

CULTURAL HERITAGE

A body of cultural assets (including architecture, art, archaeological sites and artefacts, memorabilia, folk art, historic complexes) subject to legal protection.

Legal concept proposed in the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted in Paris on 16 November 1972, ratified by Poland on 30 September 1976.

Cultural heritage is the main focus of *heritage studies*. Cultural heritage is considered to be: 1) monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; 2) groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; 3) sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view. The identified forms of cultural heritage include reservations, archaeological sites, works of fine arts, works of applied and folk art, ethnographic sites and parks, historical sites and complexes, historic parks and landscape architecture, industrial, documentary and audiovisual heritage, as well as oral traditions and languages, literature, music, songs and dance, culinary and ethnological traditions, folk games and sports, customs, rituals, ceremonials and beliefs. Cultural heritage therefore includes tangible heritage (protected under European law by the Paris Convention, under Polish law, primarily by the Act on the Protection and Care of Monuments of 23 July 2003) and intangible heritage (protected under European law by the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted in Paris on 23 October 2003, not incorporated into Polish law so far).

Exceptional examples of cultural heritage are included in the *World Heritage List* prepared by the *World Heritage Committee*. The members of the Committee, representing the 21 States-Parties to the Paris Convention, consider as particularly representative of cultural objects those sites which are of common value and fulfil at least one of the following criteria: 1) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius; 2) represent an important exchange of human values throughout history or within a given region of the world in terms of architectural or technological development, monumental arts, urban planning or landscape design; 3) present a unique or at least exceptional testimony to the cultural tradition inherent in existing or past civilisation; 4) constitute a specific example of a type of building, architectural or technological site or landscape illustrating an important stage (or stages) in the history of humanity; 5) are a specific example of traditional human settlement, land or sea use, representative of the culture (or cultures) concerned, or human interaction with the environment, especially if it is threatened by irreversible change; 6) are directly or tangibly linked to events or living traditions, inventiveness or beliefs, or to works of art or literature of exceptional universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should be applied in conjunction with other criteria). Currently there are 815 material culture sites on the world heritage list.

Non-material forms of cultural heritage are entered in 3 registers, currently consisting of 429 entries: a list of intangible cultural heritage requiring urgent protection, a representative list of intangible cultural heritage and a register of programmes, projects and activities aimed at protecting intangible cultural heritage ("Best Practices Register").

A broad definition of cultural heritage, corresponding to the distinction between tangible and intangible cultural heritage, is given by Jan Pruszyński: cultural heritage is 'a stock of movable and immovable property with associated spiritual values, historical and moral phenomena considered to be the basis for the legal protection of a specific society and its development and for their passing to subsequent generations, in view of understandable and accepted historical, patriotic, religious, scientific and artistic values, which are relevant to the identity and continuity of political, social and cultural development, evidence of truth and commemoration of historical events, cultivation of a sense of beauty and civilisation commonwealth'. (Pruszyński 2001, 50).

Zbigniew Kobyliński describes cultural heritage as a part of the old cultural heritage, which has been recognised as valuable by successive generations and has thus survived to the present day. Cultural heritage is a limited, non-renewable and vulnerable resource, a shared property that remains in the public interest domain. In order to be recognised as a cultural heritage element, an object must have cognitive and emotional value, often defined as "historical value".

Alois Riegl formulated the basics of valuing material examples of cultural heritage at the end of the 19th century, distinguishing the following values determining the status of an object as a cultural asset: historical value, ancient (antique) value, monumental value.

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