



Illicit traffic on internet. Appeal from ICOM, UNESCO and Interpol

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The illicit traffic of cultural property is currently one of the most lucrative criminal activities in the world. Every civilisation's cultural heritage is universal and priceless, and the harm caused by illicit trafficking has disastrous repercussions, not only on peoples' understanding of their history, and thus on their cultural identity, but also with regard to the future of all humankind.

ICOM, UNESCO and INTERPOL are all the more concerned about this plague since illicit trafficking in cultural property has increased at an alarming rate over the past several years through the Internet, where it is difficult for the national authorities to effectively monitor all of the objects offered for sale.

Aware of the gravity of the situation, the three organizations co-signed a letter covering Basic Actions concerning Cultural Objects being offered for Sale over the Internet which they pledged to disseminate to all UNESCO and INTERPOL States parties, as well as to ICOM's national committees, regional and affiliated organizations. To this end, the letter has been translated into UNESCO's six official languages which are English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese.

This letter, which you will find herewith, sets out a checklist of the *Basic Actions to counter the Increasing Illicit Sale of Cultural Objects through the Internet*. For this common initiative to prove effective, it is imperative to communicate the letter to the concerned authorities in each country.

Your participation is essential to enable us to carry out this awareness-raising campaign. We are closely committed to fighting the illicit traffic of cultural property, and we are very grateful for your support.