these are steps towards better protection, investigation, preservation, conservation, and presentation of the country's very rich and diverse cultural heritage. Led by the good practice of the region and Europe, we are implementing new cultural heritage laws in order to discover, promote and preserve our cultural heritage.

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