

COMPLETE GUIDE TO SEARCHING

The UNESCO Cultural Heritage Laws Database is the main gateway to national legislation on the protection of cultural heritage. A pioneering initiative in the field, the database has been publishing all the laws submitted to it from UNESCO's Member States since February 2005.

The aim of the UNESCO Cultural Heritage Laws Database is to provide you with swift and simple access to the laws that you are seeking. To facilitate searching, several types of query are possible:

- free search;
- closed search (or by field);
- combined search (both free and closed searches).

The “Search in database” page provides access to the contents of the database.

How to search

Choose the type of search: free search, closed search or combined search.

1. Free search (corresponding to the first two query fields on the search page):

DESCRIPTION:

With free search you can search rapidly for one or more terms of your choice. You can search the title, the text, or the title and the text of the laws.

When searching the title, the Boolean operators “AND” or “OR” can be used to expand or limit the search:

- “AND” corresponds to “all following words”: all the words entered must feature in the document for it to be returned as a hit.
- “OR” corresponds to “at least one of the following words”: if at least one of the words entered in the query field appears in a law, a hit will be returned.

Likewise, three search modes are available when searching the body of the text: integral, extended and Boolean.

METHOD FOR USE:

- Enter the terms that you wish to search for in the query field(s).
- Choose if you wish to search for “at least one” or “all” of the words entered.
- Choose whether you wish to search in integral, extended or Boolean mode.
- Click on “SEARCH” to begin searching.
- The search results are displayed.

IMPORTANT NOTICES:

🔍 **Languages:** The language of the search terms determines the language of the documents selected. For example, if the search terms are entered in Bosnian, only documents in Bosnian will appear as results.

🔍 **Images:** A free or Boolean search cannot be performed on “image” documents (JPEG, PDF image, GIF, and so forth). This type of search is therefore not performed on all the laws in the database, but only on those in text format.

🔍 **Boolean operator:** Between the two free search fields (title and content), the default Boolean operator is “AND”.

2. **Closed search** (corresponding to the menus and checkboxes on the search page):

DESCRIPTION:

This search method offers ten different search fields, each giving access to a closed list of carefully pre-selected associated terms. You can choose to search by:

- country;
- **geographical region(s)** (five geographical regions: Africa; Europe and North America; Latin America and the Caribbean; Arab States; Asia and the Pacific);
- **by keyword(s)** (30 keywords selected: Antiquities; Archaeological objects or sites; Architecture; Archives; Arms; Art; Burial grounds and graves; Ceramics; Coins; Fossils; Fragments; Furniture; History; Living authors; Military history; Monuments; Museums; Musical instruments; Oral practices; Paintings; Rare manuscripts; Records, films and photographs; Religion; Rock art; Sculptures; Shipwrecks; Sites; Textiles; Vehicles);
- **theme(s)** (22 themes selected: Authorization, Permit, License; Compensation; Customs; Dealer trade; Designation cancellation; Exploration licence; Exportation; Good faith acquisition; Illicit traffick; Importation; Inventory, Registry; Maintenance; Promotion and development; Protected area or good; Restitution; Return; Sanctions; Statutes of limitation; Statutory bodies creation; Theft; Transfer of ownership; World heritage);
- **category(ies) of cultural heritage** (six categories of cultural heritage selected: Armed conflict; Cultural immovable heritage; Cultural movable heritage; Intangible cultural heritage; Natural heritage; Underwater cultural heritage);
- **by type(s) of normative instrument** (24 types of normative instruments selected: Act-law; Agreement; Amendment; Application for authorization; By-law; Certificate, License; Chart; Code; Constitution; Convention; Criteria; Decision; Declaration; Instrument; License; List; Manual; Measure; Ordinance, Order; Protocol; Recommendation; Regulation; Resolution; Standard);
- **by language(s)** (all languages);
- **by year(s)** (from 1900 to the present);
- **by type(s) of document** (three possibilities : All, Law or Collection);
- **by translated document** (official translations or all translations) **or originals** (four possibilities).

On the search form, data is entered using the scroll-down menus listing the terms associated with each search field. The total number of indexed documents appears between parentheses after each search term.

Unless changed, each of these fields is set by default to the “all” value.

METHOD:

- In the field(s) in which you wish to search, choose one or more term(s) from those listed in the scroll-down menus.

A multi-criteria search (using various search fields) is possible and various terms can be selected at the same time within the same search field (hold down the CTRL when choosing).

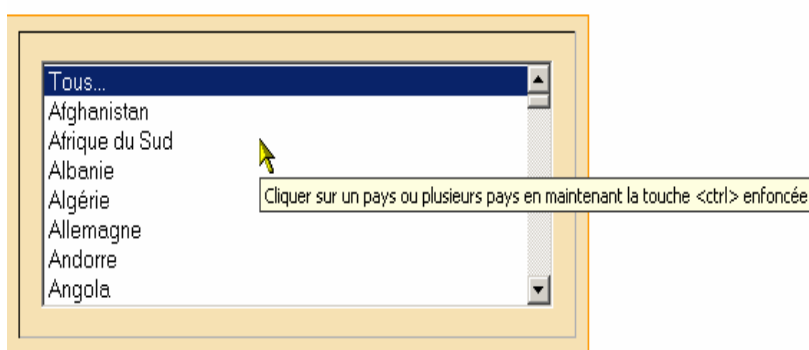


fig.1 – multiple choices with the CTRL key

- Click on “SEARCH” to begin your search.
- Your search results will appear.

IMPORTANT NOTICES:

❑ **Languages and images:** A closed search queries the entire database (both text and image documents) and can be carried out in the six official languages of UNESCO (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). All the documents in the database, regardless of the language in which they are drafted, have been indexed in the six official languages of UNESCO.

❑ **Default Boolean operator:** If a multiple selection has been made within a closed search field, the default Boolean operator is “OR”, while the default Boolean operator is “AND” across the different closed search fields.

3. **Combined search** (simple search + closed search):

It is possible to carry out a combined search (simple search AND closed search). If you put search criteria in the two types of search, the default Boolean operator between the closed and free search fields is “AND”.

Search results

Once you have filled in the search form and clicked on “SEARCH”, the database search will begin and the corresponding results will be displayed immediately.

1. Display of results:

DISPLAY BY DEFAULT:

The results of a documents search are displayed, by default, in the form of a table with three columns:

- a “country” column for the document;
- a “title” column for the document;
- a “year” column for the document.

By default, the results will be sorted as follows:

- first, in ascending alphabetical order by State name;
- secondly, in descending order by year for results from the same country (this chronological order is from the oldest to the most recent: the oldest laws appear at the top);
- lastly in ascending alphabetical order by document title for results from the same country and the same year.

PERSONALIZED DISPLAY:

You can personalize the way in which search results are displayed. You can display/hide columns and thus select the information that you wish to see displayed: “country”, “year”, “language”, “title”, and so on.

You can also choose the maximum number of results to display per page. The total number of documents meeting the search criteria is always indicated at the head of the page, but you can choose to display 10, 20, 50 or all results per page.

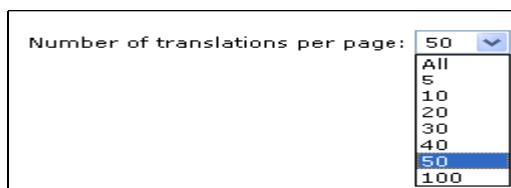


Fig 2 – Example of choosing the number of results per page

These adjustments remain valid during a single session but cannot be saved from one session to another.

2. Print/Send the results by email :

Use the functions “PRINT” or “Send this page” at the foot of the page, as necessary.

3. Search again after failure to find results:

If your search terms are not found, the following message is clearly displayed in red at the head of the results page: “Currently, no document matches the search criteria that you specified”.

You can search again:

- either by modifying the previously selected search criteria and clicking on “SEARCH” to begin;
- or by going to the foot of the search page and clicking on “RESET” for a new search (with the previous selections cleared), before clicking again on “SEARCH” to display the results page.

Explanation of symbols

“**Title**” tips: when you move the cursor over a query field, a small box with a yellow background appears, giving a short explanation of the function.

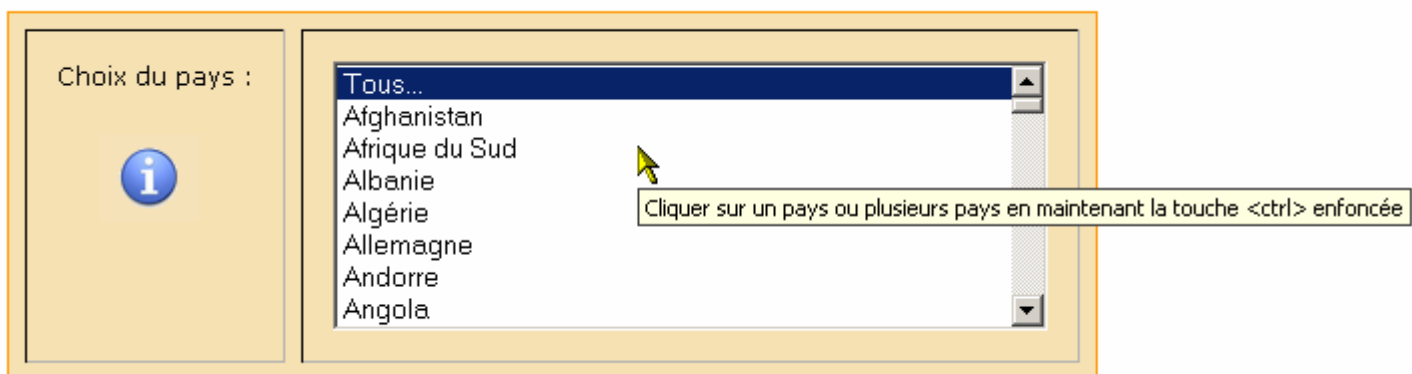



Fig 3 – “Title” tip

The  button for context-sensitive help: clicking on the  button opens an additional context-sensitive window.

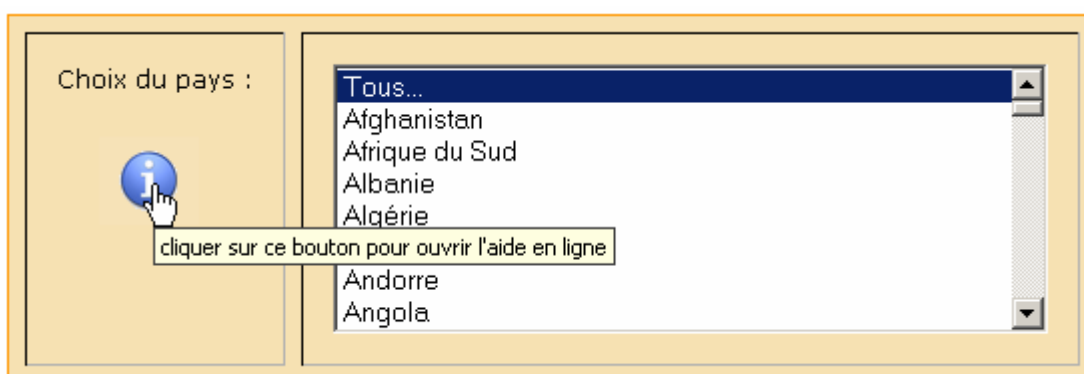


Fig 4 – The  button

Complete guide to searching:

To go to the complete guide to searching, just click on the icon:

Click here [🔗](#) to open the Complete guide to searching in a new window.

Further information

This database is designed for all those concerned with the protection of cultural heritage. You can help to improve it by making suggestions and comments. **We welcome your opinion.**

Please do not hesitate to send your remarks and comments on the UNESCO Cultural Heritage Laws Database to:

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