



# Saving Ukraine's culture

Polish Support Center  
for Culture in Ukraine  
**Activity report**  
February 2022 – December 2022

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage  
Republic of Poland



National Institute  
of Cultural  
Heritage

60 YEARS  
OF THE  
MISSION



Polish Support Center  
for Culture in Ukraine  
Centrum Pomocy  
dla Kultury na Ukrainie

National Institute of Cultural Heritage  
Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine

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Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine  
*Saving Ukraine's culture*  
Activity report  
February 2022 – December 2022**

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Photo credit: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

# Foreword

by Deputy Prime Minister,  
Minister of Culture  
and National Heritage,  
Prof. Piotr Gliński

24 February 2022 – the day the Russian occupier attacked Ukraine – evoked our most painful memories and mobilised the entire Polish nation, along with Poland’s state authorities, to provide both spontaneous and systemic assistance to Ukraine. While there were more than 1 200 000 Ukrainian citizens living in Poland prior to the invasion, additional 8 million people crossed the border in escape from war. Currently, around 3 million Ukrainians settled in Poland. We continue to provide multidimensional help, including humanitarian aid, material and logistic support, as well as medical and military equipment. Poland has donated more than EUR 1 billion 170 million for refugee assistance – this only refers to in-kind support, medical care, and social benefits. At the same time, the value of Polish military aid is estimated at over EUR 2 billion.

First and foremost, we support the Ukrainian people in their struggle on the battlefield. We also support their efforts in cultural heritage protection. Well aware of the meaning of cultural genocide, which we experienced acutely in the past century, an emergency response initiative was created at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage as early as the day before the Russian attack, in order to provide immediate support to our neighbour. After the Russian aggression began, the team was swiftly transformed into the Support Center for Culture in Ukraine.

On the basis of Polish expertise and experience, the Center provides systemic support as per verified needs. In cooperation with Ukrainian, domestic and international partners, an integrated system for identifying needs and systemic provision of support was created. As early as 10 March, the first shipment of protective materials from the National Museum in Poznań arrived in Lviv. Since then, the Center – in cooperation with cultural institutions from all over the country and government agencies, as well as foreign partners – has delivered more than 800 pallets of aid containing materials for the preservation of archives, monuments, and museum collections, to more than 110 Ukrainian cul-

tural institutions. These deliveries included, among others: generators, crates, fire blankets, mineral wool, OSB boards, polyester pipes, fire extinguishers, and sandbags. On site, the National Institute of Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad POLONIKA has secured 230 historical sites and scanned dozens more, including the Wooden Tserkvas on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The Polish government orchestrates comprehensive institutional support for heritage preservation in Ukraine. Among other things, it has allocated EUR 1 million from the state budget at the disposal of Poland’s Ministry of Culture and National Heritage to the Lublin Triangle Fund for Digitalization of Cultural Heritage in Ukraine. The fund is intended to support the digitization of historical sites and the creation of a digital platform for documentation archiving, preservation, development, dissemination, and popularisation. Poland has also embarked on a project to make an inventory of damaged architectural objects and archaeological sites. Additionally, the Center has prepared a booklet on the Ukrainian legislation on the transboundary movement of cultural goods as an input to prevent the smuggling of antiquities and has conducted training for tax and custom service professionals. Within the framework of the activities carried out by the Pilecki Institute for Solidarity and Valor, the Lemkin Centre was established with an aim to collect evidence of Russian war crimes in Ukraine.

In addition, Polish cultural institutions provide support to artists and culture professionals who found refuge in our country. It includes, among other things, more than 100 job openings made available in Polish museums – including internship and scholarship programmes, tens of free-of-charge exhibition invitations, and the organisation of tens of cultural events. Our art schools and colleges admitted students from Ukraine.

Thanks to the cooperation of the Warsaw Philharmonic, the National Institute of Music and Dance, and the Ministry of Culture and Na-



Photo credit: Jakub Kamiński



tional Heritage, the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra came to Poland in April to prepare for concerts. It was in Warsaw where the Orchestra's European tour began. The European Krzysztof Penderecki Music Centre campus in Luśawice has hosted the "Slobozhansky" Youth Academic Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine from Kharkiv several times as part of art residency programmes. The Stanisław Hadyna Song and Dance Ensemble "Śląsk" hosted Veryovka Ukrainian National Song & Dance Ensemble, named after Hryhory Veryovka from Kyiv, as well as members of the Folk Dance Ensemble "Barvinok". The Grand Theatre-National Opera, together with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, with the support of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, have established the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra, which has given concerts in the largest concert halls in Europe and the USA.

In the international arena, Poland undertakes an array of activities to mobilize the greatest resources possible to support culture in Ukraine, including cooperation within UNESCO, the UN Security Council, and the Council of the European Union. As early as 4 March, I requested the Director General of UNESCO to exclude or at least suspend Russia from the work of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. From the

outset, we have advocated for Russia to be stripped of its UNESCO membership and subjected to full sanctions in the cultural field. In the European Council, we support the establishment of the European fund to cover urgent Ukrainian needs in the cultural and media areas. We also speak about the consequences of the war and the humanitarian crisis caused by Russian aggression at the UN Security Council. At the international conference on the reconstruction of Ukraine held in Lugano in early July, we underlined our readiness to play an active role in the post-war rebuilding of Ukraine by engaging with the Ukrainian side at governmental, regional and local, and non-governmental levels.

Presented by the Support Center for Culture in Ukraine, this report on the first months of our activities provides a testimony to the challenges faced by our neighbours and those who have assisted them in protecting their heritage and culture. It bears witness to the significance of the community and the awareness of one's identity. Ukrainians are facing an enormous challenge – the war of independence and decisions on the post-war realities. Yet, Ukraine defends not only its own sovereignty, but also our security, cultural heritage, and the values of universal importance. That is why we will continue to support Ukraine and its culture – until a victorious end of the war.



Director of the National Institute  
of Cultural Heritage, Katarzyna  
Zalasńska, PhD

Photo credit: M. Szałek

# Introduction:

functioning of the Polish  
Support Center for Culture  
in Ukraine

Every war wreaks havoc and deprives of the most cherished – loved ones, homes, and the sense of safety. It ruins the capital of past generations and wrecks plans for the future. It also leaves a devastating imprint on the culture, namely, the sphere that shapes national identities. The harm caused in this area is irreversible. Poland knows well the meaning the loss of cultural heritage – the wars that struck our country in the past century deprived us of historical architecture, troves of artworks, collections of books and manuscripts, as well as archives. Ukraine is now experiencing a similar fate. The Russian invasion has caused its unique heritage to perish in front of our eyes. Poland's Ministry of Culture and National Heritage has decided to create a dedicated unit – the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine. The Center is the only example of government's financed structure tasked with aiding cultural institutions in Ukraine. By the end of 2022 the total value of the support for these activities in has exceeded EUR 1 million.

The Center functions within the structures of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage – an expert institution active in the field for 60 years. Over the decades, it has been a place for research, reflection and a source of expertise on endangered cultural heritage. We are now facing a new chapter in the history of our activities aiding cultural heritage under threat. The war in Ukraine, in which cultural sites become intended targets of military attacks, illustrates the need for a radical change of perceptions on cultural property protection in crisis and the foundations of cultural security. The advances in new technologies, coupled with the expertise of our specialists gained in Iraq and Afghanistan, in addition to the tens of years of experience of the Polish conservation school, jointly provide us today with novel tools and opportunities.

The Center coordinates initiatives related to safeguarding cultural heritage in Ukraine. These activities are carried out in Poland by, inter alia, the National Library, Head Office of State Archives, National Institute for Museums and Public Collections, The Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, the National Institute of Music and Dance and the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary

Art. Activities of Polish government institutions are managed by a task force at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, headed by the Director General of this office. Some of these activities are being conducted in cooperation with other states (e.g. Sweden and Finland) and international organisations (e.g. UNESCO, ICOM France, ICOM Spain). Through sustained engagement Poland has become the most active aid hub providing necessary assistance.

From its earliest days, the Center has focused on providing cultural institutions in Ukraine with the supplies needed to secure their collections. Polish specialists share their knowledge on the risks of illicit export of collections and the protection of intangible cultural heritage. The Center also helps Ukrainian partners to plan future activities in reconstruction and recovery. "Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage", adopted by UNESCO in 2018, was translated into Ukrainian in early April 2022. Polish assistance also has a training dimension. Our experts share their knowledge on 3D scans of architectural objects for documentation purposes. The National Institute of Cultural Heritage also collects information on cultural losses in Ukraine. In many cases, expert analysis prove that the destruction of cultural property results from planned actions.

The Center has assisted over 111 cultural institutions in Ukraine – it provided fire-fighting equipment, specialised materials to protect collections and historical buildings. More shipments are in the pipeline to reach dozens more institutions and entities. As a country so severely affected by the wars of the past century – including the cultural losses suffered during the World War II – we are convinced that mobilisation of all resources possible to provide tangible support to Ukrainian cultural heritage at risk is the highest priority.

What we need is strengthening regional cooperation and renewed reflection on new cultural security architecture. We believe that the report can raise awareness of our collective responsibility for saving the cultural heritage of generations from deliberate destruction and loss.



# Cooperation

## at the governmental level

Meeting of Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Culture and National Heritage Prof. Piotr Gliński with Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine Oleksandr Tkachenko, Warsaw, 31.08.2022.

Photo credit: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage



Poland is the first EU Member State, which has started to build state-level cooperation in support of Ukraine as early as during the first days of the war. The cooperation is based on the constant and ongoing contacts between the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Prof. Piotr Gliński, and the Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, Oleksandr Tkachenko. One of the fundamental issues for Ukraine is to block broadcasting of Russian propaganda media via satellite platforms. The targeted support that Poland provides to Ukraine in culture and heritage protection is also a topic of the ministerial talks. Many of these activities at the governmental level are implemented through a Ukraine support team established in the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage a day before the outbreak of the war to coordinate aid activities (within the competence of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Committee for Public Benefit, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister Prof. Piotr Gliński).

The Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine – the operational core of the Ukraine support team – has aided over 100 Ukrainian cultural institutions since the beginning of April 2022. The Center coordinates (Polish and international) initiatives to save Ukraine’s cultural resources. It conducts information and education activities related to Ukraine’s cultural heritage and, in particular, its losses caused by warfare. In 2022, the Center dispatched more than 800 pallets of materials for the preservation of archives, monuments and museum collections, with a total value of more than 1 million EUR. Further aid deliveries are being organised in line with the needs communicated by the Ukrainian partners.

The Polish government also actively supports Ukraine in the international forums. As early as on 4 March 2022, a letter was sent to UNESCO to exclude, or at least suspend Russia, from the works of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in connection with its role as a Chair of the Committee. The efforts of Polish diplomacy eventually contributed to changing the Chair and the venue of the Committee and moving

its session to 2023. The call to purge Russia of its UNESCO membership was presented, among others, by Deputy Minister Wanda Zwinogrodzka during the informal meeting of European Union Ministers of Culture held on 7–8 March 2022 in Angers, France.

Meanwhile, Poland is a strategic partner of UNESCO in its activities in support of Ukraine. For example, the cooperation between Warsaw and Paris resulted in a meeting on 24 November 2022 organised by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage on reconstruction and rebuilding. A workshop entitled “Combating Illicit Trafficking of Ukrainian Cultural Property: capacity-building training for law enforcement agencies” was held in Warsaw on 18–20 January 2023. Support at the organisation’s level is also provided by the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to UNESCO. Polish diplomats are leaders in the Friends of Ukraine Group at UNESCO, building an international coalition to save Ukraine’s cultural heritage.

Poland’s Minister of Culture and National Heritage has also initiated many activities in support of Ukraine’s culture at the international level. This was reflected, for example, in the position of the culture ministers of eight European countries – Poland, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia – calling for Russia to be subject of full-scale sanctions in the field of culture.

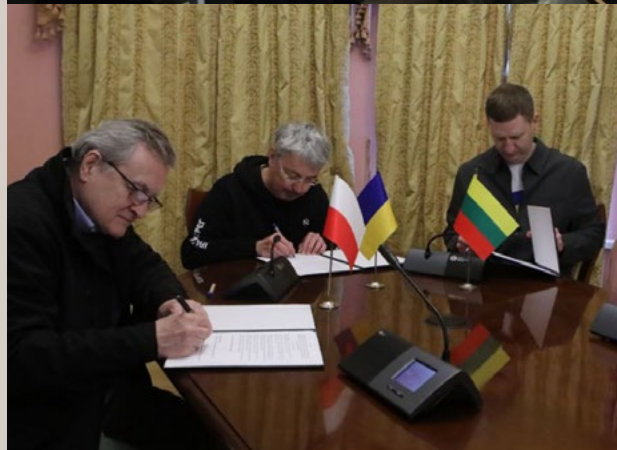
As early as on 22 April 2022, at the invitation of the Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine Oleksandr Tkachenko, Poland’s Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Culture and National Heritage Prof. Piotr Gliński and Lithuania’s Minister of Culture Simonas Kairys visited Ukraine. The aim of the ministers’ meeting was to support Ukraine in countering the aggression of the Russian Federation in the area of culture and information. One of the outcomes of the meeting was the establishment of a Polish-Ukrainian-Lithuanian working group on the digitisation of cultural heritage in Ukraine, which met for the first time on 12 May 2022 in Warsaw. At the request of Deputy





The first visit of Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Gliński to Ukraine (Kyiv), 22.04.2022.

Photo credit: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage



Prime Minister Prof. Piotr Gliński the Polish government pledged to allocate 1 million EUR from the state budget at the disposal of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage for the Fund. The Fund supports the digitisation of cultural heritage objects in Ukraine and the creation of a digital platform for their archiving, preservation, development, dissemination and popularisation.

During another visit to Kyiv on 2 June 2022, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Prof. Piotr Gliński, and the Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, Oleksandr Tkachenko, signed a memorandum on cooperation in the area of national memory. In the document, Poland and Ukraine declared their desire to develop cooperation and emphasised the importance of friendly relations and trust between the parties in preserving national memory. The Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage revisited Ukraine on 29 June 2022 to take part in a meeting of Ministers of Culture in Lviv, which was also attended by Ministers representing the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine. During the visit to Lviv, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, together with Andriy Sadov, mayor of Lviv, laid flowers on the market square at the Monument of Glory and at the Monument devoted to the Ukrainian Halic Army. They also paid tribute together to the soldiers killed in the ongoing war.

At the International Conference on the Reconstruction of Ukraine – Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC 2022), held in Lugano, Switzerland, on 4–5 July 2022, Deputy Prime Minister Prof. Piotr Gliński presented Poland's stance. He stressed out, among other things, that Poland was ready to play an active role in the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine by engaging in cooperation with the Ukrainian side at governmental, regional and local levels as well as through non-governmental initiatives.

Poland also actively supports Ukraine at the United Nations. On 15 July 2022, on the initiative of the Permanent Representations to the UN of three countries – the Republic of

Poland, the Republic of Albania, and Ukraine – a meeting of the UN Security Council was held on the damage to cultural heritage in Ukraine caused by the Russian aggression. The aim was to present international community the extent of losses suffered by Ukraine in the area of cultural heritage, to develop methods of documenting Russian crimes against Ukrainian culture, and to work out forms of assistance to endangered monuments and works of material culture by UN agencies and member states of the organisation.

During a meeting of ministers of culture, researchers, strategists, artists, and culture professionals from all over the world as part of the 6th Edinburgh International Culture Summit (EICS) in Edinburgh, Scotland (26–28.08.2022), the Polish side took an active role in a closed roundtable discussion on support for Ukrainian culture during the war and in a plenary session. Deputy Prime Minister Prof. Piotr Gliński called for greater decisiveness in the implementation of sanctions, primarily against Russian media.

In the framework of the ongoing and steady cooperation between the Ministers of Culture of Poland and Ukraine, Minister Oleksandr Tkachenko visited Warsaw on 31 August 2022. The topics discussed included the development of support tools for culture and media in Ukraine. Subsequently, on 12 October 2022, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Culture and National Heritage Prof. Piotr Gliński received a delegation from the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy led by Deputy Minister Anastasiia Bondar. The topics included issues related to the digitisation of cultural and heritage resources in Ukraine. Again, the role and development of the creative industries during the war was discussed at the VI International Forum “Creative Ukraine”, organised on 7–8 December 2022 by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine. Further cooperation between Poland and Ukraine in supporting the protection of cultural heritage in Ukraine and the need for more intensive international cooperation in countering Russian propaganda were also subject of a meeting between Ministers Gliński and Tkachenko in Warsaw on 20 January 2023.





Meeting of Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Gliński with musicians of the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra, Grand Theatre – National Opera in Warsaw, 26.07.2022.

Photo credit: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

The second visit of Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Gliński to Ukraine, 2.06.2022.

Photo credit: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

The third visit of Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Gliński to Ukraine (Lviv), 29.06.2022.

Photo credit: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage



Poland is also taking action to build awareness of the scale of the destruction of the Ukrainian cultural heritage. The film “Erase the Nation”, directed by Tomasz Grzywaczewski and financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, has been translated into several languages and is being screened in many places worldwide.

## **Multidimensional support offered by cultural institutions and state archives**

Governmental support is also executed by entities and institutions supervised by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. Activities conducted in Poland and Ukraine for the benefit of culture professionals and heritage protection specialists, but also for all citizens of Ukraine who have come to Poland involve such institutions as Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko, National Culture Centre, National Philharmonic in Warsaw, Artur Rubinstein Philharmonic Orchestra in Łódź, Polish Royal Opera, Opera Nova in Bydgoszcz, Krzysztof Penderecki European Music Centre, Śląsk Folk Song and Dance Ensemble, Mazowsze State Folk Song and Dance Ensemble, the Grand Theatre – National Opera, the National Institute of Museology and Collections Protection, the Ossoliński National Institute, the Mieroszewski Centre (former Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding), The Roman Dmowski and Ignacy Jan Paderewski Institute for the Legacy of Polish National Thought, the Pilecki Institute, the Institute of Literature, the International Cultural Centre, the Polish Radio, the Polish Film Institute, the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute, and the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity.

As a gesture of solidarity with the victims of the war in Ukraine, the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Grand Theatre – Nation-

al Opera in Warsaw formed the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra with the support of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The organizational cost of the concert and the musicians’ stay in Warsaw were covered from funds of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Thanks to the cooperation of the National Philharmonic in Warsaw, the National Institute of Music and Dance and the Ministry, in April 2022 a group of over 100 musicians from the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and their families came to Poland to prepare for concerts for the first time since the beginning of the war. The performance in Warsaw marked the beginning of the Orchestra’s European tour, which told not only the story of Ukraine’s defenders’ heroism and the drama of those who died but also of hope for victory.

In the second half of May 2022, “Śląsk” Song and Dance Ensemble hosted the “Veryovka” National Song and Dance Ensemble of Ukraine from Kyiv named after Hryhoiy Veryovka.

In March 2022, the Theatre Institute announced an artistic residency programme for theatre makers and staff. A total of 53 refugees from Ukraine found refuge in 39 host institutions in 12 cities in Poland. The artistic residencies are implemented with funds received from the Minister of Culture and National Heritage.

The Archive of New Files is coordinating the project “Mom, I don’t want war!”, which includes a unique bilingual exhibition presented simultaneously in 33 cities in Poland in the second half of July 2022. It presents historical drawings of Polish children from 1946, stored in Polish resources, which are a record of their experiences during World War II and the German occupation of 1939–1945, and contemporary drawings by Ukrainian children related to the war currently taking place in Ukraine, collected on the “Mom, I see war” portal. In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the exhibition was also presented in the majority of Polish diplomatic missions around the world, i.e. in front of the European Parliament in Brussels.





International Workshop on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Ukrainian Cultural Property, Warsaw, 18.01.2023.

Photo credit: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

Meeting of Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Gliński with a delegation from the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, Warsaw, 12.10.2022.

Photo credit: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

Remote Meeting of the Lublin Triangle in the field of culture with attended by the Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage Prof. Piotr Gliński, Ukraine's Minister of Culture and Information Policy Oleksandr Tkachenko, and Lithuania's Minister of Culture Simonas Kairys.

Photo credit: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage





**POLONIKA** The National Institute for Cultural Heritage Abroad has also been actively involved in protection of cultural property in Ukraine, securing 230 historical objects and scanning dozens of sites in Ukraine, including wooden Orthodox churches – the joint Polish-Ukrainian entry into UNESCO’s World Heritage List.

Not mentioned here by name, dozens of Polish museums, cultural institutions, libraries, community centres and other entities organised thousands of events, exhibitions and educational activities addressed to Ukrainian citizens residing on the territory of Poland who had to flee the war after 24 February 2022. Donation collections were organised by almost all state museums, and Ukrainian citizens were provided with free admission to museums and offered participation in educational activities.

## Support to non-governmental organisations

At the request of Piotr Gliński – in the capacity of the Head of the Committee for Public Benefit – Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki released two tranches of *ad hoc* aid for NGOs – a total of 20 million PLN for organisations involved in aiding and supporting refugees (130 beneficiaries).

These funds were used to meet the most basic needs of NGOs providing assistance to refugees, with most grant applications already covering the second stage of assistance, i.e., supporting integration activities and processes (labour counselling, psychological-therapeutic assistance, language and sports activities, etc.). Coordination activities between citizens and NGOs with the state support system and especially with state services (fire brigade, border guards, police) were also funded.

The National Freedom Institute – Centre for Civil Society Development (NIW-CRSO) made the rules for the implementation of projects subsidised by government programmes authored by the Committee for Public Benefit, of which it is the operator, more flexible. The change made it possible to adapt to the terms and conditions of contract implementation to emergency situations by: adding new tasks, new cost items, changing the contract implementation schedule.

A call for proposals was carried out throughout Poland under Priority 1 of the Government Programme NOWEFIO, managed by the the National Freedom Institute – Centre for Civil Society Development. Local Operators of the Programme award funds for the implementation of local activities. Applications that include support for refugees from Ukraine received additional points.

In 2022, a contest was held under Priority 5 of the Government Programme for the Development of Civic Organisations, which is also operated by the National Freedom Institute – Centre for Civil Society Development. The contest was open to organisations seeking funds to, among other things, cover the costs of aid activities for refugees from Ukraine. As part of the competition, 222 projects were co-financed for the implementation of tasks related to the refugee crisis in Ukraine. Their total value is over 2 million PLN.

The government side, including the Head of the Committee for Public Benefit, Prof. Piotr Gliński, together with the Government Plenipotentiary for War Refugees from Ukraine, Paweł Szefernaker, held talks with representatives of NGOs during working, cyclical meetings at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister. Representatives of the NIW-CRSO also took part in them. The meetings served to diagnose the needs of NGOs and develop necessary solutions. The exchange of comments also served to adjust agendas of the various ministries and the direction of the overall state policy on the refugee crisis.

# **Executive summary**

Russian invasion of Ukraine is the largest conflict in Europe since World War II and has profoundly impacted the daily lives of millions. The attacks against civilian and critical infrastructure with heavy explosives proved that the invaders have a clear objective to terrorise the Ukrainian nation and inflict damage in the largest scale. It has also become evident that Ukrainian national identity and culture are primary targets in the ongoing war, together with all manifestations of its centuries-long tradition.

There are over 140 000 protected sites and areas of cultural significance on the territory of Ukraine. It includes 7 World Heritage Sites, recognized internationally as the important part constituting common heritage of humanity. This legacy is continuously exposed to destruction and looting.

As of 21 November, the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy reported on 800 objects of cultural heritage damaged by occupants. A significant part concerns religious sites. Collection of Scythian gold from Melitopol Local History Museum was looted. More than 2 000 unique items from museums in Mariupol were robbed. In November 2022, the Oleksiy Shovkunenko Kherson Art Museum lost nearly 15 000 artworks what accounts for 80% of the museum's collection. Another museum in Kherson, the Kherson Regional Museum, was emptied by the withdrawing Russian troops. According to preliminary estimates, around 40 museums had been looted since the beginning of the war. Yet, the damage for culture is much bigger. By way of example, nearly 12 000 documents related to Stalinist repressions against the Ukrainian people were burnt down in Ukraine's Archives

of the Security Service in the Chernihiv region. Through resorting to a scorched earth strategy, unique archaeological resources which provide scientific evidence of the ancient cultures being depleted or permanently destroyed. On 6 September 2022, the Mariupol City Council reported that the Russians destroyed the "Kalmius Settlement" archaeological site and published pictures of the ruins. The ruins bring back the memories of the World War II – we are again irreparably losing a part of our European heritage and sources of knowledge about our past.

The team of the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine monitors the Ukrainian and international news outlets on a daily basis. We search for information on damages inflicted by shellings and, deliberate destruction of objects of cultural, religious or symbolic significance. We analyse sources on the situation of refugees and remain in contact with national institutions working directly with displaced Ukrainian communities in Poland. The broader picture that emerges from the analysis of collected data proves that we need to renew the debate on the cultural heritage security. We urgently need to raise awareness about the scale of destruction in Ukraine. It is our collective responsibility to address the deliberate attack against the culture and national identity.

This report presents selected examples of the destruction of cultural property in Ukraine. It is aimed to serve as a powerful reminder to mobilize the international community to safeguard this endangered part of our European heritage. Our support is of essential importance for the future of Ukrainian nationhood and statehood.

War against Ukraine and its  
**consequences  
for the culture**

There are over 140 000 protected sites and areas of cultural significance in Ukraine which are fundamental for the Ukrainian identity. In addition, there are seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites: six are cultural sites and one is a natural site. The first one to be inscribed in 1990 was Saint Sophia Cathedral alongside the separate Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra monastery site. The most recent entries include the Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora (agricultural hinterlands) located in Sevastopol – the largest city in Crimea, and Wooden Tserkvas of the Carpathian Region in Poland and Ukraine (2013). In addition, as of 2022, 17 sites have been entered on the Tentative List. Since February 24, the cultural heritage of Ukraine is under permanent threat of being destroyed by missiles or shelling.

Yet, heritage is not only about the historical fabric – it is also the tradition that constitutes a part of cultural landscape and a constituent of cultural diversity. It also includes the intangible aspect, passed down from generation to generation. Intangible cultural heritage defines the identity of communities and its transmission relies significantly on the continuity of the environmental context. On the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity there are currently five items from Ukraine, including most recent Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking (2022). While towns and cities in Ukraine are being reduced to rubble, the numbers of civil casualties and refugees are rising dramatically, the intangible cultural heritage of Ukraine faces extremely urgent, if not existential, threats.

Destruction of the Ukrainian heritage and culture is a part of the military strategy. Culture in Ukraine is attacked on every level, including the digital space. What is more, there are examples of cultural appropriation and russification of Ukrainian cultural legacy aimed at denial of its distinctiveness from Russia. Such actions require not only immediate condemnation but also a substantial mobilization of the international community to stand against the evolving threats to cultural heritage preservation. This includes direct

support and exchange of expertise in order to ensure that culture has a rightful place in the discourse on the future recovery, reconstruction, and re-establishment of peace and stability in this part of the world.

In this chapter, we wish to present the scale of cultural losses in Ukraine. With a great conviction of the urgency and importance of the topic, we broadly reflect on the consequences of the Russian invasion on culture in Ukraine, which constitutes a part of Europe's heritage, historical legacy, and cultural diversity. It is a bridge between our past and the future. With every brick destroyed by Russian bombs or artillery, we are irreparably losing a part of our wealth to be passed on to future generations.

## **Prelude: annexation of Crimea of 2014**

Already since 2013, Ukraine has been facing a broad array of hybrid threats, such as cyber-attacks or targeted disinformation. Russia has consistently applied a policy of interference in Ukrainian domestic affairs aimed at destabilizing Ukrainian society and weakening trust in domestic institutions. Simultaneously, Russia has been consistently crippling the functioning of multilateral institutions, including the ones in the field of culture, and acting in apparent violation of the core principles of international law. Russia has consistently blurred lines between history, memory, and state-sponsored narratives. In the field of culture, Russia attempted to diminish distinctiveness and visibility of Ukrainian culture. Following the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine in 2014, we witnessed intensified attacks against the heritage of ethnic Crimean Tatars.

The illegal character of the annexation was confirmed by the UN General Assembly which on 27 March 2022 adopted a Resolution on *Territorial integrity of Ukraine* which *affirms its commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of*



*Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.*<sup>1</sup> Despite the confirmed illegality, Russia instrumentalizes Crimea to further undermine the international stability and law, as well as to continue the gradual russification of its heritage. It became apparent when in 2014, Ukraine and Russia got engaged in litigation over the Scythian gold collection, which was a part of an exhibition “Crimea. The Golden Island in the Black Sea” held at the Allard Pearson Museum in Amsterdam. Around 565 exhibits, mostly archeological, were loaned from five Ukrainian institutions, including four museums in Crimea and one in Kyiv. A dispute about whether to return the objects to the illegally annexed Crimea and or to Ukrainian authorities arose in front of a Dutch court. Both instances (2014, 2021) ruled in favour of Ukraine on the basis of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. While the value of the collection was estimated at around 10 million EUR, the meaning of the collection for the Ukrainian identity is incalculable.<sup>2</sup>

In recent years, a series of resolutions on human rights recorded grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law on the peninsula by the occupying power (19 December 2016, 19 December 2017, 22 December 2018, 18 December 2019 and 16 December 2020 and 16 December, 2021). Yet, the situation of cultural heritage of Crimea has been gradually deteriorating.

On 10 September 2021, UNESCO published a 38-page report on cultural heritage and human rights violations in Crimea. According to the findings, Russia has been implementing

a whole set of measures targeting culture and cultural heritage:

*it legally exports artifacts from the occupied Crimea, which it then exhibits in Russia in accordance with its own curatorial narratives; conducts unauthorized archaeological excavations; erases traces of the cultural presence of the Crimean Tatars on the peninsula, while turning their religion into a weapon against themselves.*<sup>3</sup>

The report warned that the city of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora, the World Heritage site (2013) faces serious threats by illegal excavations and “distortive restoration.”

## **Erasing nationhood: total war on the people and Ukrainian identity**

Ukrainian identity and statehood are primary targets in the ongoing war, together with the material and intangible representations of its centuries-long tradition and independence. As Russia seeks to eradicate the Ukrainian nation and continues to commit atrocities, kill civilians and target cultural heritage sites, churches, schools, libraries, museums, archives, and anything that keeps the Ukrainian collective identity alive. The size of damage inflicted by the Russians is only estimated in the war-torn country. It is evident that retreating Russian forces are vehemently destroying everything in previously occupied cities and villages to maximize the damage inflicted on the Ukrainians. A full-scale assessment will only be available upon the ceasefire, yet it can be already expected that the current figures are significantly lower than the actual devastation.

1 Resolution on Territorial integrity of Ukraine adopted by the General Assembly on 27 March 2014. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/767565?ln=en> (viewed on 08.12.2022).

2 Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, *Scythian gold shall be returned to the territory of Ukraine*, official website, 11 March 2019. Available at: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/pavlo-petrenko-skifske-zoloto-pidlyagaye-povernennyu-na-teritoriyu-ukrayini> (viewed on 20.12.2022).

3 UNESCO Executive Board, Follow-up to decisions and resolutions adopted by the Executive Board and the General Conference at their previous sessions, 212th session, Paris, 10 September 2021, page 4. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000378910> (viewed on 08.12.2022).

As of 13 December 2022, according to data published by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, 553 cultural heritage sites or cultural institutions were destroyed as a result of Russian aggression.<sup>4</sup>

On November 21, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy reported on 800 objects of cultural heritage damaged by Russia.<sup>5</sup>

It is already evident that the scale of terror and pain inflicted upon the Ukrainian population is shocking. According to a report published on October 18, 2022 by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, Russian armed forces are responsible for grave violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law, including war crimes:

*The relentless use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas has killed and injured scores of civilians and devastated entire neighborhoods. The Commission documented indiscriminate attacks using cluster munitions, unguided rockets, and air strikes in the context of Russian armed forces' attempts to capture towns and smaller settlements. (...) Residential buildings, schools, and hospitals, among other parts of the civilian infrastructure, have been damaged or destroyed. The Commission also found that Russian armed forces have shot at civilians attempting to flee and (...) [f]urthermore, the Commission documented patterns of summary executions, unlawful confinement, torture, ill-treatment, rape and other sexual violence committed in areas occupied by*

*Russian armed forces across the four regions on which it focused. People have been detained, some have been unlawfully deported to the Russian Federation, and many are still reported missing. Sexual violence has affected victims of all ages. Victims, including children, were sometimes forced to witness the crimes. Children have become the victims of the full spectrum of violations investigated by the Commission, including indiscriminate attacks, torture, and rape, suffering the predictable psychological consequences. These violations continue to have a devastating effect for victims and survivors.<sup>6</sup>*

Behind the deliberate brutality of Russian troops, there is a political narrative based on an extreme distortion of history and denial of Ukrainian nationhood, its right to independence and its existence. The article "On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians" written by Vladimir Putin and published on 12 July 2021 outlines the falsified common history of the "large Russian nation" comprising of Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, which serves as a base to justify imperial claims over the allegedly "historical territories".<sup>7</sup> On 21 February 2022, the President of Russia gave a public address and defined the cause for his subsequent invasion through the following statement:

*I would like to emphasize again that Ukraine is not just a neighbouring country for us. It is an inalienable part of our own history, culture and spiritual space.<sup>8</sup>*

In these three spheres, Russia acts with particular intensity to impose its influence.

4 Database of destroyed cultural heritage operated by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine. Available at: <https://culturecrimes.mkip.gov.ua/> (viewed on 8.11.2022).

5 Tweet by Nexta media, @nexta\_tv, 9:47 PM, 21 November 2022. Available at: [https://twitter.com/nexta\\_tv/status/1594794633271414784](https://twitter.com/nexta_tv/status/1594794633271414784) (viewed on 8.11.2022).

6 United Nations, UNHCR, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine established by the Human Rights Council pursuant to the Human Rights Council resolution 49/1 on the situation of human rights in Ukraine stemming from the Russian aggression adopted on 4.03.2022*, 18 November 2022, page 2. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/A-77-533-AUV-EN.pdf> (consulted on 09.11.2022).

7 Vladimir Putin, *On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians*, 12 July 2021. Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181> (consulted on 09.11.2022).

8 Vladimir Putin, *Speech on Ukraine, and Recognition of Donbass*, 21 February 2022. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5-ZdTGLmZo> (consulted on 09.11.2022).





**Warsaw Uprising – German troops bombarding the Prudential building, 28 August 1944.**

Photo credit: Sylwester Braun "Kris" / Museum of Warsaw



**An explosion of an apartment building in Mariupol – 11 March 2022.**

Photo credit: BBC

On 17 October 2022, another air strike on Kyiv destroyed a historical residential building in the centre of the Ukrainian capital. Gradual destruction of historical fabric of the city erases the traces of Ukrainian independence and historic growth. Terrorizing the population through targeting civilians, critical infrastructure, culture, religion and heritage brings back the darkest memories of the evil of the XX century.

## Destroying cities, looting of museums

Melitopol was one of the first cities captured by the Russian forces in February 2022. The city has been under Russian control since 26 February. On 30 April 2022, after refusing to reveal information, the curator from the Melitopol Local History Museum, Galina Andriivna Kucher, was reportedly kidnapped by the Russian soldiers.<sup>9</sup> Despite enormous efforts to keep the collection in safety, Russian soldiers have found and looted



A 1,500-year-old golden tiara from the times of Attila the Hun, one of the very few objects of this kind preserved worldwide. The object was exhibited in the Melitopol Museum.

Photo credit: The Associated Press

the local priceless collection of Scythian gold. According to the Crimean Tatar Information Centre, almost 2 thousand of the museum's artifacts have been stolen. Among them are 300 gold objects – the Scythian gold (198 objects came from the so-called Melitopol mound dated to the 4th century BC), 76 objects dated to the period of the Huns and Sarmatians (3rd–5th centuries AD), 1491 silver items (numismatics and medals from the 18th–20th centuries), as well as historical weapons (firearms and white weapons from the 17th–20th centuries).<sup>10</sup> According to a statement by the mayor of Melitopol, Ivan Fyodorov, the museum held *one of the largest and most valuable collections in Ukraine*.<sup>11</sup>

Earlier, on 28 April, the Mariupol City Council published a statement on the removal of more than 2,000 unique items from museums in Mariupol: *[t]hese are original works by Arkhip Kuindzhi and Ivan Aivazovsky. Ancient icons and a unique handwritten Torah scroll. The Gospel of 1811 made by a Venetian printing house for the Greeks of Mariupol, and more than 200 medals from the Harabet Museum of Medallion Art*.<sup>12</sup>

In November 2022, nearly 15 000 artworks were looted from the Oleksiy Shovkunenko Kherson Art Museum. That accounts for 80% of the museum's collections. The exhibits were piled up and transported without proper packaging in four trucks to the Central Museum of Tavrida in Simferopol, Crimea, annexed by Russia in 2014.<sup>13</sup> The Kherson Art Museum informed in its social media that exhibits together with the equipment and electronic devices were removed on 31.10–03.11.22 by a group of 40 people.<sup>14</sup>

9 J. Gettleman, O. Chubko, *Ukraine says Russia looted ancient gold artifacts from a museum*, New York Times, 30 April 2022. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/30/world/europe/ukraine-scythia-gold-museum-russia.html> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

10 The office of General Prosecutor of Ukraine, official website, 10 May 2022. Available at: <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/vikradennya-viiskovimi-rf-nacionalnix-cinnostei-ukrayini-z-muzeyu-v-okupovanomu-melitopoli-rozpocato-provadzennya?fbclid=IwAR1o5b36-F5IuLTWXOUKgkPByzG86eat6Epw-ssEWtBIXVhQp1azVL0mii4> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

11 Ukrinform, Ukrainian multimedia platform for broadcasting, *Melitopol mayor says occupiers steal Scythian gold collection from local museum*, 29 April 2022. Available at: <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-society/3470870-melitopol-mayor-says-occupiers-steal-scythian-gold-collection-from-local-museum.html> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

12 Ukrinform, Ukrainian multimedia platform for broadcasting, *Invaders steal over 2,000 exhibits from Mariupol museums*, 28 April 2022. Available at: <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-society/3469803-invaders-steal-over-2000-exhibits-from-mariupol-museums.html> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

13 Tetiana Chudiakova, *Осколки братской любви в тротиловом эквиваленте (фото)*, 4 November 2022. Available at: <https://tvverezko.info/post/163984> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

14 Kherson Art Museum – Херсонський Художній Музей, official Facebook profile, 4 November 2022. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/art.museum.ks/posts/pfbid02wJ7gmQs251prJwEBkFQsMCy9bn2GGNRdU9AxbvKNy7a1TP2atCgcidxEod6QCHl> (viewed on 14.11.2022).





Destroyed museum of Arkhip Kuindzhi in Mariupol, 28 April 2022.

Photo credit: the Associated Press

Pictures of artworks taken from Kherson Art Museum which were transported and unloaded in the Central Museum of Tavrida, Simferopol, in the occupied Crimea, 4.11.2022.

Photo credit: Tetiana Chudiakova (tvrezo.info)





Another museum in Kherson, the Kherson Regional Museum, was looted by the withdrawing Russian troops in a similar manner. The second most important museum in Kherson had a collection of more than 170 thousand objects, including one of the most extensive collection of archeological artifacts such as unique coins from ancient Greek cities from the Black Sea region. The museum also exhibited weapons used from the 15th to 20th centuries, precious furniture and porcelain, and unique Sarmatian ornaments from the 2nd century BC. On 20 November, pictures of empty display units were released and according to initial estimates, the Russians snatched all of the most important objects from the collection.

The looting of museums in Ukraine has an organized character and is coupled with legal measures introduced by the Russian Federation in the four annexed territories aimed at self-validation of the robbery and dispersion of the museum collections.<sup>15</sup> Apart from the legal measures, flagship cultural institutions carry out a *cultural offensive* policy. In an interview from 23 June, Mikhail Piotrovsky, the director general of the State Hermitage Museum, expressed his view on the superiority of Russian culture, the leading role in setting global trends and emphasized its *absolute competitiveness* referring to boycotts around the world. He claimed that

*the recent exhibitions abroad are a powerful cultural offensive. Call it a kind of 'special operation' if you want. Many people will not enjoy it. Yet, we are coming. And no one is allowed to interfere with our offensive.*<sup>16</sup>



Photos from the Kherson regional history museum.  
Photo source: Ukrainian Ministry of Defence (Twitter)<sup>17</sup>

**As of 9 October 2022, it was estimated that approximately 40 museums had been looted since the beginning of the war.**<sup>18</sup>

Russian actions again resemble the systematic theft carried out during World War II across Europe, where the consequences of the plunder are still suffered and the size of damage will never be fully verified. What we know for sure is it that many important artworks, libraries or archives were lost irretrievably together with ruined cities, towns and villages. Many cultural institutions have never been reopened.

15 Konstantin Akinsha, *Vladimir Putin's martial law decree has given Russian forces 'legal' cover to loot art in Ukraine*, The Art Newspaper, 28 October 2022. Available at: <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/10/28/vladimir-putin-martial-law-ukraine-looting> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

16 Elena Jakovlieva, *Почему необходимо быть со своей страной, когда она совершает исторический поворот и выбор. Отвечает Михаил Пиотровский*, Russian government's official newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta, 23 June 2022. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2022/06/22/kartina-mira.html> (consulted and translated on 14.11.2022).

17 Tweet by Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, @DefenceU, 10:07 PM, 20 November 2022. Available at: <https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1594437303434633216/photo/4> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

18 Tweet by Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, @DefenceU, 11:38 PM, 9 October 2022. Available at: [https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1579224814480343043?s=20&t=KC9lnvN\\_CUNdoqArR71Yrg](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1579224814480343043?s=20&t=KC9lnvN_CUNdoqArR71Yrg) (viewed on 14.11.2022).



Photo credit: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, The Royal Łazienki Museum, Warsaw

Only in Poland, it is estimated that more than half a million artworks were abducted from the public, private and church collections in the years 1939–1945.<sup>19</sup>

Empty frames, a project initiated by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, launched in the largest museums in Poland on 11 November 2022, is a symbol reminding us that losses in the field of culture are, in most cases, irreparable and deprive future generations of cultural and creative wealth.

Having remembered the tragic experiences of the World War II, it is crucial to raise awareness of the values that lay at the foundations of international law and the resulting obligations to protect culture at war. Destruction of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, *may have a detrimental and irreversible impact on the enjoyment of cultural rights*<sup>20</sup> and is often accompanied by assaults on other fundamental human rights, starting from the right to life, to freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

At the same time, the functioning of museums and their role in modern societies have evolved. There is a broad understanding that a museum of the XXI century is not only *a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets, and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage*. Museums have a recognized social importance and remain engaged civil actors: *[o]pen to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.*<sup>21</sup> When a museum is looted or burned, it is not only the collection which is lost – it is a permanent deprivation of an important driver of social cohesion and development for the whole community and future generations. With this awareness, people in the cultural sector in Ukraine show outstanding determination, courage and dedication to preserving their heritage and nationhood.

19 Prof. Piotr Gliński, *Empty Frames – Unhealed Wounds of Polish Museums*, Wszystko co najważniejsze, 10 November 2022. Available at: <https://wszystkoconajwazniejsze.pl/prof-piotr-glinski-empty-frames-unhealed-wounds-of-polish-museums/> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

20 United Nations, GA, Resolution 33/20 (2016) cultural rights and the protection of cultural heritage adopted by the Human Rights Council on 30 September 2016, 33rd session. Available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/227/55/PDF/G1622755.pdf?OpenElement> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

21 International Council of Museums, *ICOM approves a new museum definition*, 24 August 2022. Available at: <https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-approves-a-new-museum-definition/> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

Maryna Hrytsenko in front of the museum building where she lived until November 2022.

Photo source: zahid.net



On the very first day of war, Maryna Hrytsenko, the chief curator in the Galagan Art Museum of Chernihiv, together with her colleagues rushed to the museum to disassemble the exposition – the most valuable pieces from the exhibition rooms got safely hidden. The situation in the region was changing dynamically, local authorities issued warnings about potential fights in the city streets, and there was a threat of marauding. In such circumstances nobody was thinking about cultural institutions. For this reason, while escaping from the city, on the third day of invasion, Maryna decided to move into the museum.

*– I took my child, I took my cat, we arrived here with backpacks filled with the most needed items, in order to ensure a permanent presence of the chief curator – says Maryna Hrytsenko with great confidence.*

There is no shelter in the museum, there are wooden floors, the building is from the 19th century, and this is a monument of architecture. There was no electricity in the city, nor running water, similarly to the situation in the city. A pipe in the basement cracked and water flooded the whole room, which was not suitable for people anyway. Volunteers brought us food and water, and later on, they helped us to construct a provisional stove so we could prepare a warm meal.

Although the building, just like the whole city, was guarded by the Municipal Police, such living conditions were not safe for a tender woman and a child. However, Maryna declares confidently that first and foremost she is a curator, only then is she a woman. She confirmed this during the first emergency.

On March 6, around 10 pm, there was an explosion. A missile fell just a few meters from the museum. As a consequence of the strike, a wave smashed glass in the building. Undaunted, Maryna went to check the building, as there might have been a fire. The collection was not damaged, but in the lack of glass windows, the temperature and humidity standards were disrupted, so exhibits had to be evacuated in the middle of the night.

The curator of the collections was assisted by a museum carpenter. He came to work from the far end of Chernihiv, under an ongoing rocket attack, in order to secure the windows and place wooden boards in the damaged spots. The conservator and other associates of Maryna were in touch too, consulting the colleagues by phone.

In the conditions of constant danger, Maryna Hrytsenko survived until the complete liberation of the Chernihiv region and did not leave the museum until the moment when communication, electricity and alarm systems were restored in the city. Only after making sure that the museum premises were safe, did she return home.

Maryna does not consider herself a hero, but she says that when the war surprised everyone, no one thought about museum collections – the utmost priority was to save human lives. Afterwards, all museum employees united and started working together to help each other and save the heritage.

*If we think about war as a necessity to save lives, then in 2014 everyone would have given up and no one would have fought. In fact, it is about preserving the independence of the state. And the determinant of the nation is its language and culture; it is what distinguishes us from the others. We have a completely different cultural path, a much longer history. We had statehood already at the time when wild bears were still running around the neighbouring territory in the north. And any form of interfering in our culture by our neighbor has to be rejected, because we have evidence for it – these are the monuments stored in our museums – asserts Maryna Hrytsenko.*

The chief curator of the museum is convinced that the enemy did not encroach Chernihiv not because he did not plan to enter – he was simply stopped by the city's defenders. Therefore, after the victory, she prepares an exhibition specially dedicated to our soldiers.<sup>22</sup>

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22 Directly translated from: Orysya Shiyan, *Treasure Rescuers. Three stories of the heroism of museologists from Okhtyrki, Chernihiv and Kharkov*, 29 April 2022. Available at: [https://zaxid.net/tri\\_istoriyi\\_geroyizmu\\_muzeynih\\_pratsivnikiv\\_z\\_garyachih\\_tochok\\_n1541902](https://zaxid.net/tri_istoriyi_geroyizmu_muzeynih_pratsivnikiv_z_garyachih_tochok_n1541902) (viewed on 14.11.2022).



## Losing the evidence on the roots of European heritage: archaeological sites damaged

Archaeological heritage is an essential source of knowledge about the ancient history of humankind. In recent decades, archaeologists' work has significantly advanced and currently commonly includes the application of new technologies such as aerial photography, satellite imagery or 3D simulations. This progress enhances research and discovery, also in the scope of underwater archaeology. Despite the development of relevant legal frameworks, either on the regional or international level, archaeological heritage remains highly vulnerable in the face of existing threats such as illegal excavations, illicit trade, investment pressure, or insufficient awareness, to name a few. Military actions are particularly invasive and have a detrimental effect on the preservation of archaeological sites. The damage

extends beyond the immediate disintegration inflicted by shelling and bombings but also by the deployment and removal of explosive devices. Explosive remnants of war (ERW) pose a deadly threat long after a ceasefire.

**According to preliminary estimates of June 2022, it will take up to 10 years to demine the territory of Ukraine.<sup>23</sup>**

Ukraine, the second largest country in Europe, is rich in archeological resources dating back to the prehistoric times. Scholars have agreed that Ukraine is of central importance for our understanding of central European cultural developments from the Paleolithic onwards.<sup>24</sup> Since 2004, Ukraine has been a State Party to the Convention for the Protection of the

<sup>23</sup> Reuters, *Ukraine will need at least 10 years to demine its territory*, 24 June 2022. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-will-need-least-10-years-demine-its-territory-official-says-2022-06-24/> (viewed on 14.11.2022).

<sup>24</sup> Malcolm C. Lillie, I. D. Potiekhina, *Prehistoric Ukraine: From the First Hunters to the First Farmers*, Oxbow, 2020, p.1.



Photo credit: Myroslava Petsa (Facebook)







The Scythians were a nomadic people with a dominant power on the Pontic Steppe in the 8th century BC. Not many written sources about their culture have survived, apart from detailed writings of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, the Greek historian living in the 5th century BC. We derive our knowledge of the Scythians from archaeological excavations, mainly in Kurgans which served as tombs, repositories of valuable objects, and orientation points in the otherwise flat area. We know that Scythians, both men and women, were excellent horse riders and archers and had trade relations with the Greeks. Rich depictions of Scythians can be found on ancient Greek vases, especially of warrior women – the legend on Amazons was inspired by the Scythian horse-centered culture where women were fighters on equal footing with men.<sup>25</sup>

Photo credit: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1907 (07.286.84)<sup>26</sup>

Archaeological Heritage of Europe (Valletta, 1992) and implemented state legislation to strengthen the safeguarding efforts and facilitate scientific excavations. This progress in protection of archaeological heritage has been stopped as Russian troops are deliberately targeting archeological sites. By extensively resorting to a scorched earth strategy, the invasion is bound to significantly disrupt archeological research and study of ancient lives for the coming decades.

In the Zaporizhzhia region, Russian soldiers have mined the archaeological site of Kamyana Mohyla (Stone Tomb). The site has been an archaeological preserve since 1954 and was inscribed on the informative list in 2006. Kamyana Mohyla is a landmark that dates back to the Upper Paleolithic, it is one of the oldest preserved structures of religious significance. Its central part is a 12-meter-high mound made of sandstone. The caves and grottoes inside are covered with more than 1000 petroglyphs with symbolic depictions, including one of a mammoth. Currently, access to the site is not possible as the surrounding forest and the paths leading to the mound have also been deliberately mined.

As a result of the Russian war, unique archaeological resources which provide scientific evidence of the ancient cultures being depleted or permanently destroyed. Between April 30 – May 1, inspectors from the Regional Inspection for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments in Kherson monitored ancient Kurgans – sacred mounds of the Scythians, in the southern part of the region, between the villages of Druzhbiwka and Dawydiw Brid. The mounds, which can be up to 15 metres high and date back to the first millennium BC, were being damaged by

25 Simon Worrall, Amazon Warriors Did Indeed Fight and Die Like Men, *National Geographic*, 29 October 2022. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/141029-amazons-scythians-hunger-games-herodotus-ice-princess-tattoo-cannabis> (viewed on 21.12.2022).

26 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Terracotta volute-krater (bowl for mixing wine and water), public domain. Available at: <https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/metkids/2017/greeks-vs-amazons> (viewed on 21.12.2022).

Russian forces who used them as elevated positions to fire artillery.<sup>27</sup> Dr St John Simpson, an archaeologist at the British Museum, warned that destruction of the mounds, the central source of knowledge on the Scythian culture, would be a *loss to humanity*.<sup>28</sup> Apart from destroying archeological sites, as it was already mentioned, Russian soldiers have also stolen gold Scythian artifacts from the Melitopol Museum of Local History in Ukraine, and their current location remains unknown.

Izium, a city in the Kharkiv region, was liberated by the Ukrainian Armed Forces on 10 September 2022. Upon recapturing from the occupying forces, the Ukrainian authorities found a completely devastated city and mass graves with more than 440 bodies buried.<sup>29</sup> Occupying Russian soldiers did not spare to destroy even centuries-old stone monuments.

The “stone babas”, standing on the Mount Kremenets in Izium, dating from the 9th to the 13th century, are artworks of Scythian and Polovtsian culture. The word “baba” stands for “grandmother” in modern Ukrainian, yet the word is derived from Turkic “balbal” meaning “ancestor” or “grandfather”. The statues portrayed warriors and women and were placed in sacred sites in order to worship the ancestors. Mount Kremenets – one of the highest in the Kharkiv Region – is a monument of nature and one of the most popular tourist attractions of the region. The Russian shelling assault on Mount Kremenets has also led to the damage

27 Ukrinform, Ukrainian multimedia platform for broadcasting, *На Херсонщині російські військові знищують кургани*, 2 May 2022. Available at: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3472834-na-hersonsini-rosijski-vijskovi-znisuut-kurgani.html> (viewed on 21.12.2022).

28 George Grylls, *Russian troops are destroying ancient nomadic tombs*, The Times, 4 May 2022. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/russian-troops-are-destroying-ancient-nomadic-tombs-5g00c96xs> (viewed on 21.12.2022).

29 Reuters, *Mass grave of more than 440 bodies found in Izium, Ukraine, police say*, 15 September 2022. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/mass-grave-more-than-440-bodies-found-izium-ukraine-police-2022-09-15/> (viewed on 21.12.2022).

30 Tweet by Ukraine / Україна, @Ukraine, 2:17 PM, 8 November 2016. Available at: <https://twitter.com/ukraine/status/795978658016067584?lang=en> (viewed on 21.12.2022).



A post from Ukraine’s official Twitter account from 2016 promoting the Stone Babas from Izium as an element connecting different cultures – similar monolithic human-shaped figures can be found worldwide, the most famous being Moai in Easter Island (top).<sup>30</sup>



Moai human figures on Easter Island in eastern Polynesia built between 13th–15th century (below).

Photo credit: Ian Sewell, via Wikimedia Commons





Izyum's ancient guardians fall victim to Russia's assault.

Photo credit: Julian Summonds via Telegraph <sup>31</sup>



"Kalmius Settlement" archeological site destroyed by Russians.

Photo source: Mariupol City Council (Telegram)



of the 17th century fortifications and the memorial to World War II fallen soldiers.

As a strategic point in the course of the Russian invasion, Mariupol was the place of heavy fights between 24 February 2022 and 20 May 2022. During the siege, the situation in the city was referred to as *apocalyptic* by humanitarian organisations.<sup>32</sup> As of November 2022, Mariupol is still under Russian occupation. According to very limited accounts given by the inhabitants, life in the occupied city without access to the most basic utilities and is *worse than hell*.<sup>33</sup> It is impossible to assess damage and destruction inflicted by the Russian forces, yet it can be predicted that its size will be horrifying.

On 6 September 2022, the Mariupol City Council reported that the Russians destroyed the “Kalmius Settlement” archeological site and published pictures of the ruins.<sup>34</sup> The site was discovered in 2010 and contains cultural layers of the 20th, 19th, 18th centuries, Early Middle Age, Late Bronze Age and Neolithic Age. The neolithic layer requires further research, yet it might have been potentially linked to a famous “Mariupol Neolithic Cemetery” of the 5th millennium BC.<sup>35</sup>

It will be highly challenging to assess fully the damage brought on by the Russian invasion to the archeological heritage in Ukraine. It is estimated that there were 65 350 archaeological monuments in the State Register of Immovable Monuments of Ukraine as of 2016.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, the information in the register is only fragmentary. It often does not provide a complete outlook on the archaeological resources, or does not fully reflect the outcomes of the research concluded. The lack of exhaustive documentation impedes future estimation of the losses and might encourage further crime. Even before the outbreak of the war, illicit trade in archaeological remains was highly concerning in Ukraine, where, as of 2012, nearly 70% of excavations had signs of unauthorized digs and site looting.<sup>37</sup> This situation has only aggravated as proper safeguarding is significantly more difficult in wartime conditions.

The future of archaeology in Ukraine depends on increased awareness of illicit trafficking, cooperation on research and documentation of endangered heritage sites, as well as international mobilisation to prevent cultural appropriation and pseudo-studies, which have become a part of the Russian offensive.

31 R. Oliphant, J. Simmonds, *Izium's ancient guardians fall victim to Russia's assault*, The Telegraph, 3 October 2022. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/10/03/izyums-ancient-guardians-fall-victim-russias-assault/> (viewed on 21.12.2022).

32 L. Harding, J. Borger, J. Kenley, *Russian bombing of maternity hospital 'genocide', says Zelenskiy*, The Guardian, 9 March 2022. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/09/ukraine-mariupol-civilians-russia-war> (viewed on 21.12.2022).

33 P. Sauer, A. Roth, *'It was worse than hell': life in Mariupol under Russian occupation*, The Guardian, 16 June 2022. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/16/ukraine-life-in-mariupol-under-russian-occupation> (viewed on 21.12.2022).

34 Telegram, *Маріупольська міська рада*, 6 September 2022. Available at: <https://t.me/mariupolrada/10885> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

35 Television Service of News, *Окупанти зруйнували археологічний об'єкт у Маріуполі (фото)*, 6 September 2022. Available at: <https://tsn.ua/ato/okupanti-zruynuvali-arheologichnij-ob-yekt-u-mariupoli-foto-2151475.html> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

36 Комітет з питань гуманітарної та інформаційної політики, *Збереження археологічної спадщини та інших культурних цінностей: аналіз, проблеми та пропозиції щодо їх врегулювання*, page 4. Available at: <https://kompkd.rada.gov.ua/uploads/documents/34247.pdf> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

37 G. Ivakin, *Проблеми охорони та збереження археологічних пам'яток в Україні*, 2013, pages 86–88.



Monument to Crimean Tatar victims of the World War II in the village of Orlovka, vandalized on 9 May 2019, just a few days after it had been erected by the local community.<sup>38</sup>

Photo credit: Crimean Tatars (Facebook)



## Religion as a battleground – hardest hits on the places of worship and religious sites

Religion plays a central role in the Ukrainian spiritually rich identity. Throughout centuries, the religious mosaic has been shaped by Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The religious dimension has a crucial yet often dismissed importance for Ukrainian nationhood. In January 2019, the spiritual head of Orthodox Christians – Patriarch Bartholomew, granted autocephaly to the Ukrainian church, marking a historic split from Russia. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko compared the meaning of the split to Ukraine’s referendum for independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.<sup>39</sup> As religion has become an inseparable part of the Ukrainian identity, it has also become a target for the Russian dominance.

Religious sites account for the majority of objects damaged by war atrocities, yet the numbers are still based on fragmentary assessment. The size of destruction that becomes apparent after the Russian retreat is appalling. As of 21 November 2022, in the official database run by the Ukrainian government, there are 170 verified cases of destruction or significant damage.<sup>40</sup> Places of worship of all denominations are being destroyed, together with all other material representations of religious diversity of Ukraine. Crimean Tatar heritage has been heavily targeted even long before the outbreak of the war. A number of cemeteries and monuments related to Crimean Tatars have been vandalized in Crimea in the last several years, especially the memorials commemorating the persecution during the World War II and deportation of 180 000 Crimean Tatars ordered by Josef Stalin in 1944.



Kyselivka, the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, built in 1852.

Photo credit: Benedictine Missionary Sisters via Catholic News Agency

Kyselivka is a village located less than 30 kilometers from Kherson. In March, this part of Ukraine was constantly shelled by the Russian army. It became a key target of Ukraine’s counteroffensive in the south in September and November 2022. When the village was recaptured from Russian hands, a pile of rubble was discovered in the place of the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The church was built in 1852, and survived the tragic events of both World Wars, and the communist regime. In 1990’s, the Society of Christ took care of the church, which has been in constant use by the local population ever since. It was one of the oldest Roman Catholic churches in southern Ukraine, a monument to Ukraine’s religious diversity and rich history. As described by Benedictine Sister Faustina Kovalska who went to the site after the successful liberation from the Russian army, there was nothing left to recover – what she saw was a heap of rubble surrounded by rockets stuck in the ground and debris of shells.<sup>41</sup>

38 Radio Free Europe, *Vandals Smash New Monument To Crimean Tatar WWII Victims*, 9 May 2019. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/newly-installed-monument-to-crimean-tatar-wwii-victims-vandalized/29931904.html> (viewed on 8.11.2022).

39 Reuters, *Ecumenical Patriarch signs decree granting Ukraine church independence*, 5 January 2019. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-church-idUSKCN1OZ0AO> (viewed on 21.12.2022).

40 Database of destroyed cultural heritage operated by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine. Available at: <https://culturecrimes.mkp.gov.ua/> (viewed on 8.11.2022).

41 J. Galant, Benedictine nun from Ukraine: The church building is in ruins, but the Church is alive, Catholic News Agency, 18 November 2022. Available at: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/252852/benedictine-nun-from-ukraine-the-church-building-is-in-ruins-but-the-church-is-alive> (viewed on 22.12.2022).



Photo source: Postcards from Ukraine project

Postcards from Ukraine is a project launched by the Ukrainian Institute in Kyiv which presents photos of destroyed historical sites, juxtaposed with pictures preceding the invasion. The project's creators want to emphasize that Ukraine's cultural heritage is being destroyed daily – Russians directly fire at temples, museums, monuments, theatres, university buildings, cultural centres, cinema theatres and burial grounds of various denominations.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Ukrainian Institute, Postcards from Ukraine. Available at: <https://ui.org.ua/en/postcard/museum-of-history-and-culture/> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

On 4 June 2022, Russian artillery struck the Sviatohirsk Lavra, a shrine of the Orthodox world that has become a shelter for 300 refugees.<sup>43</sup> That same week, Russian shells exploded right in the cells of the monks of the Lavra and resulted in severe injuries and four fatalities.

On March 25, the Russian troops destroyed the Church of the Ascension of the Lord in liberated Lukyanivka with 4 shots from a tank, as reported by the Department of Strategic Communications of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.<sup>44</sup>

Sustained attacks on churches threaten religious freedom and diversity in Ukraine. Temples are being targeted not only by occupying troops present in the Eastern part of Ukraine but also with rocket attacks aimed at civilian targets in cities and towns. The Roman Catholic Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Berezhivitsi, Lviv Region, has been damaged as a result of the rocket fire across Ukrainian territory on 10 October. The church dates back to the 18th century and is a registered monument. As recounted by the parish priest, two rockets fell next to the church. The shockwave shattered the windows and damaged the plaster on the external walls. Restoring the temple will take a lot of effort and financial resources. Fortunately, there was no one in the temple at the time of shelling.

Forty-nine destroyed temples are registered monuments of history, architecture, or urban planning of national importance – such as the Eletsy Holy Dormition Monastery (Church of the Assumption of the Most Holy Theotokos) in Chernihiv, dating from the 11th to 17th centuries.

43 Telegram, *Zelenskiy / Official*, 4 June 2022. Available at: [https://t.me/V\\_Zelenskiy\\_official/1910](https://t.me/V_Zelenskiy_official/1910) (viewed on 22.12.2022).

44 СтратКом ЗСУ / AFU StratCom, official Facebook profile 27 April 2022. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/AFUStratCom/posts/340612444774076> (viewed on 22.12.2022).



Photo source: Postcards from Ukraine project





Photo credit: Oleksandr Tkachenko (Facebook)<sup>45</sup>

The attack of the Russian troops on the sacred sites is not limited to churches and temples. On 8 May, a Russian shelling damaged the Jewish cemetery in the small historic town of Hlukhiv, located on the territory of a national reserve in the region of Sumy. The historical necropolis contains around one and a half thousand graves from the 19th and 20th centuries. Victims of the pogrom (massacre) of 1918 and people related to the development of the culture of the region were buried there, such as the Jewish writer, publicist and social activist L. D. Tsveifel, as well as tzaddikim Menachem-Nohim-David Geselev and Israel-Dov-Ber Nokhimov Shumyatsky.

The Jewish cemetery in Hlukhiv is not only a historical monument but also an important site for the international Jewish community. In addition to the necropolis, the Hlukhiv National Reserve also includes a settlement from the times of Kyivan Rus and architectural monuments from the 17th–20th centuries.

**Faced with the scale of destruction of Ukrainian religious buildings, President Volodymyr Zelensky has been quoted as saying that the actions of the Russians amount to *a complete denial of universal values*.**

<sup>45</sup> Олександр Ткаченко, official Facebook profile. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/oleksandr.tkachenko.ua> (viewed on 22.12.2022).



## Eradication of historical documentation – attacks against archives, libraries, and memorial sites

*That was but a prelude; where they burn books, they will ultimately burn people also.*<sup>46</sup>

*Heinrich Heine, 1821*

Archives, collections of written materials and books constitute the memory of generations. They are also a basis for scientific research and historical analysis, therefore they remain silent opposers of propaganda and fake-news. This is why archives, libraries, as well as memorial monuments, which all speak of the history

unwanted by Russia, are under constant attack. Digital resources also face threats of hacking and manipulation.

Since the beginning of the war, among others, 12 000 archival records on Stalinist repressions against Ukrainian citizens in the Archives Department of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) in Chernihiv Region were burned. The buildings of the State Archives of Kharkiv Region and the State Archives of Mykolayiv Region have been damaged. In Bucha near Kyiv, the private archive of Vyacheslav Chornovil, a political activist and journalist fighting for independent Ukraine, has been destroyed.<sup>48</sup>

In March, the unique archive of 500 Ukrainian folk songs stored on the [folk-ukraine.com](http://folk-ukraine.com) website fell victim to Russian cyber-aggression. It's founder, Marichka Marchik, estab-



Fire in the building of the Archives Department of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) in the Chernihiv region on 25 February 2022.

Photo credit: Ihor Kulyk<sup>47</sup>

46 Heinrich Heine, *Almansor: Eine Tragödie*, 1821, line 240. Available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/45600/45600-h/45600-h.htm> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

47 Rayon History, Окупанти знищили Архів Служби безпеки України в Чернігові, 26 February 2022. Available at: <https://history.rayon.in.ua/news/500397-okupanti-znishchili-arkhiv-sluzhbi-bezpeki-ukraini-v-chernig> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

48 Богдан Плахотнюк, official Facebook profile, 19 April 2022. Available at: [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=5306312356079911&id=100001035967800](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=5306312356079911&id=100001035967800) (viewed on 22.12.2022).



Viacheslav Chornovil's archives destroyed by shelling.<sup>49</sup>

Photo credit: Spilka news

lished the website as a resource for teachers. Fortunately, the creators of the website had backup copies of the songs collected over the years and intend to share them with the world with even more dedication. There were numerous attempts to re-upload the content, yet the attacks were persisting. "It's not about shooting people only, it's also about trying to destroy all our connections to our culture, our traditions, our ancestors" – Marczyk said.<sup>50</sup>

Another important collection of music records is endangered by the war and shelling in Kyiv. The Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine was the world's largest repository of Jewish folk music from 1912–1947, recorded on Edison's wax cylinders. More than 1 017 recordings, each containing from 2 to 7 minutes of music, were in the collection. The recordings were of historical value, similar to decoded notes and texts collected, representing the music made in the years 1912–1947 by the Jewish communities of Ukraine and Belarus. This priceless collection included the only authentic phonogram of the voice of the writer Sholem Aleichem, voices of prominent Jewish actors and writers, as well as instrumental pieces performed by the famous violinist and

composer Leo Pulver. In 2005, the collection was entered on the UNESCO Memory of the World program list. The collection was a living testimony of the Jewish world in Easter Europe which was lost in the result of the World War II. The fate of the collection as we speak is unknown.

*If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants<sup>51</sup> – the origin of this sentence reaches back to the Middle Ages, yet it is often quoted through letters of Isaack Newton, who as a scientist, emphasized the fundamental importance of the legacy of the previous generations for research and progress. In the XXI century, we understand that documentary heritage is a foundation of human civilization, a factor of development and a resource that has to be preserved and passed on to the next generations. It has also become a field for international cooperation. *Documentary heritage is a legacy of humankind, through which we can look back into the past, enrich our present lives, and look into the future with the boldness forged by enduring memories – we can read on the website of the UNESCO's Memory of the World Program. It was established in 1992 in order to guard against the collective amnesia, calling upon the preservation of the valuable archive holdings and library collections all over the world and ensuring their wide dissemination. As of 2022, there are 432 Memory of the World inscriptions on the International Register.**

Documentary heritage, both traditional and digitized, is extremely endangered in the event of war. In the light of Russia's policy of deliberate destruction, we need to raise the collective awareness the importance of

49 Telegram, *SPILKA News*, 19 April 2022. Available at: <https://t.me/spilkanews/669> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

50 Bloomberg, *How Ukrainians Are Protecting Their Centuries-Old Culture From Putin's Invasion*, 3 November 2022. <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2022-ukraine-culture-russia-war-map-building-preservation/> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

51 Isaac Newton, *Letter from Sir Isaac Newton to Robert Hooke*, 1675, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/objects/9792> (viewed on 14.11.2022).





Photo source: Postcards from Ukraine project

documentary heritage preservation and its meaning for sustainable development which we all benefit from.

Russia denies the Ukrainian nation its right to keep the historical resources and express their memory. In Mariupol on 19 October, the Russian occupation authorities dismantled a monument to the victims of the Great Ukrainian Famine, calling it an 'epitome of disinformation'.<sup>52</sup> The monument was dismantled by a truck crane and the granite slabs are to be turned into

building materials. The propaganda media are promoting the claim that the 1932–33 famine did not affect Ukraine but Kazakhstan, the Volga Region, and the North Caucasus. The Great Ukrainian Famine was a famine in 1932–33 supposedly induced by the communist authorities of the USSR, caused by villagers' opposition to the forced collectivisation of agriculture. At the time, Ukrainian villages were subjected to ruthless execution of planned grain deliveries to the USSR's collective granary – the mandatory quota exceeded their

<sup>52</sup> Suspilne, *Росіяни знесли пам'ятник жертвам Голодомору в окупованому Маріуполі*, 20 October 2022. Available at: <https://suspilne.media/299070-rosiani-znesli-pamatnik-zertvam-golodomoru-v-okupovanomu-mariupoli/?fb> (viewed on 14.12.2022).

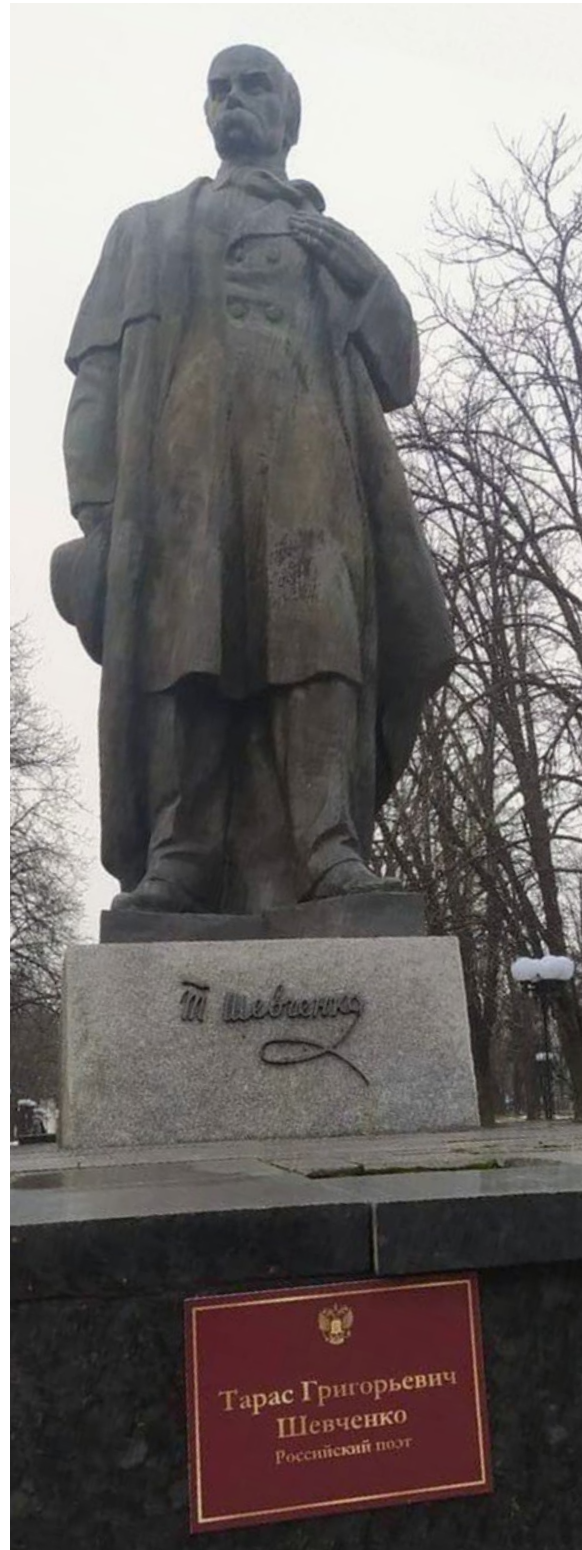


production capacity. All foodstuffs were looted, including grain intended for next year's sowing. The famine resulted in the deaths of 4 million Ukrainians, including around 60,000 ethnic Poles. The Day of Remembrance for Victims of the Great Ukrainian Famine and Political Repression is celebrated annually in Ukraine on the fourth Saturday of November. In 2006, Poland acknowledged the Great Famine in Ukraine as genocide.

On 3 August, according to Mariupol City Council, Russian occupation troops dismantled the monument to the Ukrainian defenders of Mariupol.<sup>53</sup> The memorial was one of the features of the modernised Freedom Square. It was built on the plan of Ukraine's Trident, with attached bronze leaves showing the names of soldiers who died in the city's defence. Streams of water, symbolising tears, flowed down the stone slabs of the monument's foundation. In the place of the vandalized monument, the Russian authorities plan to erect a statue commemorating Alexandr Nevsky – the 13th-century Grand Duke of Vladimir, and a saint of the Russian Orthodox Church. In another retaliatory move, the occupation military forces are allegedly going to place a bust of Lenin in one of Mariupol's schools.

In Kharkiv, the historical Freedom Square, together with the building of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration, was destroyed by missiles on 1 March 2022. The square was renamed as Freedom Square in 1991 and was a favourite venue for public events in Kharkiv for decades. Twenty people were injured and ten died in the attack.<sup>54</sup>

On 12 December, a plaque "Russian Poet" was placed on the Taras Shevchenko monument in the center of Luhansk. The monument was erected in 1998 and is an example of locally important monumental art. It is vivid example of cultural appropriation carried out by Russian authorities.



Taras Hryhorovych Shevchenko (spelled in Russian) "Russian poet".

Photo credit: Denys Kazanskyi (Telegram)

<sup>53</sup> Telegram, Мариупольська міська рада, 3 August 2022. Available at: <https://t.me/mariupolrada/10440> (viewed on 14.12.2022).

<sup>54</sup> Ukrainian Institute, Postcards from Ukraine. Available at: <https://ui.org.ua/en/postcard/freedom-square-maidan-svobody/> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

## Dispersed communities, broken ties – viability of intangible cultural heritage at risk

Since the adoption of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the awareness of the meaning of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) for modern societies has been progressively growing among both the policy-makers and the bearers. The ICH practice is a carrier of memory of many generations. The Convention introduced a broad, people-centered definition of ICH, thus encouraging bottom-up methods for identification and elaboration of dedicated safeguarding measures. What is crucial is that traditional practices or expressions have been recognized as fundamental components of identity that require institutional support to ensure its viability. We are the guardians of the traditions, obliged to pass it on to the future generations, especially in the face of new threats resulting from war.

War and displacement lead to collapse of communities and eradication of individuals from the structures and contexts that so far had a constitutive impact on the cultural identity. Disruption of community life and deprivation of tools, artifacts or other necessary components is detrimental for continued practice. Museums and cultural centers are often partners in safeguarding of ICH as they are repositories of folk art, knowledge and artifacts. Destruction of schools and community culture centers affects negatively the intergenerational transmission.

**In February 2022, the Ivanka Historical and Discovery Museum was burned down. It exhibited a collection of works by Maria Prymachenko, Ukraine's beloved artist who derived her inspiration from folk tales and traditions. Only a part of the collection was saved.**

According to the information published by the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, 2 129 educational institutions have been bombed and shelled, 216 of them have been completely destroyed as of 3 August 2022.<sup>55</sup>

Influx of refugees demands unprecedented mobilization on the part of the host countries in the field of ICH which starts with identification of the bearers and the establishment of a dialogue on the ICH in the emergency contexts. Safeguarding ICH among displaced communities is crucial for their resilience, psychological comfort, and sometimes it even provides income. Creating an environment that would allow for a continued practice and transmission of intangible heritage among refugees is not only an expression of respect for cultural diversity and human creativity, but also a sign of an utmost care for safeguarding this priceless cultural wealth for future generations. Finding an adequate response to the ongoing crisis requires urgent action and renewed debate on holistic protection of culture at war.

During the fifth extraordinary session held on 1 July 2022, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took a unprecedented decision to inscribe the Culture of Ukrainian borscht on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, as a case of extreme urgency.<sup>56</sup> Ukrainian borscht is a traditional dish which represents centuries old tradition and is an expression of hospitality. It is traditionally cooked with beetroot and other vegetables. The viability of the element, however, is threatened by the armed conflict which started in February 2022. The factors mentioned in the nomination include displacement of bearers from their communities of origin and from the cultural context together with destruction of traditional agriculture which affected negatively the availability of ingredients. The culture of

55 Tweet by Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, @DefenceU, 12:48 PM, 3 August 2022. Available at: <https://twitter.com/defenceu/status/1554781215202369536> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

56 UNESCO, Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee: 5.EXT.COM 5, 1 July 2022. Available at: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/5.EXT.COM/5> (viewed on 22.12.2022).



Photo credit: Aleksandra Brodowska

Open handicraft workshops of traditional Ukrainian dolls (“motanki”) took place during Freedom Festival in Warsaw, 4 June 2022. Motanki are made mainly by women out of scraps and strings. They are prepared with an intention or a wish. Every doll may signify something else, depending on the colour, the materials and fabrics used. For example, a red string symbolizes a return home. Nadia who is a traditional artist and conducted the workshop, prepared handmade dolls with precisely red strings and she calls them “travellers”. They are supposed to be together, and if separated, they should always be reconnected. Before leaving Ukraine is escape of war, she made two identical dolls. She has one of them with her. The other one is with her son who is in combat at this very moment. He carries the doll in a pocket next to his heart. Nadia made the doll with the intention that her son comes back home safely, that that he never forgets where he is from. She told us that making dolls helps her to find her

place in the new country, but also to feel connected to her roots.

Nadia, asked why she had started to practice the art of motanki, said that this was a natural consequence of her upbringing. She was born in a village, grew up next to a forest, her grand-mother was a tailor and her grand-father was a carpenter. She was growing up surrounded with tools, fabrics and sounds that inspired her imagination. She clearly mentioned that her home, the surrounding environment and the natural landscape – all these have shaped her sensitivity which she now expresses in the handicraft.

Nadia, as a majority of Ukrainians who fled the war, wishes to come back home and reunite with her family, closed ones, and the familiar scenery. She hopes that the war ends soon, just like her daughter, who has helped with the workshops cutting paper birds – a sign of peace. Hope and faith are all that matters to her at the moment.



borscht cooking has been uniting Ukrainian communities despite the growing hardships, both in Ukraine and abroad.

Each refugee bears a story – a part of the Ukrainian intangible heritage. This legacy will live on only if the people can survive and their stories are heard. Yet, Russian troops spread death and terror through killings of those who dedicated their lives to culture, heritage, art – and therefore contributed to the Ukrainian identity and nationhood.

Below: Monument to Taras Shevchenko, Borodianka. Right: Stele in memory of Our compatriots-defenders of Ukraine who died in the anti-terrorist operation zone, Borodianka.

Photo credit: Yurii Veres



Yuri Kerpatenko, the conductor of the Kherson Regional Philharmonic Orchestra, has tragically died at the hands of the occupying authorities in Kherson. According to the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, Yuri Kerpatenko was shot dead in his own home after he refused to cooperate with the occupation authorities. Earlier, the occupiers had threatened to persuade the man to cooperate under duress. The Kherson Regional Prosecutor's Office has opened an investigation into the case.<sup>57</sup>

Popular Ukrainian children's writer Volodymyr Vakulenko was killed during the Russian occupation of Izium, Kharkiv Oblast, which was liberated in September.<sup>58</sup>

Vadym Chlupianets, a ballet dancer of the Kyiv National Academic Operetta Theater, died fighting for Ukraine near Bakhmut. He was only 26 years old.<sup>59</sup>



57 Kherson Region Prosecutor's Office, *У Херсоні окупанти розстріляли дирижента обласної філармонії - розпочато розслідування*, 14 October 2022. Available at: [https://kherson.gp.gov.ua/ua/news.html?\\_m=publications&\\_c=view&\\_t=rec&id=321375](https://kherson.gp.gov.ua/ua/news.html?_m=publications&_c=view&_t=rec&id=321375) (viewed on 22.12.2022).

58 Suspilne, *Письменника Володимира Вакулєнка вбили під час окупації — розслідування і результат ДНК*, 28 November 2022. Available at: <https://suspilne.media/327144-pismennika-volodimira-vakulenk-a-vbili-pid-cas-okupacii-rozsliduvanna-i-rezultat-dnk/> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

59 Tweet by Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, @DefenceU, 7:40 PM, 24 November 2022. Available at: <https://twitter.com/defenceu/status/1595849732177502210> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

# Multi-dimensional support

The Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine – established at the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, is the operational core of the team based at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, working, among others, for cultural assistance to Ukraine. The Center coordinates (domestic and foreign) initiatives to save Ukraine's cultural resources and performs educational activities and information campaigns about Ukrainian cultural heritage – especially about the losses caused by the war atrocities. It cooperates with national cultural institutions, museums, state archives and libraries, including the National Institute of Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad POLONIKA, the Ossolineum National Institute, the Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Polish National Foundation, the Government Agency for Strategic Reserves, monuments conservators and other institutions. From the beginning of April to the end of 2022, it helped over 100 Ukrainian cultural institutions.

Earlier, the assistance organised independently by museums, archives, libraries and other institutions had aided dozens of institutions. In 2022, the Center alone shipped 800 pallets of protective materials to secure archival resources, antiquities, and museum artifacts with a total value of more than 1 million EUR. More shipments are being organised on an ongoing basis in response to the needs reported by the Ukrainian side.

As it was already mentioned, Poland remains one of the biggest providers of aid. The total value of Polish contributions to refugees and partners in Ukraine is estimated at 1.7 billion USD. Poland has also created institutional and legal framework to create long-lasting support mechanisms. The governmental assistance is complimented with enormous involvement of state and non-state institutions, self-government bodies, non-government organisations, and individual citizens.

Overnight, Poland became a host country to around 3.4 million refugees. In March 2022, Poland introduced an act on assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country.<sup>60</sup> The new solution facilitates legal stay, work permits as well as access to all public services, including healthcare and education. It also guarantees financial support.

**According to available statistics, around 200 000 Ukrainian refugee children attend school in Poland.**

The tragic legacy left by the two totalitarian regimes in the XX century mobilize the whole Polish society to get involved for the sake of Ukraine's independence. As Poland was deprived of historic architecture, art and books collections, and archives, there is a widespread understanding, support and engagement to save Ukrainian cultural heritage.

The Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine was established with a mission to support Ukrainian institutions in their efforts to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of Ukraine – it is an operational core of the emergency response initiative established in an ordinance of 23 February 2022 by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage.

Since the very first day of its functioning, the Center's activity has been based on close cooperation with the Ukrainian side. The team of the Center constitutes of both Polish and Ukrainian staff members who remain in direct contact with partner institutions on a daily basis. The support provided includes material support, expertise and know-how exchange, as well as extensive activity on the international arena.



Photo source: HERI Ukraine (Facebook)

<sup>60</sup> Ustawa z dnia 12 marca 2022 r. o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa, Dz.U. 2022 poz. 583.





Photo credit: National Institute of Cultural Heritage, National Agency of Strategic Reserves



## Material support

The Center carries out the shipment of materials to answer the needs of Ukrainian partners which were submitted to the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, either directly or through other institutions. We closely cooperate with the Governmental Agency for Strategic Reserves (RARS) to ensure safe and efficient delivery of gathered supplies.

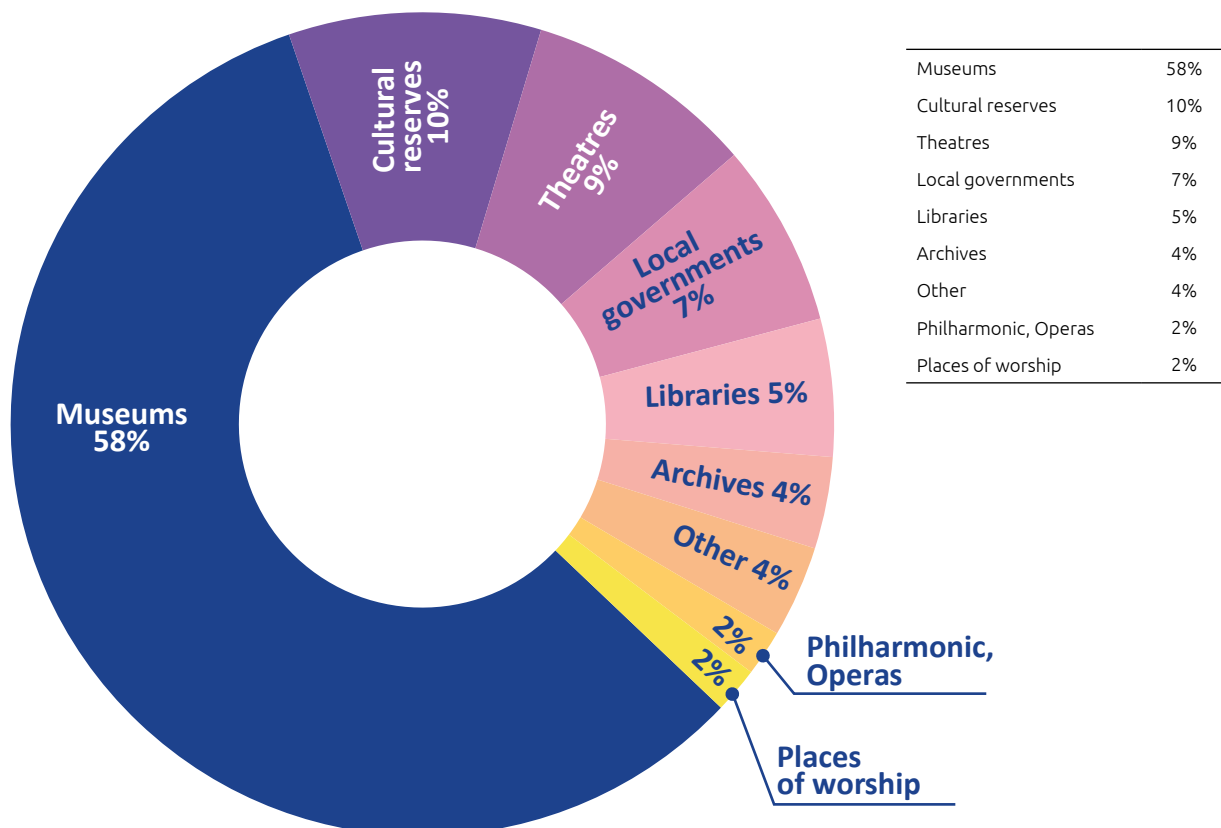
The Center is in charge of running and updating database of needs indicated by institutions from Ukraine. Upon establishing contacts, we verify and coordinate support provided by us, by institutions from Poland and around the world. The Center's team is composed of both Polish and Ukrainian specialists, which greatly facilitates communication with our partners from Ukraine. The language skills enable fast analysis of information and review of Ukrainian sources. We are constantly liaising with the institutions to which we are providing the assistance, and the aid delivery procedures are being updated and adjusted to fit the current situation in Ukraine.

The materials delivered are essential for protection of cultural heritage in war-time conditions, such as power generators (48) and fire extinguishers (1 500), as well as sand bags (30 000), fire blankets (500), boards (OSB), polyester pipes, and many other necessary items.

**In 2022 our support was delivered to 111 various cultural institutions.**

So far, the value of material support sent to cultural institutions in Ukraine has amounted to over 1 million EUR, almost half of which came from the subsidies provided by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.

The Center has so far effectively delivered transports to 8 cities: Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Dniepro, Kamieniec Podolski, Kiev, Kotelwa, Lviv and Vinnitsa. In cooperation with local partners, the aid was effectively distributed to local institutions.





The aid was received by various types of cultural institutions. The staff members remain committed to protect the collections and find materials and safe spaces to ensure that the priceless items survive the dangers of war.

In the past 6 months, shipments were provided on a regular basis. For example, in mid-May, a shipment arrived at the Olbia National Historical and Archaeological Reserve, in the Mykolayiv Region. It included fire protection means and materials to be used for safeguarding collections from the sites located in the region.

Olbia is one of the most important archaeological sites on the Black Sea. The first archaeological excavations were performed there in 1794. Since then, Olbia has been a place for cooperation and scientific exchange as numerous international teams were involved in excavations. In the light of most recent events, the collection and the archeological resources face serious threat of looting and destruction.

Another shipment which was delivered in October to the Vinnytsia Local History Museum in Vinnytsia, Ukraine in October was welcomed with great satisfaction. It contained, among other things, a generator, fire extinguishers, bubble wrap, and other protective materials.

## Summary



**800**

palettes  
of protective materials  
and fire extinguishing  
equipment



**111**

institutions  
received aid from  
the Centre  
and its partners



**2** over  
mln  
Euro

spent by  
the Polish government  
on assistance to the  
cultural sector  
in Ukraine





*We see the Russians methodically attacking and destroying our heritage. They destroy museums, destroy archives, libraries, destroy monuments. When the Museum in Vinnytsia turned to its Polish colleagues at the end of March, both individuals and cultural institutions extend a helping hand to us. We have created a list of needs for fire-fighting and packaging materials in such quantity that we, in turn, could also help other cultural institutions in Vinnitsa if they needed it. For us, it is important and meaningful both in the context of the history of our collection and our mission to preserve the architectural monument. (...) Such a partnership shows the practical ground of cooperation, empathy, shared understanding of the enemy, and therefore we feel that we are not alone in this confrontation, both on the military and on cultural fronts.<sup>61</sup>*

Oleksandr Fiodorytsen,  
Director of the Vinnytsia  
Local History Museum

<sup>61</sup> A Footage from local television, including the interview with Oleksandr Fiodorytsen, Director of the Vinnytsia Local History Museum. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHT9yDmSpCo> (viewed on 22.12.2022).

See translation



Today, humanitarian aid from Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine went to Nikopol to protect its cultural heritage. Nikopol suffers from shelling every day, so many thanks to Poland for their continued help to our country 🇺🇦❤️

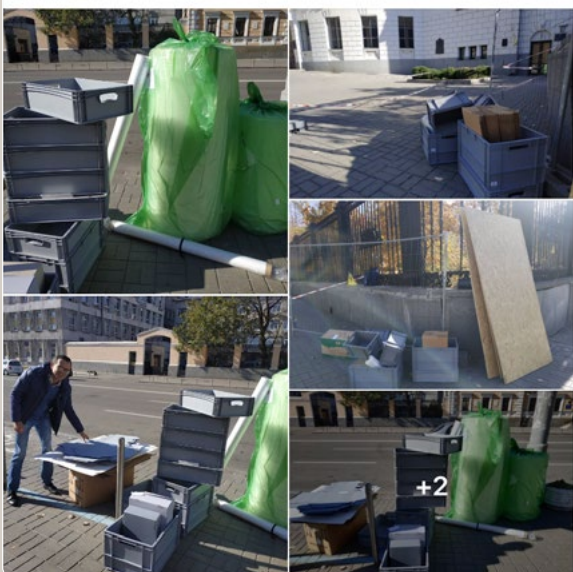
Управління з питань охорони культурної спадщини Дніпровської міської ради, Дніпропетровський національний історичний музей ім. Яворницького.

See original · Rate this translation



Щиро дякуємо Штаб порятунку спадщини / Heritage Emergency Response Initiative за необхідні матеріали для музею. Така підтримка та допомога для нас неоціненна. Дякуємо Maria Zadorozhna, Olha Salo.

See translation



Щиро дякую Вам, Катерина Литвин, та Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine за вкрай потрібні прилади для пожегогасіння та обігріву приміщення в зимовий період! Дуже вчасно, вкрай потрібно! Хай повсякчас береже Вас Господь Бог!

See translation



Сьогодні російська федерація цілеспрямовано і жорстоко нищить Україну, нищить все, що пов'язано з нашою історією, культурою, нашою ідентичністю.

Щодня сотні ракет і бомб летять на наші міста і села, гинуть мирні українці... Світ піднявся на захист нашої країни, світ допомагає нам аби вистояти у цій жахливій війні та зберегти наше майбутнє.

І саме зараз ми відчуваємо потужну підтримку від наших польських друзів і колег, які постійно допомагають нам зберегти нашу культурну спадщину, наші музеї та пам'ятки. Археологічний музей Інституту археології НАН України безмежно вдячний Центру допомоги культурі України Національного інституту культурної спадщини Міністерства культури та національної спадщини Республіки Польща (Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa) за гуманітарну допомогу, за їхню щирі підтримку та співучасть у цій нелегкій боротьбі.

Dzisiaj Federacja Rosyjska celowo i brutalnie niszczy Ukrainę; niszczy wszystko, co dotyczy naszej historii, kultury, naszej tożsamości.

Na nasze miasta i wsie codziennie spadają setki rakiet i bomb, codziennie giną pokojowo nastawieni Ukraińcy...

Świat powstał, by bronić naszego kraju, by pomóc nam przetrwać tę straszną wojnę i ocalić naszą przyszłość.

Wielkie wsparcie otrzymujemy także od naszych polskich przyjaciół i kolegów, którzy z całym siłą pomagają nam zachować nasze dziedzictwo kulturowe, nasze muzea i zabytki.

Muzeum Archeologiczne Instytutu Archeologii Narodowej Akademii Nauk Ukrainy wyraża wdzięczność Centrum Pomocy dla Kultury na Ukrainie zorganizowanego w Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa Kulturowego Ministerstwa Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego RP) za pomoc humanitarną, szczerze wsparcie i współudział w tej trudnej walce.

See translation



Гуманітарну допомогу від Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine сьогодні було передано зоологічному музею Дніпровського національного університету ім. Олеса Гончара.

Управління з питань охорони культурної спадщини Дніпровської міської ради, Дніпропетровський національний історичний музей ім. Яворницького.

See translation







During this month, humanitarian aid was transferred from Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine to save the exhibits of the SES Museum and to the city of Nikopol, which suffers every day from shelling, and in which there are almost no cultural heritage objects left that have not been damaged.

Thank you to the Polish people for helping Ukraine and our heritage 🇺🇦🇵🇱

Дніпропетровський національний історичний музей ім. Яворницького  
Управління з питань охорони культурної спадщини Дніпровської міської ради

👉 See original · Rate this translation



Квітень 2022 року, чи не одна з перших, кого почула в телефоні була Маріяна Мороз, а потім Лілія Онциценко з пропозицією доєднатися до зустрічей з поляками)))  
Так ми зустрілися кожну п'ятницю, формували пакети допомоги містам, які відчували на собі спаління „сусідів“...  
Буквально вчора телефонний дзвінок, до Вас їде допомога установам, які опіюються збереженням спадщини, а сьогодні ми її отримали! Дива таки існують, вони реальні!!!!  
Дякую пані Лілія та Мар'яна за знайомство , Michal Krasucki за діву допомогу!!!! Це так круто, мати можливість бути корисним на ниві збереження українського!!!!  
Щира подяка за допомогу  
@Polish Support Center  
#PolishSupportCenter <https://www.facebook.com/PSCforCultureinUkraine/>  
Олександр Шевчук Олександр Шевчук дякуємо за логістику, допомогу!!!!  
Гайовий Ярослав , ти ключовий колега, з тобою і в огонь, і в воду!!!!  
Окрема подяка всім представникам культурних закладів, які допомагали в розвантаженні щастя, тепер до примного - застосування в дію)))

See translation



Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine , дякуємо за допомогу!!! Наша красуня Катеринська церква з вогнегасником!

See translation

Понад 200 об'єктів культурної спадщини України відчували на собі душок "руського міра" - руйнування наших церков, музеїв, меморіалів, архівів, театрів, пам'яток...

Аби зберегти наші культурні цінності й нашу ідентичність, світ допомагає Україні чим може. Поміж іншого нагальною є потреба у пакувальних матеріалах і захисному обладнанні.

Деталей - уникаємо, але лише Штаб порятунку спадщини / Heritage Emergency Response Initiative допомогу надано закладам культури завдяки польським та французьким музеям, нідерландському фонду Prince Claus Fund, швейцарському фонду Aliph, італійській асоціації CHOICE, Міністерству культури Естонії Eesti Kultuuriministeerium, საქართველოს მემკვიდრეობის Blue Shield Georgia, Komitet Pomocy Muzeom Ukrainy / Committee for Ukrainian Museums та іншим.

Особливо системним у цьому є польський Центр допомоги культурі в Україні при Інституті національної спадщини Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa та Міністерстві культури і національної спадщини Польщі Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego. Відповідно до запитів низки інституцій наш Штаб отримав вантаж від Центру і у найближчий час доставлятиме у різні регіони.

Щира вдячність за спільний культурний фронт!

See translation



Polish assistance received by a partner institution in Kharkiv, Ukraine.



## Study visits, high-level meetings, and conferences

Study visits are an important part of the work performed by the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine. It is a space for the exchange of knowledge, continued cooperation, as well as discussion on the challenges resulting from the invasion. Since February, the Center has supported the organisation of two study visits for Ukrainian officials and hosted a several meetings to discuss the most effective cooperation formats.

In September 2022, Taras Vozniak, Director General of Lviv National Borys Voznytsky Art Gallery, and dr Wolodymyr Herych visited the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine to discuss the expert cooperation with the National Institute of Cultural Heritage. The Institute's cooperation with art conservation specialists from Ukraine, dating from 2002, has resulted, among others, in the entry of the Wooden Tserkvas into the UNESCO World Heritage List (2013). In the following months, we met with a number of our partners, including Jurii Savchuk, the Director General of the War Museum (National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War), and Ihor Poshyvailo, the Director of the Maidan Museum.

In October 2022, a delegation from the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, which arrived in Warsaw at the invitation of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, held working meetings at selected cultural institutions. Anastasia Bondar, Deputy Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, and the directors of the Ministry's departments were presented with the most recent activities of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage in archive management and preservation. The delegation had an opportunity to see the Institute's archival collections and a modern digitization laboratory. In addition, in line with the interest of the Ukrainian guests, a presentation was given on selected fields of expertise, such as new technologies in documentation,



Photo credit: National Institute of Cultural Heritage





On 27 October 2022, a meeting with Marek Lemiesz, a researcher of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, was organized in Kiev on the topic “Documenting the war. Protection of cultural heritage of post-conflict territories as part of modern stabilization operations. Polish military contingents in Iraq and Afghanistan 2003–2012”. The event was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, the Institute of Archeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the National Pedagogical University, Kyiv National University, NGO „Union of Archaeologists of Ukraine”, and many other participants interested in the topic. The meeting was an opportunity to exchange practical experiences regarding inventorying, digitization and protection of valuable objects of cultural heritage during war, including discussion on conclusions drawn from the peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Photo credit: Спілка археологів України / The Ukrainian Association of Archaeologists



inventorying and digitization. The meeting was also an occasion for a face-to-face meeting with the staff members of the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine who have been in contact with some cultural institutions since the first days of the war.

In November 2022, at the invitation of the Polish Institute in Kyiv, a group of museum professionals from Ukraine took part in a study visit in Poland and visited the National Institute of Cultural Heritage. The meeting was an opportunity for discussion, transfer of knowledge, and direct exchange between the staff of the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine and the staff of museums that, in recent months, have received assistance from Poland to secure and protect

their collections from destruction. During the meeting, the Center received the Diploma of Gratitude and Appreciation from the Heritage Emergency Response Initiative *in recognition of sustained commitment and outstanding contributions to the preservation of Ukraine's cultural heritage during the war*. Ihor Poshyvailo – and the Maidan Museum was one of the Center's leading partners in distributing the supplies delivered from Poland to cultural institutions throughout Ukraine.

In addition to the meetings in Warsaw, staff members of the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine visited a number of partner institutions in Ukraine. Expert on-site meetings are a permanent component of the Center's activities and mission.



Kateryna Chuyeva, Deputy Minister of Culture and Information Policy, dr Wolodymyr Herych, prof. Andrzej Szczerski, the Director of the National Museum in Kraków and Katarzyna Zalasinska, director of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, together with the staff members of the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine.

Photo credit: National Institute of Cultural Heritage



## The Warsaw Recommendation

- Core principles of the recovery and reconstruction processes.
- Result of the conference „The challenges of World Heritage recovery” which gathered representatives of UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, UNISDR, the World Alliance for Urban Crises and representatives from all regions of the world.
- Available in 5 languages, including Ukrainian.



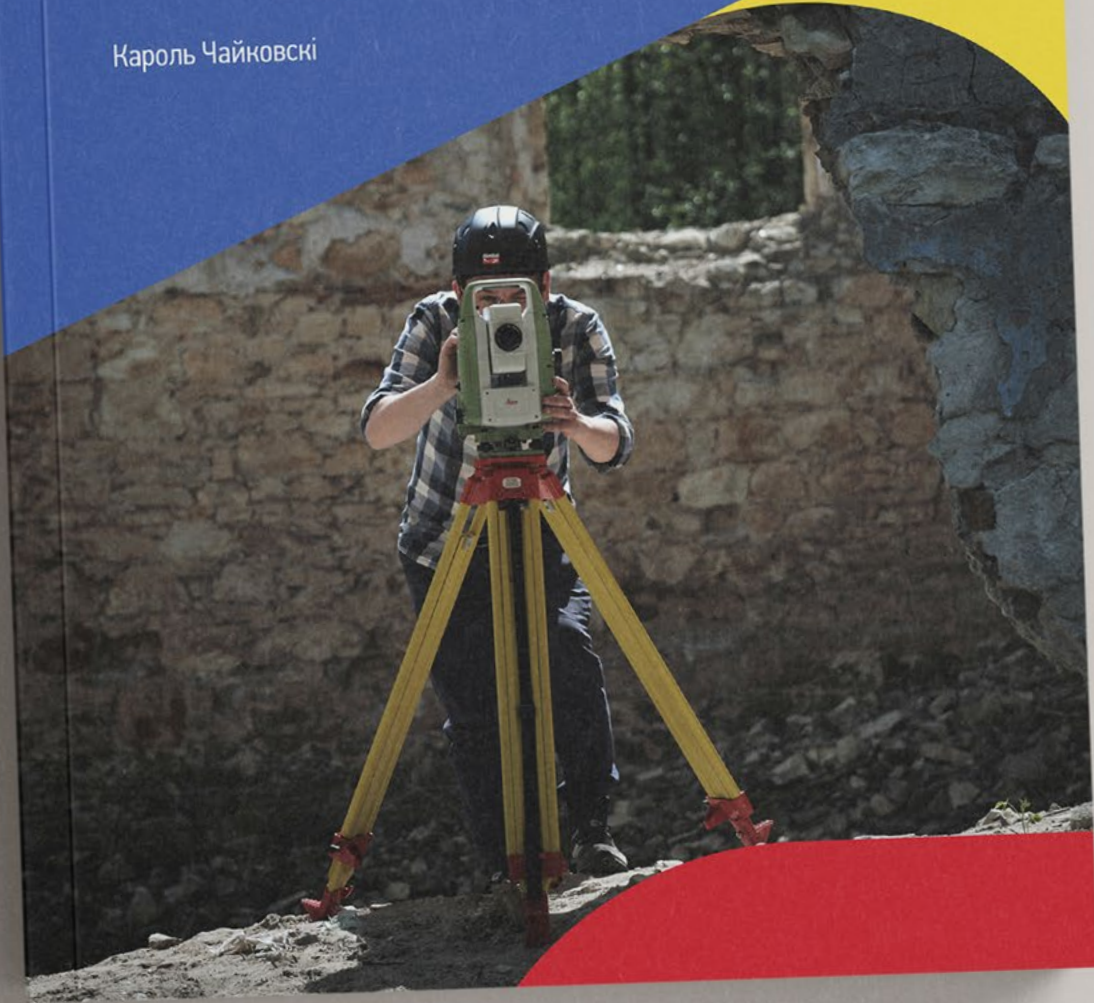
In December, an open discussion on “Reconstructing Ukraine: Hope, Perspectives and Challenges” brought together representatives of civil society, urban planners, architects and experts from different countries. During the event held at the Goethe-Institut Paris, Aleksandra Brodowska from the National Institute of Cultural Heritage talked about the activities of the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine and the Warsaw Recommendation. This project was organized by the Goethe-Institut, the Polish Institute, Institut français, Instituto Cervantes and in cooperation with civil society actors, the European Cultural Foundation and EUNIC.

Photo credit: Goethe Institut, Cyrille Clément

# Сучасні технології в документуванні пам'яток культури

Узгоджена система збору, обробки та презентації даних як основа реставраційної діяльності

Кароль Чайковскі



Modern Technologies for the Inventory of Architectural Monuments. A coherent system of collecting, processing and presenting digital data as a basis for conservation activities in war-threatened areas. The training session was conducted on 26 August 2018 by Karol Czajkowski from the Centre of Excellence for Digitisation of Monuments.



## Expert support and enhanced cooperation

National Institute of Cultural Heritage, a home institution for the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine, has over 60 years of experience in research in the field of cultural heritage documentation, monuments analysis and heritage management. It is a center of competence in the field of digitization of monuments. It is also a community of dedicated professionals from all areas of cultural heritage preservation who rushed to support their Ukrainian colleagues from the very first day of war. This strong fundament allows for transfer of know-how, organization of trainings and workshops as well as enhanced cooperation in the field of i.a. education.

In the period from February – December 2022, the Center has engaged in numerous activities.

Together with the Polish Committee for UNESCO, the Center has organized support for refugee children from Ukraine. Inciting curiosity and openness through sharing of both cultures was a clear objective to the experts of intangible cultural heritage who united their forces with specialists in education. Even before the end of the school year lesson scenarios and accompanying materials were provided to Polish students in order to familiarize them with Ukrainian culture. In the scenarios the role of intangible heritage has been emphasised, including the knowledge on items entered onto the Representative List. Students learn about the traditions of both countries, and in the course of interactive activities and group-work, it becomes clear that tradition may help also the youngest generations to form a unique bond.

The National Institute of Cultural Heritage has been a center of excellence for the digitisation of historical monuments in Poland for more than ten years. In August, the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine organized an expert training session on 3D scanning of architectural objects entitled “Modern Technologies for the Inventory of Architectural Monuments. A coherent system

of collecting, processing and presenting digital data as a basis for conservation activities in war-threatened areas”. The training session was conducted by Karol Czajkowski from the Centre of Excellence for Digitisation of Monuments.

Poland has repeatedly engaged in the protection of endangered cultural heritage in various parts of the world. As result of our efforts, in 2018 UNESCO adopted the Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage. The document constitutes a comprehensive set of principles concerning the process of restoring cities and reconstruction of historic buildings, or compounds, destroyed in armed conflicts or in natural disasters.

The Center has translated the text of the Recommendation into the Ukrainian language. We believe that it will soon be the basis for discussions on the reconstruction. We have already assured our Ukrainian partners of our readiness to cooperate in this field – we have learnt many valuable lessons from the reconstruction process after World War II, and our experience in this area is particular in the global perspective.

Safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, which is a prime carrier of the nation’s identity and traditions, is an important part of activities supporting our neighbouring country. In June, the Center published a report on intangible cultural heritage of displaced Ukrainian communities. The report is the first analysis of this type made available in the English language. Having thoroughly examined the bearers’ needs we are capable of providing adequate assistance and to further implement support initiatives.

The ongoing war increased the risk of illegal exports of cultural goods from the territory of Ukraine. The first Polish-language publication covering the Ukrainian law on the transboundary movement of cultural goods was published. It was a significant contribution to raising awareness of the Ukrainian heritage protection law. It was followed by workshops for custom officials on the main characteristics of cultural goods vulnerable to illicit trafficking.





ВАРШАВСЬКА РЕКОМЕНДАЦІЯ ЩОДО ВІДНОВЛЕННЯ ТА РЕКОНСТРУКЦІЇ КУЛЬТУРНОЇ СПАДЩИНИ

WARSAW RECOMMENDATION ON RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

REKOMENDACJA WARSZAWSKA W SPRAWIE ODBUDOWY I REKONSTRUKCJI DZIEDZICTWA KULTUROWEGO

THE CHALLENGES OF WORLD HERITAGE RECOVERY

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN RECONSTRUCTION

**LP** Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine  
 Centrum Pomocy dla Kultury na Ukrainie



24 NOVEMBER 2022  
 9.30-13.30

THE WARSAW RECOMMENDATION - INTRODUCTION TO HERITAGE RECOVERY

**ONLINE**  
 LANGUAGES: ENGLISH

Community Contact, Irpin, Ukraine, photo by Yuri Velez

The Next 50 unesco ICCROM Ministry of Culture and National Heritage National Institute of Cultural Heritage 60 YEARS OF THE MISSION LP Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine Centrum Pomocy dla Kultury na Ukrainie

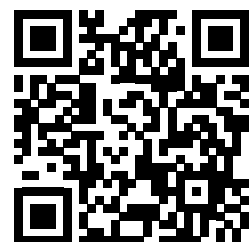
## Reconstruction of Ukraine's heritage in the light of the 2018 Warsaw Recommendation on recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage

"The Warsaw Recommendation on recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage"<sup>62</sup> was developed in response to challenges faced by societies and decision-makers worldwide brought by conflicts, wars, or natural disasters. The document was elaborated during the international conference "The Challenges of World Heritage Recovery" held at the Royal Castle in Warsaw in May 2018. In this genuinely symbolic place, deliberately brought to ruin during World War II and meticulously rebuilt to become the World Heritage Site in 1980, more than 200 participants shared their perspectives and conclusions on the experience of reconstruction and recovery in post-disaster societies. Well aware that such processes require the highest levels of coordination and expertise, the representatives of *i.a.* UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, UNISDR, the World Bank, and the Global Alliance for Urban Crises elaborated a set of guiding principles that facilitate reconstruction and recovery of cultural heritage damaged or destroyed as a result of armed conflicts or natural disasters.

The Warsaw Recommendation has consolidated an approach to recovery of cultural heritage viewed as a time-sensitive social process with a clear objective: *[i]n post-conflict and post-disaster situations, the overall goal is the recovery of the society.* Such an approach to recovery is not limited to the material substance but extends to the whole cultural practice and the surrounding social fabric. Furthermore, successful reconstruction depends on reconciliation

and remembrance, which heavily rely on the recognition of values identified by the communities. Again, recovering cultural heritage can help communities to reaffirm their identity, restore their dignity, and lay the conditions for a sustainable social and economic recovery. These issues have gained significant importance in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, where we see a near-total scale of destruction of cities such as Mariupol or Kharkiv, painfully comparable to Warsaw or Gdańsk in the year 1945. Understanding the urgency caused by the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage, the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine at the National Institute of Cultural Heritage – in cooperation with both Poland's Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and ICCROM – has initiated further discussion on the Warsaw Recommendation. On 24 November 2022, we organized the first workshop session, "The Warsaw Recommendation – Introduction to Heritage Recovery", held entirely online in order to facilitate the participation of both Ukrainian and international partners.

The workshop was held in 3 sessions focusing on case studies, regional and institutional cooperation, as well as challenges and opportunities for digitization, documentation, or holistic approach to heritage recovery. The event was attended by experts from UNESCO, ICCROM, Marche Polytechnic University, and the National Institute of Cultural Heritage. It offered a space for enhanced dialogue on the future of Ukraine and opened new channels for cooperation. More than 80 participants took part in the workshop while another 200 followed the live transmission.



62 Document available at <https://whc.unesco.org/document/168799>



**Special report**  
on intangible  
cultural heritage  
**of displaced**  
**Ukrainian**  
**communities**  
- the perspective  
of Poland

June 2022



Ministry of  
Culture  
and National  
Heritage of  
the Republic  
of Poland



National Institute  
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Polish Support Center  
for Culture in Ukraine  
Cultural Heritage  
and History in Ukraine



## Special report on intangible cultural heritage of displaced Ukrainian communities – the perspective of Poland, June 2022

Safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, which is a prime carrier of the nation's identity and traditions, is an important part of activities supporting our neighbouring country. The report was created in the framework of the activities conducted by the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine, and it is the first report of this type made available in the English language.<sup>63</sup>

Poland overnight became a host country for an estimated 3.4 million refugees. The report was created at lightning speed – the research was conducted in May, while the outcomes were published already in the first week of June. We were faced with enormous challenge and thanks to the effective cooperation of state and self-government institutions, NGOs and the civil society, we have been capable of assessing the situation in Poland through dialogue with the communities on their cultural practice and existing needs. The report allowed us to provide adequate assistance and conditions for continued practice of intangible cultural heritage in many identified cases.

First of all, we learned from the surveys that the group of Ukrainians who have found refuge in Poland is very diverse. Safeguarding

this cultural richness, which is a part of our European heritage, is our shared responsibility. Second, many traditions and customs cultivated in Poland and Ukraine are very similar. Sharing knowledge on intangible culture helps to build bridges of understanding between Poles and Ukrainians who thanks to joint practice feel closer together. It's also a strong resilience factor, a big help in integration and education, especially for school children. Third, the report confirms the economic importance of intangible heritage for refugee communities, especially for those active in the creative sectors. We learned that many folk artists who have made a living in Ukraine from their activities have been left without tools, equipment or work space. We witnessed immense support in such situations, when we facilitated to find solutions enabling the bearers to continue their practice. The key conclusion of the report is that safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage of displaced Ukrainian communities is of fundamental importance for saving Ukraine's culture and preserving the European cultural diversity. It requires identification and safeguarding carried out by states hosting refugee communities, accompanied with information campaigns. What is more, based on the expertise and discussions around the importance of the 2018 Warsaw Recommendation, raising awareness of the existence and role of intangible heritage is a prerequisite for Ukraine's future reconstruction process. Lastly, the report constituted a basis for further research and policy development in the field.



<sup>63</sup> The report available at [https://ukraina.nid.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Special-report-on-intangible-cultural-heritage-of-displaced-Ukrainian-communities.-The-perspective-of-Poland.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3CPWCSP\\_U7y5KyOns2dmnjKkdqw4VbvqO7-\\_jlns8HLM6oPHZ\\_HiGwq\\_4](https://ukraina.nid.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Special-report-on-intangible-cultural-heritage-of-displaced-Ukrainian-communities.-The-perspective-of-Poland.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3CPWCSP_U7y5KyOns2dmnjKkdqw4VbvqO7-_jlns8HLM6oPHZ_HiGwq_4)

# **International engagement**



Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its consequences for the cultural heritage of mankind is a key topic for the entire international community. In the scope of international cooperation, the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine is aided by its key partner – UNESCO.

On 9–10 June at the International Cultural Centre in Krakow a conference entitled 50 Years of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in Europe. Achievements and Challenges. The meeting was attended by experts from Great Britain, Germany, Israel, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Lithuania, Slovakia and Spain. The conference participants shared, among others, their experience in implementing the provisions of the World Heritage Convention and presented prospects of its enactment. The first topic raised at the conference was the situation of cultural heritage in Ukraine. The problem of threats resulting from the Russian aggression was discussed by experts, activists and civil servants.

In the scope of the tripartite cooperation among Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine in the Lublin Triangle format another EUR 1 million has been granted to a fund for digitalisation of Ukrainian culture. Digitalisation is a key form of protecting heritage against the war and the ongoing deliberate destruction. In this context we are supporting our Ukrainian partners professionally, technologically and financially.

On the initiative of the Permanent Representations to the United Nations of three countries – the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Albania and Ukraine, on 17 July 2022, a meeting of the Security Council in the Arria formula was organized in order to bring wider attention to the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage in Ukraine resulting the Russian invasion. The aim of the meeting was to present the international community with the extent of Ukraine's losses in the area of cultural heritage, to develop methods of documenting Russian crimes against Ukrainian culture, and to define ways for the UN agencies and its Member States to assist in the protection of endangered monuments and other works of material culture.



A meeting of the Security Council in the Arria formula organized on 17 July 2022 on the initiative of the Permanent Representations to the United Nations of three countries – the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Albania and Ukraine. During the meeting important messages were exchanged between Lazare Eloudou Assomo, Director of the World Heritage Centre UNESCO; Kateryna Chuyeva, Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Culture and Information Policy; Teresa Patricio, President of the International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), a non-governmental organisation dedicated to the conservation and protection of cultural heritage monuments; and Katarzyna Zalasinska, Director of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage and of its Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine.



In September 2022 Polish representatives – Dąbrówka Lipska from the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, Mariusz Lewicki, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland to UNESCO in Paris and Katarzyna Zalasieńska, Director of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, met with Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of the World Heritage Centre UNESCO and Irena Caquet, Programme Specialist at the World Heritage Centre. The meeting was devoted to the continuation of cooperation regarding further implementation of the Warsaw Recommendation and Polish support for cultural institutions in Ukraine, which is coordinated by the Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine.

Photo credit: National Institute of Cultural Heritage

The National Institute of Cultural Heritage undertakes an array of activities, primarily within the framework of UNESCO, to mobilize the greatest resources possible to save Ukraine's cultural heritage. Sunna Altnoder, Head of Movable Heritage and Museums Unit at UNESCO and Katarzyna Zalasieńska, Director of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage in Poland and and have discussed the prospects of future cooperation and joint projects.

Photo credit: National Institute of Cultural Heritage

Building upon the Polish experience of the post-war recovery, UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the National Institute of Cultural Heritage has initiated further discussion on the principles of recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage affected by war atrocities. Together with the UNESCO World Heritage Center and ICCROM, an online workshop session on the principles of the reconstruction and recovery was carried out on 24 November 2022. Three panels gathered an audience of more than 200 listeners, including representatives from Poland, Ukraine, Finland, Lithuania, France, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Spain and Belgium. Among the speakers was the director of the World Heritage Centre UNESCO Eloudou Assomo, Kateryna Chuyeva, Deputy Minister of Culture and Social Policy, Katarzyna Zalasieńska, the Director of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, and a number of internationally recognized experts from UNESCO, ICCROM, Marche Polytechnic University and the National Institute of Cultural Heritage.







Photo credit: National Institute of Cultural Heritage

Cooperation of Polish – Ukrainian experts has been carried out e.g. within the framework of the International Conservation Council, established in connection with the Polish-Ukrainian inscription of the Wooden Tserkvas of the Carpathian Region in Poland and Ukraine on the UNESCO World Heritage List (2013).

During the meeting held in Kraków on 8 June 2022, the Council discussed current risks and challenges resulting from the immediate threats of destruction and the needs for preservation of the 8 Orthodox churches located in Ukraine. The meeting was attended by Ms. Kateryna Chuyeva, Deputy Minister of Culture of Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine.



## The future ahead

It is very important that we do not treat war as a “new normal”. It is our mission to sustain solidarity and ensure that information on the scale of the destruction reaches as many people as possible.

Europe will assist Ukraine in its recovery and reconstruction of historical monuments. Ukraine’s Minister of Culture and Information Policy, Oleksandr Tkachenko, informed about the declaration signed jointly with ministers of other European countries on the recovery and reconstruction of the cultural heritage destroyed in the war. The document has been signed by ministers of culture of Poland, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania and Slovakia the common goal of the declaration signatories will be to protect and preserve Ukraine’s cultural heritage as a component of the human cultural heritage, as well as to act jointly on the international stage to counter the Russian aggression on Ukraine.

The Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine will continue to provide assistance to Ukrainian partners. A workshop on prevention of illicit trade in cultural goods, organized in close cooperation with UNESCO, that took place in Warsaw between 18–20 January 2023.

## Acknowledgements

Since March 2022, the Center has carried out transports in cooperation with 13 international partners. We wish to thank them for their engagement, generosity and solidarity.

- The National Museum of Finland,
- The Finnish National Gallery – Finland,
- Museoiden hankintakeskus,
- Nationalmuseum – Sweden,
- Moderna Museet – Sweden,
- Nordiska Museum – Sweden,
- The Army Museum – Sweden,
- Arkdes – Sweden,
- Fine Arts Museum – Hungary,
- ICOM France,
- ICOM Spain,
- SUCHO,
- AMAZON.

The Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine - established at the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, is the operational core of the team based at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, working, among others, for cultural assistance to Ukraine. The Center coordinates (domestic and foreign) initiatives to save Ukraine's cultural resources and performs educational activities and information campaigns about Ukrainian cultural heritage - especially about the losses caused by the war atrocities. It cooperates with national cultural institutions, museums, state archives and libraries, including the National Institute of Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad POLONIKA, the Ossolineum National Institute, the Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Polish National Foundation, the Government Agency for Strategic Reserves, monuments conservators and other institutions. From the beginning of April to the end of 2022, it helped over 100 Ukrainian cultural institutions.

Earlier, the assistance organised independently by museums, archives, libraries and other institutions had aided dozens of institutions. In 2022, the Center alone shipped 800 pallets of protective materials to secure archival resources, antiquities, and museum artifacts with a total value of more than 1 million euros. More shipments are being organised on an ongoing basis in response to the needs reported by the Ukrainian side.