



## PITCHER Policy Brief

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### Figures and Challenges of the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods and the Looting of Archaeological Sites

Over the past thirty years, the looting of archaeological sites has developed across European territory, reaching an alarming level of millions of objects each year in France alone. This looting and illicit trafficking of cultural goods have serious consequences on our understanding of the past, our security, and the potential development of many countries. In these countries, younger generations are particularly affected by these issues: the extent of looting limits their access to heritage, leading to a weaker sense of identification with their history. Conversely, in many Western countries, these younger generations have become actors in archaeological looting through the use of metal detectors designed specifically for children, a phenomenon that has been growing significantly since the 1990s.

### The PITCHER Project

Funded by the Erasmus+ program, aims to combat this scourge by developing educational resources and issuing policy recommendations to raise awareness of these issues within educational communities. Its objective is to enhance the ability of education professionals to train young people in heritage preservation, in partnership with cultural institutions at the European level.

### Summary of Recommendations for Policy Makers

This summary highlights the key measures proposed by the PITCHER project to strengthen the fight against archaeological looting, illicit trafficking of cultural goods, and the protection of heritage through education, awareness, and improved regulation.

## Strengthening Education on Heritage Preservation and the Fight against Looting of Archaeological Sites and Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods

### Training Teachers:

- Integrate these topics into the initial and ongoing training of teachers.
- Develop interactive and digital training materials (MOOCs).
- Promote best training practices (experience sharing, targeted roundtables or conferences, case studies...).
- Encourage academic research in education to teach these topics more effectively.

### Integrating These Issues into School Curricula:

- Introduce topics related to the fight against looting and illicit trafficking of cultural goods throughout students' education.
- Include illustrated examples of looted objects and stolen artworks in school textbooks.
- Use PITCHER project educational resources in the classroom.
- Encourage interdisciplinary approaches (history, arts, political sciences, etc.).
- Broaden the theme of cultural goods to the competencies and responsibilities of educational inspection personnel across various European countries.

### Integrating These Issues into Professional and University Training:

- Train future professionals in public works, construction, and agriculture sectors on heritage protection (legislation and best practices in archaeological discoveries).
- Systematically put heritage protection teaching, including issues of looting and illicit trafficking, in Bachelor's and Master's programs for future professionals in archaeology, museums, and the art market.
- Raise awareness among law enforcement agencies about these topics beyond specialized offices (initial or ongoing training).

### Encouraging Collaboration Between Educational Institutions and Heritage Stakeholders:

- Promote partnerships between schools, universities, museums, archaeological sites, and law enforcement to enrich educational programs.
- Foster transnational projects to develop shared resources and involve partner schools from the PITCHER project to initiate these partnerships.

### Enhancing Awareness of Archaeological Looting and Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods

#### Raising Awareness Among Younger Generations Outside of the School Environment:

- Include information on these topics in museums and archaeological sites with content tailored to young people.
- Encourage events that allow young people to reflect and act on the representation of shared heritage, inspired by the international "MUSEOMIX" event.
- Strengthen collaboration between cultural institutions and social centres, hospitals, prisons, associations, etc., to reach young people who are no longer in school.
- Launch large-scale awareness campaigns via social media platforms popular among young people (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube).

### Mobilizing the Educational Sector to Raise Awareness Among Local Communities:

- Encourage activities and events to help students and local communities understand the importance of heritage preservation. For example, propose the theme of fighting illicit trafficking of cultural goods during events such as "European Heritage Days," "European Archaeology Days," "European Night of Museums," and involve younger generations by leveraging PITCHER resources.
- Make November 14th, the "International Day Against Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property" (UNESCO), a European event modelled on the "European Heritage Days," spanning several consecutive days, with one day dedicated specifically to school audiences.

### Modernizing Regulations to Better Protect Younger Generations and Heritage

- Ban the Sale of Metal Detectors to Minors: In the short term, ban the sale of metal detectors designed as toys for children, as well as the sale of all metal detectors to minors.
- Create a Whistleblower Status Specific to Heritage for 14-18-Year-Olds: Provide a suitable and secure legal framework for young people to report acts of looting or illicit trafficking, with support from adult mentors and forms of recognition and appreciation.

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