

The aim of this project, to be implemented within the framework of the international research programme – *Dictionnaire comparé du droit du patrimoine culturel* –, is to conduct basic research which will significantly contribute to the development of studies on cultural heritage law. Notably, the protection and effective management of cultural heritage are nowadays increasingly seen as key elements of social development, as well as methods of dealing with threats related to conflicts, organised crime, terrorism and fundamentalism. However, cultural heritage is still a difficult fit to law and its practice, and scholarship. While at the international level, regulation in the field of culture – usually concerning the protection of human creativity and cultural heritage – have already reached a certain degree of standardisation, national legislation in this area substantially varies. This also regards domestic legal systems of the Member States of the European Union (EU). Although the EU is the most integrated international organisation in the world, in which common cultural policy issues are gradually integrated, at the level of law and institutional practice, the regulation of the protection and management of cultural heritage belongs to the exclusive competence of Member States' national laws. In practice, this means that cultural heritage regulatory framework in the EU is truly diverse and fragmented. This state of affairs has a huge impact on the control of cross-border trade in cultural goods, on the flow of investment, and on development of cultural industries. Differences in regulatory regimes and their interpretation often hinder effective cultural exchanges and protection of cultural heritage. Such obstacles are increasingly evident in times of deepening economic integration on the European continent, progressing globalisation of the art market, the flourishing illegal trade in cultural goods (often coming from conflict-ridden countries), and the spread of international organised art crime.

Given these difficulties, the primary research objective of this project – undertaken in the framework of international scientific cooperation – is to systematise the main national cultural heritage law institutions in selected European countries (Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) in a comparative perspective. The project, therefore, aims at examining whether and to what extent European cultural heritage law systems are similar or have certain connecting elements and, if so, whether it is possible to establish common terminology and concepts for cultural heritage law in Europe. The project's contribution to a wider international research programme consists of an analysis of the Polish legal system for the protection of cultural heritage based on a comparative research questionnaire. Therefore, it will be explored whether and to what extent Polish law in this area belongs to the common European core of the cultural heritage law and whether it contributes to its construction and crystallisation. The scientific analysis undertaken within the framework of the project is based on the examination of legislation, judicial caselaw, practice of public administration, instruments of cultural policy and legal scholarship. The main result of this research project will consist in contributing to the development of a comprehensive dictionary of comparative cultural heritage law (*Dictionnaire comparé du droit du patrimoine culturel*). This publication will constitute a milestone for further studies in cultural heritage law in Europe. The results of the research will also be published in important, peer-reviewed scientific journals and presented in conference papers.