

REPORTS FROM STATES PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION

ALBANIA

Report concerning the application of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict

In accordance with Decree No. 313 of 18 July 1960 of the Presidium of the People's Assembly of the People's Republic of Albania, published in the Official Journal no. 1 of 31 January 1961, the People's Republic of Albania has signified its adhesion to the Convention "on the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict", as well as to the protocol and regulations for the execution of the Convention aforesaid, adopted at the Unesco Conference at The Hague on 14 May 1954. Furthermore, by special decision of the Council of Ministers, the Albanian Consultative Committee for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict has been created, and has examined and adopted the necessary measures regarding the fulfilment of the obligations deriving from the Convention in question.

Within the field of the protection, safeguarding and restoration of both immovable and movable cultural property existing in this country, appropriate measures have been adopted and legislative rules exist in this field.

(a) Within a relatively short time after the country's liberation, the Decree-Law No. 586 of 17 March 1948 (published in the Official Journal No. 39 of 10 April 1948) was adopted "on the protection of cultural monuments and rare natural objects", in accordance with which "all immovable and movable cultural and historical, artistic and ethnographical monuments as well as rare natural objects of a botanical, geological, palaeontological, mineralogical, petrographical and geographical nature or of special beauty, are placed under the protection of the State, regardless of their owners or possessors. The scientific and aesthetic value of these objects is the joint heritage of the people (Article 1).

(b) In accordance with the aforementioned Act, by decision of the former Institute of Sciences, a list of monuments placed under State protection was published in the Official Journal No. 95 of 1948. After an extensive study of the situation of monuments in Albania, this initial list was replaced by a more complete list published in the Official Journal No. 1 of 1963, in accordance with Decision No. 6 of 15 January 1963 of the Rectorate of the State University of Tirana.

(c) For the better protection of monuments, the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania, by its Decision No. 130 of 9 April 1955, took a series of measures and, furthermore, approved exhaustive regulations having reference to the safeguarding of cultural monuments. Meanwhile, a workshop has been established entrusted with the maintenance, safeguarding and restoration of cultural monuments as well as a scientific board for the same purpose. A further step was taken in 1959 when the material culture group at the University of Tirana was established.

(d) Having regard to the architectural peculiarities and the wealth of monuments in Albania, the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania, at its meeting of 2 June 1961, pursuant to a special decision, proclaimed Gjirokastra and Berat, the ancient part of the town of Durrës, as well as the old Bazaar in the town of Kruja, to be museum towns. It also approved a regulation regarding the administration of the museum town of Berat.

(e) A further and no less important measure designed to ensure better protection, maintenance and restoration of cultural monuments was adopted in 1962 by the establishment of five permanent studios in the principal districts where most monuments exist, such as Gjirokastra, Berat, Korçë, Durrës and Shkoder. Custodians were entrusted with the maintenance of the most important works of a national character.

(f) More recently, the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania, having regard to the great monumental treasures inherited by the country from the past, and of the important character of studies and operations for the safeguarding and restoring of monuments, decided to establish an "Institute for the protection and restoration of monuments". Its creation will make it possible to deal successfully with this problem, to extend and improve the work done in this field and to raise to a higher level the operations relating to the protection of these cultural values of Albania.

(g) With a view to safeguarding movable cultural property in Albania, a whole network of museums in the capital and the provinces as well as memorial museums (house museums) has been created. Furthermore, a considerable number of libraries and archives have been created for other valuable records and collections of important books.

(h) Directives have been issued and all necessary measures adopted not only to ensure that no possible deliberate damage can be caused to our monuments by any kind of operation but also that the monuments shall not be used for purposes harmful to them.

(i) In order that the army, youth and workers as a whole may be imbued with respect for the culture and cultural property of all peoples, not only have pamphlets and other illustrated publications on the cultural monuments of this country been published, but lectures have also been planned for the great mass of workers and for the army on the subject.

(j) In general, the People's Republic of Albania has complied with all the provisions prescribed by the Convention in question and has taken all the necessary steps deriving therefrom.