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ICOM Moldova and ICOM Ukraine meet on museum security and post-war conflict resolution

From 7 to 13 October, 2015, ICOM's National Committees in Moldova and Ukraine implemented a joint project on the theme "Museums on the firing line: from victim to peacemaker" in Chisinau, Moldova. The project was sponsored by ICOM as part of its annual "support to the network" programme.



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The destruction of cultural values during armed conflicts, the looting of art objects, countless unauthorised excavations, and the theft of art objects from museums, archives, libraries and other institutions in which they are kept all constitute a danger for scientific research as well as for the conservation condition of these objects. Analysing the deplorable situation in the region, ICOM Ukraine expressed the urgent need to work with ICOM Moldova to implement the project "Museums on the firing line: from victim to peacemaker" in order to help professionals working in Ukrainian museums to confront current issues related to situations of conflict, raise the awareness of the regional museum community

regarding the vital role of museums in society, and equip it with the tools necessary for joint actions aimed at reviving trust within a society affected by armed conflict.

For the first phase of the project, ICOM Ukraine held a workshop in Chisinau from 6 to 11 October, 2015, for a group of museum professionals from the regions of Ukraine affected by armed conflict. Ukrainian colleagues reported on the situation of the museums within the country, as well as the problems of Ukrainian museums that directly faced situations of armed conflict and military actions. In the wake of the workshop, an exhibition project is being carried out in Chisinau, and will subsequently be presented to the public in Ukraine, Georgia, Romania and other European countries.

Also as part of the project, on 12 and 13 October in Chisinau, ICOM Moldova organised the regional conference on museum security and post-war conflict resolution. Dr Anne-Catherine Robert-Hauglustaine, Director General of ICOM, opened the conference with the following words: "Ever since museums have started to look beyond their classical tasks of collecting, preserving, researching, exhibiting and educating, they are seeing themselves more and more in the service of society, they have begun turning into places of reconciliation, in many different ways." She congratulated the ICOM National Committees in the region on their long-term support for and as exceptional involvement in

ICOM's activities, especially ICOM Ukraine, at their own initiative and given extremely complex circumstances. During one of the sessions, she also discussed necessary developments for Moldovan museums in their search for identity with the Moldovan Culture Minister, the Director of the National Art Museum of Moldova and the French Ambassador to Moldova.