

Press release

Paris, 7 April, 2014



Website of ICOM's International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods officially launched



ICOM's International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods launches its website, as an important stage in this three-year project on the initiative of ICOM with the financial support of the European Commission.

The website of ICOM's International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods was launched officially during ICOM's 128th Executive Council meetings held in Paris, France, on 4 and 5 April, 2014. Now available to the public at <http://obs-traffic.museum>, the website marks an important stage in the initial triennial phase of the project.

The website, core of the Observatory, will act as a hub for all information related to illicit traffic in cultural goods, aimed at centralising and disseminating all kinds of resources and instruments relating to illicit traffic in cultural goods and the means to fight it.

A large number of external resources are compiled on the Observatory's website:

- 2,171 reading materials and 396 videos and audio recordings
- 831 practical tools collected from institutions and organisations
- 137 normative ethical instruments
- 89 international legal instruments
- links to 114 information websites
- 549 stakeholders concerned by the issue

In addition, it offers an extensive glossary, technical sheets on good practices, a news section, and links to websites offering legal and criminal case studies, identified and produced by the team and groups of experts working in this field.

Started in January 2013, the Observatory was initially conceived as a three-year project at the initiative of ICOM and with the financial support of the Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme of the European Commission's Directorate-General Home Affairs.

The Observatory is the fruit of ICOM's long-term [involvement in the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods](#), and is created to serve as a permanent international cooperative network between international

organisations, law enforcement agencies, research institutions and other external expert stakeholders. In accordance with article 17 of the [1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property](#), and in the context of ICOM's international commitment to fighting illicit traffic in cultural goods, the main objective of this platform is to build a major information databank for the network and the public through the newly launched [website](#). It will also publish in 2015 a triennial Global Report, the first of its kind, presenting a range of case studies, statistics, analyses and reference articles. After the first triennial phase, ICOM intends to turn the Observatory into a sustainable project.



With the financial support of the Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme,
European Commission, Directorate-General Home Affairs

About the International Council of Museums (ICOM)

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), created in 1946, is the world organisation of museums and museum professionals. ICOM is committed to promoting and protecting natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible. With more than 30,000 members in 136 countries, the ICOM network is made up of museum professionals from a wide range of museum- and heritage-related disciplines.

ICOM promotes standards of excellence in the museum field, in particular through its *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, a standard-setting tool for museums, which includes basic principles for museum governance, the acquisition and disposal of collections, and rules for professional conduct.

In order to carry out its activities, ICOM partners with entities such as the World Intellectual Property Organization, INTERPOL, the World Customs Organisation, ICCROM, and maintains its long-standing collaboration with UNESCO. ICOM's activities include fighting illicit traffic in cultural goods and promoting risk management and emergency preparedness to protect world cultural heritage in the event of natural or man-made disasters.

The UNESCO-ICOM Museum Information Centre, created in 1946, gathers the most comprehensive collection of ICOM publications including *ICOM News*, *ICOM Red Lists*, publications by ICOM's committees, and conference proceedings.

ICOM's commitment to culture and knowledge promotion is reinforced by its 31 International Committees, which are dedicated to a wide range of museum specialities and conduct advanced research in their respective fields for the benefit of the museum community. The organisation's International and National Committees, Regional Alliances and Affiliated Organisations hold conferences and symposiums worldwide that revolve around pre-defined themes with a view to fostering exchange among museum professionals of all nationalities. In addition, ICOM organises International Museum Day each year, a worldwide event held around 18 May, to increase public awareness of the role of museums in developing society.

Website: <http://icom.museum>

For any matter related to the global museum community:

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