



**KFLMUN'26**

*Organised by Kocaeli Science High  
School*

# UNESCO

*Study Guide*

Chair: Zeynep Sarımehtemtođlu

Co-Chair: Kerem Cem Tefekli

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## Letter From the Secretary General

Dear Participants, welcome to KFLMUN'26!

It is our pleasure to welcome you all to our conference. No matter your role in this conference, as the executive team, we wish you an amazing experience in our conference. As much as we hope to have a great time socializing, we also look forward to finding great solutions regarding the news that we all see everyday.

As we all know, the future does not look pleasant for our world. Even though we say the world wars are behind us, we still are struggling to find peace in the globe that we live in and it is sad to say that we are on the luckier side at the moment. That is why we want to raise awareness about these ongoing wars. We also hope to protect the people and also us, because who knows what's next?

In this conference, our goal is to turn our words and thoughts to actions for those who are less fortunate and for those that sacrifice their lives to help others. We will work as a team to support our friends, brothers and sisters who are in need of hope and help.

We know, even in Turkiye, we have very destructive natural disasters like earthquakes, (1999 Marmara earthquake, 8 February Hatay earthquake) and much more. When natural disasters or conflict hits, we can't do much more than to hope and pray that we live, and don't lose everything. This is why in this committee we will discuss about cultural heritages that got destroyed, restoration processes, how to protect the heritages in case of a conflict or a disaster.

We will also address cultural heritage trafficking as we know has become a regular crime at this point of time. We will talk about how we will protect our culturally significant pieces that hold our history, how to control our borders and much more—which will be mentioned further in the study guide.

We expect productive ideas from you, our fellow delegates, on both issues.

While we prepare for KFLMUN'26 as the executive team, your chairboard will give the information as the time ticks. And if you have any further questions, feel free to check our contact page or e-mail me through [ecrenakbas@gmail.com](mailto:ecrenakbas@gmail.com). Feel free to ask anything that is on your mind, we are here for you!

## Letter from the Chairboard

Dear Delegates,

First of all, We would like to welcome you all to this conference held at our school. We are very excited to have you as part of this committee. We also hope that you will have both an engaging and enhancing experience.

We, the chairboard, Chair being-Zeynep Sarımehmetoğlu the Co-Chair being Kerem Cem Tefekli have worked really hard just like our whole MUN team. Take care, see you on May 8-9-10!

We will talk about preventing the illicit trafficking of cultural property, which occurs from threats such as illegal excavation, theft, and organized smuggling. The committee will also discuss how to protect World Cultural Heritage sites from dangers such as armed conflicts and natural disasters.

To get prepared for the conference we recommend you look at the “Questions to be Addressed” part to find some questions to be addressed and get prepared for crisis situations... Don't hesitate to get in contact if you have any questions or need anything. See you in the conference.

Contact Info:

Zeynep Sarımehmetoğlu: [zeyneps1006@gmail.com](mailto:zeyneps1006@gmail.com)

Kerem Cem Tefekli: [keremcemtefekli@gmail.com](mailto:keremcemtefekli@gmail.com)

## Key Words

*Illicit Trafficking:* The illegal trading, selling, or dealing of goods that are prohibited by law. The import, export or transfer of ownership of cultural property shall be illicit.

*Restitution & Return:* Restitution is giving back cultural property that was lost through a wrongful or illegal act, returning is giving it back to its rightful owner,

*Cultural Property:* Objects, artifacts, and sites that hold significant value for a particular culture or community.

*Non-biased:* Free from bias, able to judge fairly because you are not influenced by your own opinions.

*Emergency Response:* an immediate, systematic response to an unexpected or dangerous occurrence.

## What is UNESCO?

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is a specialized agency dedicated to strengthening international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture, and information.

In our committee we will focus on the field of culture which aims to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. To achieve this UNESCO encompasses 4 main challenges:

### -Protecting culture in crisis situation \*\*\*

Focuses on protecting culture in crisis situations like armed conflicts, disasters; combating the illicit trafficking of cultural property and heritage. We will mostly focus on this challenge.

### -Adapting to contemporary challenges

Focuses on adapting situations such as climate, technology and integrating culture into education

### -Preserving heritage

Focuses on preserving World Heritage sites, Intangible Cultural Heritage (traditions and oral histories), Underwater Cultural Heritage; facilitate preservation of the Memory of the World (documentary heritage)

### -Developing sustainable, inclusive and creative societies

Focuses on raising awareness, spreading culture

## Agenda Item 1: Addressing the illicit trafficking of cultural property and heritage

### *Brief Summary:*

To combat the multi-billion dollar illicit trade in cultural goods, UNESCO operates as a global "intelligence hub," connecting national police forces, customs, and art markets. Their strategy has shifted recently from simple prevention to a high-tech, proactive enforcement model.

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Cultural property and heritage are put at risk through several anthropogenic actions (actions taken by humans). Anthropogenic threats take various dimensions, ranging from theft from museums, private collections, and religious buildings, smuggling of and illicit trade in cultural property, the irremediable looting and demolition of archaeological sites by clandestine excavators, or simply neglect of heritage sites. Moreover, the illicit trafficking of cultural goods contributes to the funding of terrorism, organized crime, and money laundering.

### *Past Actions:*

The 1970 Convention (Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property) urges States Parties to take measures to prohibit and prevent the illicit trafficking of cultural property. It provides a common framework for the States Parties on the measures to be taken to prohibit and prevent the import, export and transfer of cultural property. The return and restitution of cultural property is central to the Convention.

The convention has three main principles: Prevention, Restitution and International Cooperation.

*Prevention can in particular consist of:* the regular establishment of inventories, the establishment of export certificates, the application of controls and approval of traders, the application of criminal or administrative sanctions, the organization of information and education campaigns.

*Restitution:* Article 7, paragraph (b)(ii) provides that States Parties should undertake appropriate measures to seize and return any stolen and imported "inventoried" cultural property. Article 13 states that parties are responsible at the national level in terms of restitution and cooperation. However there is a little conflict since "if the purchaser is innocent" the requesting party of return shall pay just compensation to the purchaser or to a person who has valid title to that property. (This conflict will be taken care of in 1995 UNIDROIT Convention though.)

*International Cooperation:* One of the guidelines of the 1970 Convention is the strengthening of international cooperation between States Parties. Article 9 of the Convention commits mechanisms.

The 1970 Convention doesn't cover the period before 1970, so the cultural properties exported illegally before this date were left in a legal limbo if the countries involved didn't cooperate.

And in 1976, under the aegis of UNESCO, a committee of experts met in Venice to study the question of the restitution or return of lost cultural property, whether as a result of foreign or colonial occupation or following illicit traffic before the entry into force, for the States concerned, of the 1970 Convention. Stressing the absence of international mechanisms, an international body responsible for finding ways to facilitate bilateral negotiations between the countries concerned for the return or restitution of cultural property and encourage them to conclude agreements to that effect, The UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP) was established. However it's still non binding, it only supports the process and does recommendations.

In 1995 in order to be more effective in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property, UNESCO asked the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) as well to study private law questions that are not directly dealt with by the 1970 Convention. The Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995), supplements that of 1970 in terms of private law.

## **Agenda Item 2: Protecting World Cultural Heritage Sites from armed conflicts and natural disasters**

### **Brief Summary:**

When we are talking about cultural heritage protection, we can divide it into 3 main parts:

#### *1-Preventive Measures*

There are many ways we can protect our cultural heritages, such as :

- Creating detailed digital records, including high-resolution 3D scans and photographs, so sites can be reconstructed if damaged.
- Moving portable artifacts (museum collections, archives) to secure underground bunkers or neutral third-party countries.
- Educating armed forces on the locations of "no-strike" heritage sites and their legal obligations under international law.-This may not work on some countries for obvious reasons.-

#### *2-Emergency Responses*

During the conflict, we can:

- Use sandbags, scaffolding, and protective barriers to shield monuments and statues from shrapnel and blasts.
- Use ground-based reports and satellite surveillance to track looting and damage in real-time. (then maybe see the overall damage and figure out a plan on how to fix it properly)
- Carry the portable artifacts to safe havens

to protect our valuable artifacts.

### 3-Recovery

After the conflict hit, the artifacts may have gotten damaged, even fully destroyed. The best we can do is restore them- if they are damaged- and hold individuals accountable through the ICC. (International Criminal Court)

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#### a. *Protecting World Cultural Heritage Sites from armed conflicts;*

Cultural Heritage is vulnerable especially during times of conflict to being illegally removed from archaeological sites, stolen from museums, trafficked and sold to private collections. UNESCO started taking actions in response to the widespread destruction of cultural heritage caused by war.

UNESCO, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, the World Customs Organization and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) are all involved in the implementation of international conventions on cultural heritage, such as the 1954 Hague Convention and the 1972 Unesco Convention. They also monitor compliance with the 1954 Convention's Second Protocol protecting cultural heritage, and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Unidroit) Convention on trafficking of artefacts. The European Union contributes to these efforts, providing financial support to civil society and international organisations in this field, and organising specialised training courses, meetings, and networks for those involved in protecting EU cultural heritage. It condemns destruction and looting of cultural heritage, and prohibits illicit trade in cultural goods.

The Convention outlines key obligations for States Parties, including preventive measures such as maintaining inventories, planning emergency responses, and providing refuge for movable cultural property. It also mandates respect for cultural sites, prohibits their use for military purposes, and enforces sanctions for violations.

First Protocol (1954) specifically addresses the protection of cultural property during occupation, prohibiting its export, sale, or retention. To further strengthen the Convention, a Second Protocol (1999) introduced enhanced protection for cultural sites of exceptional importance, defined criminal sanctions for violations, and established an Intergovernmental Committee to oversee its implementation.

#### b. *Protecting World Cultural Heritage Sites from natural disasters;*

Cultural heritage is vulnerable to the adverse impacts of natural disasters. Floods, earthquakes, landslides, fires, long-term climate effects, and other natural hazards can cause damage or even total destruction of cultural heritage (European Parliament 2007).

Unesco has manuals to manage the disaster risks for World Heritage properties which focuses on one approach to the principles, methodology and process for managing disaster risks at cultural and natural World Heritage properties. The manual is primarily aimed at site managers, management teams and the agencies and organizations that have a direct stake in the management of a heritage property.

## Questions to be Addressed

How can common inspection plans and policies be developed regarding the prevention of illegal sales of cultural property?

How can the inspection of certifying and registering cultural assets be improved?

How can a completely neutral process be followed for the return of cultural property?

How will protection against stealing, illicit trafficking be provided in a conflict situation (like war, disaster situations) ?

How can it be distinguished if the cultural property is illegally removed or trafficked, or has been destroyed from serious conflicts ?

What kind of precautions should be taken before disasters to protect world Cultural heritage sites?

What kind of actions should be taken to manage heritage property if a disaster happens?

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What is UNESCO?

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The 1995 Convention

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Brief summary agenda 1

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Brief summary agenda 2

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