

## The CPKU Center Against Trafficking in Works of Art

[www.cpkul.org](http://www.cpkul.org)

The Center Against Art Trafficking - CPKU is a non-governmental organization founded in 2014 with its headquarters in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The CPKU specializes in activities aimed at fighting illicit trafficking of artworks and cultural property. The center brings together experts in the fields of law, culture and art, as well as a large number of associates of various profiles from Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad. CPKU is a research and training center. Since its creation, numerous training courses and exhibitions intended for the general public and professionals have been organized and a large number of specialized documentation have been published.

Because of the complex political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the problem of illicit art trafficking has been marginalized and neglected by both the government sector and the civil society for decades. This is the reason for the creation of this organization whose purpose and task is to actively work on the collection of documentation in order to establish a precise inventory of the current situation in the afore-mentioned field. The CPKU is active in research, exchange of experiences, training of professionals in cooperation with museums, galleries, police and justice, as well as providing a guideline of recommendations to executive and legislative authorities in order to improve the legislative framework in the field of trafficking prevention and protection of cultural property in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### Context

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no **national system of coordination and cooperation** for the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural goods, which is also a complex issue. That's why it was necessary to found an organization that would embody the link between the different levels of government, museums, galleries, private art collectors, law enforcement agencies, the judicial sector, citizens and the media. As for the media, they play a very important role in raising public awareness. Since our establishment, we have enjoyed their full support in Bosnia and Herzegovina and at the regional level.

In collaboration with national and international partners, CPKU focuses on resolving issues related to the illicit trafficking of cultural property at the national and international levels. In order to improve practices in this area and based on the conclusions of the conferences we organized in 2015 and 2018 and at the initiative of the CPKU, Member of the National Parliament Mr. Saša Magazinović addressed in 2021 to the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina a set of parliamentary questions on: "The creation of a national database of missing artworks", as well as on the question of the restitution of the work of Đoko Mazalić "Magdalena", classified as national cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina and property of the Mulabdić family, of which was proved that it was in the territory of the Republic of Serbia. The first information on this case was published during the conference organized by the CPKU in 2015. Launching its database on missing artworks in 2017 enabled the CPKU to include this information. Later the Interpol office also included it in its database in 2018.

Furthermore, in Bosnia and Herzegovina there was also no **national database of missing artworks**. Based on the information collected from private and public owners of cultural property, we therefore decided to publish on our website in 2017 a database of missing cultural property in Bosnia and Herzegovina, thanks to the support of the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Central Office for Fighting Trafficking in Cultural Property – OCBC in France. This is the only database covering the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and containing data only on stolen artworks for which complaints have been filed to the competent authorities.

The CPKU also submitted an initiative for the creation of a "**Specialized Art Trafficking Police Unit**" based on the United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 73/130 of December 2018. We have also launched an initiative to adopt a legislative framework at the national level, which regulates the inventory of museum funds, in order to prevent the theft or disappearance of cultural goods within archives, libraries, galleries, museums and other institutions. Indeed, the UNESCO recommendation confirms that inventories are a key tool for the protection of collections and prevention in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

The CPKU is also the only partner from Bosnia and Herzegovina listed on the **ICOM Observatory** platform, which gathers together a vast set of data and stakeholders committed in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural goods at the international level.

The CPKU representatives are regularly invited to **international conferences and seminars** in order to share with as many people as possible the right practices and the challenges facing a country in transition like Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans more generally. For example in 2017 the CPKU was invited to the ARCA (Association for Research on Crimes Against Art) conference as the only representatives from South-Eastern Europe. The CPKU representatives also improve their knowledge by taking part in various training courses and seminars, among others those organized by Interpol, the National Institute of Advanced Studies of Security and Justice - INHESJ (current IHEMI) and the National Heritage Institute - INP in France.

Since it was founded in 2014 until today, the **official website** of the Center against Art Trafficking /[www.cpk.org/](http://www.cpk.org/) has been visited by more than 700,000 people and has been consulted more than 2 million times.

Thanks to the activities initiated by the CPKU as well as the database of missing artworks, some artworks have been located and returned to their true owners in cooperation with the police authorities, in particular the International Gallery of Portraits of Tuzla. In 2016, 44 artworks by Božidar Jakac, owned by the AVNOJ Museum in Jajce and looted during the 1992-1995 war, were anonymously returned to the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Serbia. From now on these works are back in the AVNOJ museum fund. Negotiations are underway regarding the return to Bosnia and Herzegovina of the work "Magdalena" by Đoko Mazalić, which is part of the national heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This work belongs to the Mulabdić family and was stolen from them during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s. This work is currently in Serbia in a police station waiting to be returned to its owners in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## **National and international cooperation**

Until now, the CPKU has received support and cooperated with various organizations and institutions, both national and international, among which we would like to highlight:

- at the international level: the General Directorate of Interpol in Lyon, the Central Office for the Fight against Trafficking in Cultural Goods - OCBC part of the Ministry of the Interior in France, the Artive association, the Association for Research into Crimes against Art – ARCA, Le Courier des Balkans.
- in Bosnia and Herzegovina: the French Embassy, the OSCE Mission, the British Council, the ICOM, the Interpol National Central Bureau in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Agency for Education and Professional Training of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Agency for Education and Professional Training of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina - AEPTM, the Center for Training of Judges and Prosecutors of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Center for Education and Training of Judges and Prosecutors of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia, the National Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Museum of History in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Museum of Literature and Theater Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the International Portrait Gallery in Tuzla, the Association of Artists of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Center for Culture in Tuzla, the Action for Culture, the Faculty of Law in Tuzla, the Museum of Una Sana Canton, the Association of Artists of Tuzla Canton, the Bosnian Cultural Center of Tuzla Canton, the Museum of Eastern Bosnia, the National University Library "Derviš Sušić", the Institute for the Protection of cultural, historical and natural heritage of Tuzla canton.

## **Recognition of the CPKU's work**

Regarding the work and the results obtained by the CPKU, the Ambassador of France to Bosnia and Herzegovina H.E. Claire Bodonyi spoke in the foreword to the Handbook "Illicit trafficking of cultural goods in Bosnia and Herzegovina": "Thanks to its commitment since 2014, the Center against trafficking in works of art has contributed to raising awareness in society about the fight against trafficking in cultural goods, as well as encouraging thorough thinking over this complex subject, which requires the coordination of a large number of participants. This is why I am particularly honored to have been offered to provide an introduction to this work as part of the development of cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and France on topics which mean a lot to us."

When awarding IT equipment to the CPKU by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2021, the Ambassador H.E. Kathleen Kavalec told the media: "The mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina - OSCE has acknowledged the CPKU as a key NGO protagonist in this field and we place great confidence in the role of the Center against Trafficking in Works of Art to support the relevant authorities. Proceeds of crime from the trafficking of cultural goods and the illicit trade in artworks are often used to finance serious and organized crime, including terrorism. I am convinced that our awareness-raising efforts are bearing fruit in this field. Just a few months ago, the public campaign we organized with the CPKU was followed by more than 400,000 people."

UNESCO's report, published in 2015, on the measures taken to implement the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property considered that CPKU is a positive action in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **Summary of the CPKU activities carried out since its creation**

- **2014** – Launch of the **website [www.cpk.org](http://www.cpk.org)** (with the support of the British Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2015** – Organization of the **first interdisciplinary conference "Illicit trafficking of cultural property in Bosnia and Herzegovina"** (with the support of the International Portrait Gallery of Tuzla)
- **2015** – Creation and publication of the **handbook "Illicit trafficking of cultural property in Bosnia and Herzegovina"** (with the support of the Embassy of France in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2016** – Creation and publication of the **handbook "Instructions for photographing artworks and valuable objects"** and the **"Descriptive sheet of artworks"** (with the support of the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2016** – Organization of the **exhibition of empty frames**, under the name "Great names of art in Bosnia and Herzegovina", where reproductions of artworks stolen in Bosnia and Herzegovina were exhibited (with the support of the National Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Association of Artists of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the International Portrait Gallery in Tuzla and the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2016** – **First training cycle for judges and prosecutors** of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, attended by representatives of the Ministry of the Interior of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Public Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Supreme Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (with the support of the Center for Training of Judges and Prosecutors of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - CEST FBiH and the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2017** – Publication of the first **"Database of missing artworks in Bosnia and Herzegovina"** (with the support of the Central Office for Combating Trafficking in Cultural Property - OCBC in France and the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2017** – **Second training cycle for judges and prosecutors** of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (with the support of the Center for Training of Judges and Prosecutors of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - CEST FBiH and the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2018** – Creation and publication of the **booklet "Thefts in museums – preventive measures and instructions in case of theft"** for museum and gallery professionals (with the support of the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2018** – Organization of the **second interdisciplinary conference "Illicit trafficking of cultural property in Bosnia and Herzegovina"** (with the support of the Atelier Ismet Mujezinović, the International Portrait Gallery in Tuzla and the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2019** – **First training cycle for judges and prosecutors** of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia (with the support of the Center for Training of Judges and Prosecutors of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia – CEST RS and the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2019** – Creation and publication of the **handbook "Methods of import and export of artworks in Bosnia and Herzegovina"**, for the Border Police, Customs, museums and galleries (with the support of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina)

- **2019 – First training cycle for the law enforcement agencies** (with the support of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Agency for Education and Professional Training of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina - AEPTM)
- **2019 – Second cycle of training for the law enforcement agencies** (with the support of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Agency for Education and Professional Training of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina - AEPTM)
- **2020 – Training for judicial authorities** (with the support of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Center for Training of Judges and Prosecutors of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - CEST FBiH)
- **2020 – Third training cycle for the law enforcement agencies** (with the support of the Works of Art Unit of the Interpol General Secretariat in Lyon, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Agency for Education and Professional Training of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina – AEPTM)
- **2020 – Creation and launch of the video clip "Protection of cultural property in Bosnia and Herzegovina"** in order to raise awareness among the general public (with the support of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2021 – Publication of the booklet "Let's protect our cultural heritage"** to raise awareness among the general public (with the support of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2021 – Sending a parliamentary question to the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina** dealing with the creation of a "National Database of Missing Cultural Property" at the state level, as well as a question on the restitution of national cultural property "Magdalena", artwork by Đoko Mazalić currently in Serbia (with the support of the deputy in the national Parliament Saša Magazinović)
- **2021 – Launch of an initiative to create a "Specialized Art Police Unit"**
- **2021 – Launch of the online platform "iJaBiHBaštinu"** to raise awareness among the general public (with the support of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2021 – Activation of a single police call number for anonymous reports** in case of knowledge about the theft of artworks, cultural property or destruction of an archaeological site (with the support of the National Police Agency for Investigation and Protection – SIPA and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2021 – Thanks to the trainings of CPKU and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Agency for Education and Professional Training of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina included in its training program topics related to the prevention and fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property.**
- **2021 – Inauguration of the exhibition "Missing Works" at the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina**, where reproductions of stolen and missing pieces in Bosnia and Herzegovina were presented, followed by a **debate with parliamentary representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the theme of "Illicit trafficking of cultural property in Bosnia and Herzegovina"** (with the support of the deputy of the National Parliament Saša Magazinović, the National Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the International Republican Institute - IRI, the Center for Culture of Tuzla and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **2022 – Donation to the CPKU** by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina of computer hardware needed to continue the work and the collection of data.
- **2022 – Training cycle for judges, prosecutors and inspectors of the Ministry of the Interior of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia** (with the support of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Center for Training of Judges and Prosecutors of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia - CEST RS)

- **2023** – Signing of a **cooperation protocol with the US-based Artive organization**, regarding the expansion and updating of the CPKU database of missing cultural property in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the exchange of information, as well as the documentation about missing cultural property in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **2023** – **Partnership on the European project RITHMS** – Research, Intelligence and Technology for Heritage and Market Security