

Press release: Government ratifies Hague Convention on protecting cultural property

The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols are designed to protect cultural property from destruction and looting during armed conflict. These include monuments, archaeological sites, works of arts and important artefacts.

The move cements the UK's position as a world leader in cultural heritage protection and sends out a clear message on our commitment to protecting cultural property during conflict.

The Government introduced the legislation to ratify the Convention in the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act, which was passed into law in February 2017. The Government intends to bring the Act into force at the same time that the Convention and Protocols come into force for the UK.

The UK and France are the only permanent members of the UN Security Council to accede to both its Protocols.

Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism John Glen said:

The world has watched with dismay and horror in recent years at the wanton destruction of priceless historic artefacts and sites in war.

By ratifying the Hague Convention and both its Protocols, the UK underlines our absolute commitment to protecting cultural heritage, both here and across the globe.

The 1954 Hague Convention was set up following the massive destruction during the Second World War. The UK chose not to ratify the Convention or accede to the First Protocol in 1954 as it considered, along with a number of other countries, that it did not provide an effective regime for the protection of cultural property. The adoption of the Second Protocol in 1999, which the UK was involved in negotiating, addressed these concerns and allowed the UK to announce its intention to ratify in 2004.

Ratification of the Convention builds on the Government's £30 million Cultural Protection Fund, which is helping protect and restore cultural heritage in global conflict zones.

Subject to confirmation by UNESCO, the Convention and Protocols will come into force in the UK on December 12, 2017.