



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



The Protection of
the Underwater Cultural
Heritage

Provisional Agenda

International Meeting on Underwater Cultural Heritage and Site Protection

**In support of the implementation of the 2001 Convention on the
Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage**

UNESCO Headquarters, 22 – 23 September 2016, Room II, Fontenoy building



Context

An International Meeting on Underwater Cultural Heritage Sites Protection will be held on 22 and 23 September 2016 at UNESCO Headquarters (Room II, Fontenoy building) in support of the implementation of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

It will focus on the issue of quantification and identification of threats to underwater cultural heritage and on preventive measures to be taken. International experts will present their experiences, followed by a round table which will allow the exchange of views regarding the effectiveness of the means used.

The meeting will bring together representatives of the States Parties to the UNESCO 2001 Convention and other States, and experts representing different national authorities (Culture and Foreign Ministries, Navy, Customs, Coastguards, etc.) and international organizations (UNESCO, INTERPOL, Europol, etc.).

Underwater cultural heritage has become increasingly accessible with the development of diving techniques, which allow not only scientists and archaeologists, but also treasure hunters and wreck explorers to reach greater depths. The looting of underwater archaeological sites and the destruction of their context has increased rapidly and threatens to deprive humanity of this heritage. The pillaging and dispersion of archaeological heritage is no longer restricted to land-based sites, with treasure-hunting now greatly increasing in underwater sites. Nevertheless, while many States have strengthened the preservation of their heritage on land, most underwater cultural heritage remains unprotected. Treasure-hunting is not the only issue. Sites have also been damaged by trawling, mineral extraction and the laying of pipelines.

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage is aimed at providing States Parties with an international legal mechanism to protect their submerged heritage. However, ratification must be accompanied by the effective national implementation of the Convention and mobilization of the adequate means to support it.

The main objective of the international meeting is to continue to reinforce the implementation of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, especially with regard to practical questions such as site preservation and monitoring, as well as existing measures to prevent illicit trafficking of underwater cultural heritage.

Provisional Agenda

22 September 2016 – Room II Meeting

10 am Welcome remarks by Francesco Bandarin, *Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO*

Welcome remarks by Alejandro Palma Cerna, *Chairperson of the Meeting of States Parties to the 2001 Convention (tbc)*

10:30am - Current state of threats to underwater cultural heritage

Session Chair: Mechtild Rössler, Director of the Heritage Division, UNESCO; 10 min per intervention

- The advantages of the 2001 Convention to increase site protection, *Ms Ulrike Guerin, UNESCO*
- An overview of the current state of Europe's pillaged sites, *Mr Michel L'Hour, Department of underwater archaeological research (DRASSM), France*
- The role of archaeology in major cases of pillaging concerning underwater cultural heritage - two case studies, *Mr James Delgado, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), USA*
- The statistics on treasure-hunting in the Bahamas, *Mr Michael Pateman, Underwater Archaeologist, The Bahamas*
- The challenges posed by the looting of underwater sites in Asia, *Vice Admiral Prayoot Putian, Royal Thai Navy, Thailand*

Questions & Answers

11:40am - Practical issues of sites monitoring

Session Chair: Ulrike Guerin, Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, UNESCO; 10 min per intervention

- The challenges we face in regards to the protection of sites from treasure-hunting, *Mr Alexandre Monteiro, Portugal*
- Modern surveillance techniques, *Manuel Angel Sanchez Corbi, Chief of the Central Operative Unit, Civil Guard (Unidad Central Operativa, Guardia Civil), Spain*
- The challenges and details of large quantity coin finds, *Mr Peter Van Alfen, United States of America*
- Opening site access while preserving site security, *Sebastiano Tusa, Sopra-Intendenza Sicily, Italy*

Questions & Answers

1pm - Lunch break

3pm - Preventing illicit and unethical trafficking of underwater cultural heritage under the 2001 Convention

Session Chair: Augustus Ajibola, Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB), Nigeria; 10 min per intervention

- The prevention of illicit and unethical trafficking of underwater cultural heritage under the 2001 Convention, *Gianpietro Romano, Carabinieri, Italy*
- The cooperation of museums and the possible seizure of trafficked artefacts, *Chris Dobbs, Chairperson International Congress of Maritime Museums (tbc)*
- Facing difficult contexts in the protection of underwater cultural heritage, *Mr Ricardo Duarte, Mozambique*
- Consequences of a major pillage case for national authorities – case study of the *Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes* pillage, *Ms Elisa de Cabo, Deputy Director for Heritage, Spain*
- The chances provided by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body to the 2001 Convention, *Helena Barba Meinecke, President STAB, Mexico*
- The responsibilities and potentials of the marine armed forces in the protection of underwater cultural heritage, *Denis Bigot, Rear Admiral, France*
- Divers as guardians of the protection of underwater cultural heritage, *CMAS (tbc)*

Questions & Discussion

23 September 2016 Room VI – Working group of experts

10am Practical protection of sites (installations, surveillance, inventory)

Moderator: Michel L'Hour, France

11 am Law enforcement

Moderator: Manuel Angel Sanchez Corbi

12 am Implementation of the 2001 Convention in international waters

Moderator: Ulrike Guerin

1 pm *Lunch break*

3 pm Possibilities of seizing underwater cultural heritage artefacts coming from pillage and commercial exploitation

Moderator: Marnix Pieters, Belgium

4 pm Approach to traded artefacts exhibited in museums

Moderator: Chris Dobbs

Other items