Strategy for the Safeguarding of Archives

Research into illicit trade involving archives in the Netherlands

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Cultural Heritage Inspectorate

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Archives found at a Market in The Hague
Lay-out presentation

• Activities Cultural Heritage Inspectorate

• Research 2011 into Trafficking of Archives and what can we learn from this research

• Proposals
  – Red List of Archives at Risk
  – On-line tool registration of stolen or missing archival pieces
  – Mexico Principles
Cultural Heritage Inspectorate
Cultural Heritage Inspectorate: tasks

• Inspection of collections of the state and of objects which are irreplaceable and indispensable for Dutch cultural heritage

• Central authority for European and UNESCO legislation (1970, 1954) on the protection of cultural heritage and for Sanction measures Iraq and Syria (Mali)
Cultural Heritage Inspectorate: tasks (2)

- Authorization of Export Licenses
- National cooperation with Customs and Police
- Cooperation with relevant (inter)national Organizations
Research 2011: Trafficking Archives

Main conclusions:

• Most significant problem: theft or misappropriation of archival material

• Hidden problem

• Insufficient cooperation

• Awareness
Research 2011: Trafficking Archives

Recommendations:

• Development of an integrated security policy, including safety and security measures (RCE, EGI, Royal Library, National Archives, archival sector)

• Development of a uniform and coordinated approach by institutions involved

https://veilig-erfgoed.nl/en/subjects/theft/theft-archive-institutions
Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Archives: Instruments and Strategy


At the end of the 1960s and in the beginning of the 1970s, thefts were increasing both in museums and at archaeological sites, particularly in the countries of the South. In the North, private collectors and, sometimes, official institutions, were increasingly offered objects that had been fraudulently imported or were of unidentified origin.

It is in this context, and to address such situations, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property was created in 1970.

The 1970 Convention requires its States Parties to take action in these main fields:

- **Preventive measures:** Inventories, export certificates, monitoring trade, imposition of penal or administrative sanctions, educational campaigns, etc.

- **Restitution provisions:** Per Article 7 (b) (ii) of the Convention, States Parties undertake, at the request of the State Party of origin, to take appropriate steps to recover and return any such cultural property imported after the entry into force of this Convention in both States concerned, provided, however, that the requesting State shall pay just compensation to an innocent purchaser or to a person who has valid title to that property. More indirectly and subject to domestic legislation, Article 13 of the Convention also provides provisions on restitution and cooperation.

- **International cooperation framework:** The idea of strengthening cooperation among and between States Parties is present throughout the Convention. In cases where cultural patrimony is in jeopardy from pillage, Article 8 provides a possibility for more specific undertakings such as a call for import and export controls.
Awareness-raising:

Awareness-raising: Register of loss and incidents

Example: Interpol
Awareness-raising: Register of loss and incidents

Example: ICOM
Awareness-raising: Register of loss and incidents

Example: ILAB

https://www.ilab.org/eng/ilab/ILAB_Stolen_Books.html
Proposal: Register of loss and incidents

1. In close cooperation with UNESCO, ICA and Interpol
   Develop a dedicated red list for archives

   OR

   Expand the present ICOM red lists to incorporate information
   on missing archives or possible examples of vulnerable
   archives

2. Develop an online tool for the registration of stolen or missing
   archival pieces

3. Using a uniform description language / thesaurus to identify
   (e.g. parts of Encoded Archival Description (EAD))
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International Cooperation Framework

Example: Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL)
International Cooperation Framework

Example:
International Committee for Museum Security (ICMS)
International Cooperation Framework

Mexico Principles
Inspired by the Copenhagen Principles

Principle 1: To establish a security network for transnational cooperation between archival institutions

Principle 2: Set up security policies and security systems in archives

Principle 3: Agreements to inform and assist colleagues in a secure network

Principle 4: Share security information among archival institutions

Principle 5: Cooperate on security issues with the trade organizations

Principle 6: Cooperate with the law enforcement agencies
International Cooperation Framework

Example: APE

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International Cooperation Framework

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Proposals

• Red List of Archives at Risk

• Online registration tool for stolen archival pieces

Proposal “Mexico Principles”
(Inspired by The Copenhagen Principles)

Established during the General Assembly of Association of Latin-American Archivists (ALA)
Contact

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