



The UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws is the international gateway to national laws related to cultural heritage. It aims to strengthen the prevention and protection of cultural heritage against looting, theft, illegal export and import, illicit trafficking, and other threats such as intentional destruction and natural disaster.

### THE DATABASE IN NUMBERS:

Launched in 2005 thanks to the financial support of the United States Department of State, the Database celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2015

Approximately 2,900 laws of almost 190 Member States are published on the website in 42 languages



### A pioneer initiative in this field, the Database

- Publishes in real-time UNESCO Member States' laws on cultural heritage protection including legislative texts that regulate the movement of cultural objects
- Enables any individual or entity to access cultural heritage legislation currently in force and its related historical background
- Allows for rapid and free consultation of national laws in the original language with a translation in English at least



"The UNESCO international database is a very precious instrument that represents a milestone on the path of restitution claims."

Jean-Jacques Neuer, Cabinet Neuer, Avocats Paris – Solicitors, London

"The UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws has an impressive amount of useful information on cultural heritage legislation and related themes." Nuno Vasco Oliveira, State Secretary of Art and Culture, Timor-Leste

"We use the UNESCO Laws Database for our daily work. It is easy to compare the different national legislations. The national laws on cultural heritage are well managed and uploaded quickly." Eszter Bognar, Ministry of Culture, Hungary

"My personal experience with the UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws is very positive as it represents a unique first aid tool for all those – scholars, researchers, professionals – who are in search for reliable information concerning national legislation on the protection of cultural heritage." Manlio Frigo, Professor of International Law – University of Milan, Ludolex Studio Legale, Italy

"The World Customs Organization (WCO) and UNESCO have been working together for many years in the fight against the trafficking of cultural property. The efforts made by UNESCO in developing the Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws represent a significant step forward in raising public awareness about the need to protect our cultural heritage. The Database is, moreover, a fundamental tool for customs and indeed all law enforcement agencies engaged in the fight against crime involving cultural property." Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General, World Customs Organization

UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws

<https://en.unesco.org/cultnatlaws>



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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Convention for the fight  
against the illicit trafficking  
of cultural property



## UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws

<https://en.unesco.org/cultnatlaws>

## Who are the users of the Database?

**Law and policy-making institutions:** governments and intergovernmental organizations

**Institutions preserving and promoting cultural heritage:** museums and non-profit cultural heritage organizations, non-governmental organizations



**Law enforcement bodies:** police and customs officials

**Research centers, researchers, and practitioners:** universities, scholars, archaeologists, students, lawyers, legal experts, magistrates and prosecutors

**Global market in antiquities:** cultural property dealers, importers, exporters and collectors

## What information is stored in the Database?

**National laws** related to cultural heritage in general (in their original language, with an official or unofficial English translation, as specified)

**Import/export procedures** and model certificates (available on request)

**Contact information** for national authorities responsible for the protection of cultural heritage

**Official cultural heritage website addresses** for countries that have provided national laws



## How to search the Database?

Available free of charge on UNESCO's website, the Database is user-friendly and offers quick access to national cultural heritage legislation. Simply follow these three steps:



1

Start the search

2

Enter or select country, region and period

3

Click on search

Search results are displayed in three columns: country, year and title. Results are sorted by ascending alphabetical order by name of country, by descending order by year (from the oldest to the most recent) and by ascending alphabetical order by document title (in the same country and the same year).

## How to contribute to the Database?

All UNESCO Member States are invited to submit their national cultural heritage laws to us for inclusion in the Database. The following information should be sent by e-mail to the UNESCO Section of Movable Heritage and Museums (see contact information on the back of this brochure):

- Relevant legislation currently in force on cultural heritage irrespective of its source (law, decree, order, etc.) and its geographic scope of application (federal or national laws, and local ones, where appropriate)
- Import/export certificate(s) currently in force (will be made available on request)
- Historical references of legislation regarding legal exportation and ownership of cultural objects
- Official translation(s) of these documents into English
- Contact details (name, address, telephone, fax and e-mail address) of the relevant national authorities responsible for cultural heritage protection
- Official website address for national cultural heritage protection
- Official written authorization from the appropriate national authority permitting UNESCO to reproduce the laws on its website and to establish an automatic link from the UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws to the official government website
- Please remember to submit copies of new or updated legislative texts in order to keep the Database relevant and useful



## UNESCO'S POLICIES TO PROTECT CULTURAL HERITAGE

**STANDARD-SETTING ACTION** concerning the preparation and implementation of international legal instruments

**LEGAL, TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANCE** and support for trainings and capacity-building workshops

**POLICIES TO COMBAT ILLICIT TRAFFICKING** and promote the return and restitution of cultural property

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE** in conservation practices, security issues and the promotion of museums as stewards of cultural heritage through collections management, exchange and outreach

**POLICIES TO EDUCATE AND INFORM** the general public, professionals and governments

