

CULTURAL PROPERTY

DESCRIPTION

The 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects applies to claims of an international character for the restitution of stolen cultural objects and for the return of cultural objects exported illegally from the territory of a Contracting State. It is intended to be complementary to the 1970 UNESCO Convention.

WHO BENEFITS?

Persons and States from whom cultural objects were stolen and to whom these objects would be returned, as well as States which may request the return of cultural objects which had been illegally exported from their territory

The *populations* of the countries of the world who will be able to benefit from the presence of the cultural goods recovered.



OPINION

“Any even slightly objective reading of the UNIDROIT Convention, if it is compared with the current state of the art of substantive law, should be persuasive of the fact that it constitutes an important advance in the field of international cultural property law, and that its ratification is justified, indeed imposes itself, from the legal, political and moral points of view” (Pierre Lalive d’Epinay, *Une avance du droit international: la Convention de Rome d’Unidroit sur les biens culturels volés ou illicitement exportés*, in *Uniform Law Review*, 1996, 40. *Translated from the French.*)

“[P]ossession confers a sort of title. [...] It becomes full ownership when I prove how I came to be in possession of that object. For the law to recognise this would be to put order and legal propriety in a sector as special and worthy of respect as that of the market in art objects and archaeological finds” (Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, President of the Italian Republic, at the Audience given on 9 June 1995 on the occasion of the Diplomatic Conference for the adoption of the *Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects*, Rome, 7 to 24 June 1995, cited in the *Acts and Proceedings* of the Diplomatic Conference, p. xvii.)

FUNDS NEEDED

€10,000 per annum to promote the Convention in those states, in particular developing countries and countries in economic difficulties, which are most exposed to international art trafficking and which do not currently have a legal framework capable of efficiently dealing with this phenomenon.