

07.06.2018 - UNESCO Office in Brussels

UNESCO ADG for Culture participates in Workshop on Protecting Iraqi Cultural Heritage and Fighting Terrorism - Brussels



Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq H.E Nazar Khairallah, EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator Mr. Gilles de Kerchove and UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr. Ernesto Ottone.

UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture, Ernesto Ottone, attended a workshop on the protection of Iraqi Cultural Heritage and Fighting Terrorism organised by the European Commission on the 30 and 31 May in Egmont Palace, Brussels.

In collaboration with the federal Government of Iraq and the office of the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, the two-day workshop was organised by the [Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument](#) of the European Commission and funded by the [EU Partnership Instrument](#), which enables the EU to unite with partners around the world to develop the Union's external strategy and tackle global challenges.

The workshop aimed to explore measures to counter the illegal trafficking and destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and to combat terrorist financing. Discussions were held on related conventions and legislation, cooperation between national authorities and third countries and were illustrated with a several presentations and case studies.

A number of experts gathered for the event, including customs and law enforcement officials, archaeologists, art dealers, representatives of online market places such as eBay, cultural institutions, representatives of the Iraqi government, as well as representatives of EU institutions and international organisations. Mr. Gilles de Kerchove, EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator, opened the event by outlining the priorities of the workshop to assess the current challenges faced by Iraq, to discuss practical steps towards improving the legal framework regarding its cultural heritage and to raise awareness of the issue both in Europe and beyond.

In his opening remarks, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq H.E Nazar Khairallah underlined the important collaboration with the EU in capacity building in order to improve its means and measures regarding the retrieval of missing Iraqi antiquities, which could in turn boost cultural tourism in Iraq.

UNESCO's contribution to the workshop opened with the presentation of a [short film from the Unite4Heritage campaign](#), shedding light on the issue of so-called "blood antiquities" and on UNESCO's work to provide training at the national level to counter the trafficking of antiquities. UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr. Ernesto Ottone, delivered a keynote speech in which he confirmed the Organisation's ongoing support to continue the fight against illegal trafficking of cultural goods based on UNESCO's [1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property](#).

Further keynote speeches on behalf of the European Commission were delivered by Mr Pierre Moscovici, European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, taxation and Customs, as well as Mr Stefano Manservigi, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO).

Organised in the framework of the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#) (EYCH), the event followed on from the previous TAIEX-PI workshop held in October 2017 on National and International Criminal Justice. This workshop, along with others in the framework of EYCH, form part of the EU's strategy for its external cultural relations, aiming to promote peace and fight radicalisation through intercultural dialogue and to strengthening international cooperation on cultural heritage.

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/brussels/about-this-office/single-view/news/unesco_adg_for_culture_participates_in_workshop_on_protectin/