Cultural Heritage at Risk:

From Shared Challenges to Joint Action

Joint Symposium on Border Security Responses and Cross-Sector Co-operation Against Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property

18 & 19 November 2026, Leopold Museum, Vienna, Austria

Wednesday 18 November 2026

08:30 – 09:00 Registration & coffee

09:00 – 09:30 Welcome remarks

- **Ambassador Alena Kupchyna**, OSCE Coordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats
- **Prof. Mag. Dr. Johanna Schwanberg,** President, International Council of Museums (ICOM) Austria
- **Mag. Hans-Peter Wipplinger,** Director, Leopold Museum

09:30 – 10:00 Opening panel discussion
Moderator: Siv-Katrine Leirtroe, Head of Unit, Border Security and Management Unit, Transnational Threats Department, OSCE Secretariat

- **Ambassador Rafael Nägali**, Head of Mission for Switzerland to the OSCE and Representative of the Swiss Chairperson in Office (TBC)
- **Ambassador Neil Holland**, Head of Delegation of the United Kingdom to the OSCE and Chair of the OSCE Security Committee (TBC)
- **Katariina Leinonen**, Head of Division, Integrated Approach for Peace and Security, European External Action Service (EEAS)

10:00 – 10:15 Group photo and coffee break

Session 1
10:15 – 10:35 KEYNOTE
Heritage looting in the context of conflict and the need for Cultural diplomacy
Heritage looting in the context of conflict and the importance of cultural diplomacy as both a tool for prevention and effective international responses for post-conflict artifact recovery and prosecution.

- **Dr. Andrea Cayley**, Executive Director, Center for Law and Global Affairs, and Professor of Practice, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law - Arizona State University. and former International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia Prosecutor. Member of the OSCE-led Heritage Crime Task Force

10:50 – 11:30 PANEL 1A
Cultural diplomacy in the context of conflict: The need for partnership and trust
Establishing the foundations for Symposium discussions. Why combatting trafficking in cultural property and ensuring the protection of cultural property are critical components of regular national and regional border management in times of peace; the importance of ensuring co-operation amongst stakeholders in the context of conflicts; the role of cultural institutions and museums as a partner for border management and law

enforcement as experts and platforms for dialogue; and what frontline, cross-agency partnership to combat TCP looks like between States, institutions and communities.

- **Representative of the OSCE** (TBC)
- **Laura Searson**, Senior Programme Manager, Leader of the Culture in Crisis Programme, British Council & Board member ICOM UK
- Others TBC

11:30 – 11:45 Break

11:45 – 12:25 PANEL 1B

Heritage looting in the context of conflict — Addressing trafficking, post-conflict artifact recovery and effective cross-border responses

Addressing the increases in cross-border trafficking in cultural property from active and post-conflict zones. Highlights of successful cross-border co-operation, repatriation cases and lessons learned for sustainable artifact recovery and prosecution frameworks

Moderator: TBC

- **Prof. Maamoun Saleh Abdulkarim**, Dean, University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
- **Shadia Abedrabbo**, Chief Curator, National Museum of Sudan
- **Maj. Timothée Le Berre**, France Armée de Terre and Ministry of Culture. Member of OSCE-led Heritage Crime Task Force
- **Dr. Barbara Horejs**, Deputy Executive Director, Austrian Archaeological Institute (OeAI), Austrian Academy of Sciences

12:25 – 13:45 Lunch break

Session 2

13:45 – 14:05 KEYNOTE

Museums as platforms for dialogue and centres of expertise: Implications for cross-border trafficking

The evolving role of museums in, and the need for, cross-border co-operation in provenance accountability and art market reform.

- **Vernon Rapley FSA**, former Director of Cultural Heritage Protection and Security, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and former chair of the ICOM International Committee for Museum Security. Member of the OSCE-led Heritage Crime Task Force

14:20 – 15:00 PANEL 2A

Museums as platforms for dialogue and cross-border communication

Exploring the evolving role of museums as partners for State border management and law enforcement authorities, both as catalysts and facilitators in cross-border dialogue. From serving as safe spaces for recovered heritage, to facilitators of intercultural exchange, how can museums and institutions be better utilized to ensure successful outcomes in combatting illicit trafficking?

Moderator: Elke Kellner, Managing Director, ICOM Austria

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- **Vernon Rapley FSA**, former Director of Cultural Heritage Protection and Security, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and former chair of the ICOM International Committee for Museum Security. Member of the OSCE-led Heritage Crime Task Force
- **Sabari Christian Dao**, Spokesperson of the ICOM National Committees & General Director, National Museum of Burkina Faso

- **Ajna Babahmetović**, Venice Biennale Architettura 2027 – Curator team of Austrian Pavillion in Cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegowina: Koncesija / Konzession / Concession(e)"

15:00 – 15:15 Break

15:15 – 15:55 PANEL 2B

Art market regulation, due diligence and provenance – closing the gaps in legal frameworks and market accountability

Examining regulatory gaps, voluntary versus mandatory due diligence reporting and import/export regulations in Europe, provenance research standards, and emerging legislative initiatives. How do we build due-diligence requirements into the market that prevent cross-border trafficking, money laundering, financing of terrorism and protect heritage for the future?

Moderator: TBC

- Policy Officer, Cultural Heritage Civ/Mil Co-operation, EEAS (TBC)
- **Dr. Marcel Marée**, Assistant Keeper - Egypt and Sudan, British Museum, United Kingdom. Member of the OSCE-led Heritage Crime Task Force
- Others TBC

15:55 – 16:15 DAY 1 WRAP-UP

Key takeaways from Day 1 clusters. Framing the agenda for Day 2.

19:00 – 21:00 SOCIAL EVENT (OPTIONAL)

Working dinner and networking

Thursday 19 November 2026

09:00 – 09:15 Day 1 recap

Session 3

09:15 – 09:35 KEYNOTE

Transnational organized crime – trends, risks and responses

An overarching keynote connecting the global illicit trade landscape (trafficking route convergence and organized crime trends) with the specific vulnerabilities of maritime heritage and port security infrastructure.

- **Speaker TBC**

09:50 – 10:30 PANEL 3A

The current state of transnational organized crime and trafficking routes — trends, risks and responses

A border management and law enforcement informed look at how illicit cultural property trafficking intersects with drug and arms trafficking, and financial crime networks. Methodologies for coordinated responses, joint actions and the role of data-sharing across jurisdictions.

Moderator: TBC

- **Cameron Walter,** Customs Adviser and Project Manager, Combatting Trafficking of Cultural Property in the OSCE Area, OSCE Border Security and Management Unit, Transnational Threats Department, OSCE Secretariat. OSCE-led Heritage Crime Task Force
- **Silvio Mele**, Chief Inspector, Carabinieri, Italy. Member of the OSCE-led Heritage Crime Task Force
- **Bob Van Den Berghe**, Deputy Director, Border Management Division, UNODC (TBC)

10:30 – 10:45 Break

10:45 – 11:25 PANEL 3B

Maritime heritage: Ports, freeports, containerised trafficking and international co-operation at sea

Opportunities and challenges in combatting maritime cultural heritage trafficking. Freeport vulnerabilities, containerized trafficking routes, coast guard and customs co-operation, and

Moderator: TBC

- **Prof. Timmy Gambin**, Maritime Archaeology, Department of Classics and Archaeology, University of Malta / Heritage Malta. Member of the OSCE-led Heritage Crime Task Force
- **Dr. Cyril Dworsky,** National Management, UNESCO World Heritage Site "Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps", Austria
- **Dr. Alexandre Monteiro**, Maritime Archaeology, University of Coimbra, Portugal. Member of the OSCE-led Heritage Crime Task Force

11:25 – 12:45 Lunch break

Session 4

12:45 – 13:05 KEYNOTE

Co-operation, information-sharing and community engagement

An overarching keynote tying together the imperatives of cross-border law enforcement co-operation with the longer-term work of artifact restitution, community empowerment and youth engagement.

- **Cultural Heritage Civ/Mil Co-operation, EEAS (TBD)**

13:20 – 14:00 PANEL 4A

Co-operation and information-sharing between states, law enforcement and museums — Towards a more secure future

Enhancing cross-border co-ordination, joint actions and interoperable data systems. Building mutual understanding between border management, law enforcement agencies and diplomatic and cultural institutions as the foundation for long-term security.

Moderator: TBC

- **Siv-Katrine Leirtroe**, Head of Unit, Border Security and Management Unit, Transnational Threats Department, OSCE Secretariat
- **Corrado Catesi**, Head of Works of Art Unit, INTERPOL
- **Cultural Heritage Civ/Mil Co-operation**, EEAS (TBD)

14:00 – 14:15 Break

14:15 – 14:55 PANEL 4B

Restitution and repatriation of artifacts, and engaging youth and communities — Building trust between states, institutions and the leaders of tomorrow

Moving beyond negotiation frameworks towards genuine community empowerment. Youth engagement programs, community-led advocacy, and building the next generation of cultural heritage stewards across borders.

Moderator: Elke Kellner, Managing Director, ICOM Austria

- **Dr. Pia Schölnberger**, Director, Commission for Provenance Research, Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport, Austria
- **Sabari Christian Dao**, Spokesperson of the ICOM National Committees & General Director, National Museum of Burkina Faso
- **Dr. Claudia Banz**, Director, Weltmuseum Wien

14:55 – 15:15 **Coffee break**

15:15 – 16:15 **WRAP-UP**

Key findings, recommendations and the path Forward

Presentation of draft conclusions and recommendations. Comments from OSCE participating States and institutions.

16:15 – 16:45 **Closing remarks**