



Applying New Solutions for Cultural Heritage protection by Innovative,
Scientific, social and economic Engagement

HORIZON EUROPE - EUROPEAN PROJECT

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Supporting local, national and European policy makers for active strategies to fight illicit trafficking and looting of cultural goods

Cultural Heritage is a Threatened Resource

Cultural heritage is under threat. Addressing this challenge requires a global and comprehensive approach. It is crucial to establish a common platform for practitioners concerning the assessment of worldwide technologies and the early adoption of solutions. This approach ensures high added value and a positive cost-benefit analysis, integrating these solutions into civil society for the service of heritage protection.

Preservation is a Multidisciplinary Task

To effectively support the preservation of threatened cultural heritage, a broader application of in-depth analyses is necessary. Leveraging technological developments, social and human sciences, and fostering stronger interaction with experts and citizens can enhance and improve preservation efforts.

Piloting Experimental Areas

Cultural communities should implement pilot experimentation areas, collaborating with scientific and technological providers. This approach facilitates the understanding of local, sociological, and economic contexts. Additionally, it involves mobilising local stakeholders, training beta-users, specifying and implementing

technology demonstrations, and evaluating the impact and replicability of these demonstrations.

Documenting and Recording of Threaten Objects

The control of objects' provenance and the detection of illicit trafficking can be effectively improved thanks to the development of images, Shape From Shading and 3D recognition technologies.

Bridging the Gap Between Technologies and Market

Evaluation of technologies close to or on the market using user-centric methods is essential for bridging the gap between technologies and the market. This includes aspects such as looting detection, identifying neglected or abandoned heritage, object identification and traceability, and implementing effective object marking.

Supporting the Vulnerable Countries

Protecting cultural heritage in vulnerable countries is intricately linked to the social, political, and economic situation of those areas. These interconnected factors play a vital role in determining the success and effectiveness of efforts to safeguard the cultural heritage in the region. Understanding the links between cultural property crime and other forms of organised crime is vital. Even beyond the context of armed conflict, activities such as looting, face-to-face transactions, and online trafficking exhibit a scale and intensity that surpass the monitoring and investigative capacities of available civil society actors, cultural heritage specialists, and law enforcement agents. The social organisation evident in looting and trafficking operations highlights that seemingly disorganised criminal activities, orchestrated by apparently reckless individuals, can efficiently evade policing and punishment. There is a pressing need to delve deeper into the connections between cultural property crime and other organised criminal activities to gain a more profound understanding and effectively address these multifaceted challenges.

Increase the use of Technological Tools

In the pursuit of repatriating objects, institutions tend to ignore the potential of satellite imagery and ground truthing in documenting events and providing additional evidence regarding the extraction of cultural artefacts. In this context, archaeologists are often tasked with adopting an object-oriented approach, attempting to establish links between artefacts and their places of origin based on typological knowledge. This approach helps in determining provenance. Satellite and ground monitoring, when employed effectively, can capture the distinctive indicators left by looters. These tools enable the characterization of the methods employed by looters, identification of the periods involved, and the specific areas within archaeological sites that are targeted. This comprehensive use of technological tools contributes significantly to enhancing the investigative and repatriation processes associated with cultural heritage objects.

Active Policy

It is crucial for local, national, and transnational decision-makers to actively disseminate the outcomes of the ANCHISE project. Their role involves engaging with communities and enhancing their capacities to bridge the gap between innovations and key stakeholders such as Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), museums, archaeologists, art dealers, auction houses, and citizens. This active policy approach ensures effective communication and collaboration, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the project's outcomes and facilitating the integration of innovative solutions within various sectors.

ANCHISE suggestions for an Active Policy

The ANCHISE project relies on its holistic expertise to implement five key actions with the aim of providing efficient methods, knowledge, and toolkits to enhance the protection of cultural heritage against illicit trafficking:

- **Creating a Hub of Social Sciences, Politics, and Economics:**

This involves establishing a central hub that integrates expertise from social sciences, politics, and economics. The goal is to generate in-depth results that are likely to drive structural evolutions in heritage protection.

- **Conducting a Large-Scale Evaluation of Technologies and Needs:**

ANCHISE proposes a comprehensive assessment of technologies and needs on a large scale. This evaluation aims to identify the most effective tools and strategies required for addressing the challenges of heritage protection.

- **Developing a Toolkit of Innovative Technological Solutions:**

The project emphasises the development of a toolkit comprising innovative technological solutions. This toolkit serves as a resource for implementing advanced methods and technologies in safeguarding cultural heritage.

- **Conducting Pilot Experimentation Areas with Museums, Border Control, and Archaeological Sites:**

ANCHISE advocates for engagement through the implementation of pilot experiments. Collaboration with museums, archaeological sites and customs agencies will help test and refine innovative solutions in real contexts.

- **Engaging a Unique and Wide Network of Practitioners:**

To ensure broad impact, the project emphasises the engagement of a diverse network of practitioners. This engagement fosters collaboration and knowledge-sharing among professionals involved in heritage protection, contributing to a collective and effective approach.

Awareness Raising

The initial and crucial step in addressing the threat of cultural heritage trafficking involves effective communication and awareness raising to prevent the dissemination of stereotypes and misconceptions.

- **Professional communities:**

Judicial, customs, and police institutions often underestimate the gravity of cultural heritage trafficking, viewing it as a casual pursuit akin to a passion for history. Similarly, cultural and research professionals may have divergent perspectives on purchasing antiques from the art market. Some emphasise buying to preserve cultural heritage, while others overlook the endorsement of a potentially fraudulent system. Rapid implementation of efficient training actions is imperative, fostering communication among diverse communities and creating toolkits to enhance their understanding of this phenomenon.

- **Art market:**

Collaboration with the art market community varies based on the country and local context. Identifying partners within the professionals who are particularly attentive to the issue of trafficking is crucial. Establishing effective cooperation and collaboration is essential to address trafficking challenges effectively.

- **Law enforcement agencies and justice authorities:**

Security forces, including police and border control staff, play a pivotal role as key stakeholders. They should contribute by describing the state of the art, offender processes, modus operandi, flows, routes, and waypoints related to cultural heritage trafficking. Additionally, they can provide content for registers of needs, good practices, risks, and ethics. Their active participation in designing legal frameworks at national and international levels is vital, contributing to the inventory and analysis for interoperability of existing tools.

Read about the ANCHISE project: <https://www.anchise.eu/>

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