



Executive summary of the public audit report

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF MOVABLE CULTURAL PROPERTY

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Full audit report in Lithuanian is available on the website
of the National Audit Office: www.vkontrole.lt

DEFINITIONS

Definitions¹:

Movable cultural property means material creations and other objects which are movable based on their designation and nature, hold cultural value and are listed in the state inventories of movable cultural property.

Cultural value means a characteristic feature of a movable item or part thereof which is of value from the ethnical, archaeological, historical, artistic, scientific, technical, religious, aesthetical, memorial or another perspective.

Cultural object means an antique item, an item of movable cultural property or another movable item holding cultural value.

Regulations on the protection of movable cultural property means a document setting forth storage, maintenance and use requirements for a specific item of movable cultural property.

Certificate of movable cultural property means a document which contains the basic data concerning an item of movable cultural property, a copy of a decree by the Minister of Culture to include the item in the Register of Movable Cultural Property, photocopies or/and other visual material, information concerning restoration and conservation work performed, location sites and changes in ownership.

Protection of movable cultural property means the totality of the technical and organisational means which are employed in the protection, for current and future generations, of movable cultural property

Conservation means research-based activities aimed at stopping a destructive or harmful impact on an item of movable cultural property and reinforcing authentic features as well as protecting the item of movable cultural property against natural deterioration.

Compensation means a financial payment paid to the owner for the costs of works necessary for the preservation of the property².

Restoration means research-based activities aimed at disclosing cultural value through elimination of damage and deterioration when conserving and recreating the missing parts.

State inventories of movable cultural property means the inclusion of a movable item holding cultural value in the Register of Movable Cultural Property, the accounting documents of the museums and libraries whose founders are state or municipal institutions and other public legal entities (hereinafter referred to as "museums and libraries") and the National Documentary Fund, processing and storage of data on cultural property.

¹ Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Protection of Movable Cultural Property, 23 January 1996 No. I-1179 (s amended by Law No X-1682 of 3 July 2008), Art. 3r.

² Order No. ĮV-231 of the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania of 14 May 2009 on the approval of the procedure for compensations to the owners of movable cultural property, Art. 4.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The authorities responsible for shaping the national policy of the protection of movable cultural property of cultural heritage in Lithuania are the Seimas, the Government, and the Ministry of Culture. The State Commission on Cultural Heritage is involved in the shaping of this policy, meanwhile the policy is implemented by the Department of Cultural Heritage, museums, libraries, archives, etc. The audit was prompted by discussions in the public space concerning the inappropriate protection and maintenance of movable cultural property and recent fires in some churches and other religious buildings that destroyed or damaged part of the items of cultural value.

The objective of the audit was to assess the efficiency of the management and maintenance of movable cultural property.

The auditors looked at whether:

- the entry of movable cultural property in the Register of Cultural Property and the inventories and maintenance of movable cultural property is organised in a proper manner;
- part of the costs of the research, conservation, and restoration works, and protection measures for the movable cultural property listed on the Register of Cultural Property which are required for the preservation of the property is compensated;
- museums, libraries, and archives ensure adequate maintenance and management of movable cultural property;
- the property acquired, protected and included in the state inventories of movable cultural property is only the one that holds cultural value.

The audit covered the period 2010–2012. Some data from other periods was also used for analysing trends and changes.

Movable cultural values are stored in 104 museums, libraries, 5 libraries of national significance, Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania³, Public Library of Kaunas County which stores part of the second fund of the press archive⁴, and in all 15 state archives. The amount of movable cultural property stored in the Lithuanian museums in 2012 totalled about 6.7 million items. The audit evidence was obtained from 10 museums (which store about 3.3 million cultural property items stored in the museums), 3 libraries (which store about 4.6 million cultural property items), and 3 archives (which store about 4 million cultural property items).

As of 26 November 2013, the Register of Cultural Property contained 2,466 movable cultural property items protected by physical and legal entities.

The audit procedures were performed in:

- Ministry of Culture;
- Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture and its three territorial subdivisions – those in Kaunas, Klaipėda, and Šiauliai;
- 10 museums – Lithuanian National Museum, M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art, Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum, Vytautas the Great War Museum, Lithuanian Art Museum, Šiauliai Aušros Museum, History Museum of Lithuania Minor of Klaipėda City Municipality, museums of Šilutė and Kretinga, and Museum of the Administration of the State Cultural Reserve of Kernavė;
- 3 libraries – Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, and Public Library of Kaunas County;

³ Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Libraries, 6 June 1995 No. I-920 (as amended by Law No. IX-2378 of 15 July 2004), Art. 8(5).

⁴ Order No. ĮV-265 of the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania of 23 April 2007 on the approval of the Regulations of the National Archive Fund of Published Documents, p. 6.2.

- 3 archives – Lithuanian State Historical Archives, Lithuanian Special Archives, and Kaunas County Archives.

The following public audit conclusions and recommendations were drawn upon the assessment of the audit findings. The Action Plan for Implementing the Recommendations is given in Annex 3.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The maintenance of the movable cultural property listed on the Register of Cultural Property is insufficient because:
 - certificates and regulations on the protection of movable cultural property have not been issued to all owners whose property have been entered in the Register of Cultural Property;
 - the maintenance of movable cultural property transferred for temporary storage to another person has not been regulated, so there is a risk that adequate protection of the property against damage or loss may not be ensured;
 - the frequency of checks of movable cultural property and criteria of the assessment of the property condition have not been regulated.

These reasons may prevent timely detection of cases of lost, damaged property, etc. and sufficient preservation of cultural values.

2. Part of the costs of the research, conservation, and restoration works and protection measures for movable cultural property listed on the Register of Cultural Property which are required for the preservation of the property was not compensated because the Department of Cultural Heritage had not received property owners' applications, so not all statutory measures to ensure the preservation of the property have been used.
3. Not all items of movable heritage contained in the Register of Cultural Property have been classified as movable cultural property based on their in rem purpose and nature, which prevents adequate inventories, maintenance, and preservation of the property.
4. The process of the entry of movable cultural property in the Register of Cultural Property involves many (six) entities, with overlapping functions of two entities and time-consuming receipt of the owners' consent, so it takes a long time.
5. The valuation of the movable cultural property stored in the museums is slow and may be completed later than planned. No property valuation methodology has been developed for libraries, archives, and other institutions, meanwhile the value establishment criteria and sources laid down in the Methodological guidelines for the assessment of movable cultural property for museums are not entirely specific, so problems arise in identifying the actual value of movable cultural property and insuring this property.
6. Museums pay too little attention to the management of movable cultural property, acquire items of no cultural value and store them in the main fund, only a small number of low-quality items are written off, thus the property which is accumulated does not always meet the criteria for compiling collections in a specific museum, such items occupy place in the repositories.
7. Checks of the condition and number of items of movable cultural property are carried out by museums, libraries, and archives in a non-systematic manner, which prevents ensuring the protection of the property against deterioration, disappearance, and other similar cases.
8. The founders have been failing to sufficiently ensure supervision of the inventories and protection of movable cultural property in museums, libraries, and archives, which prevents timely provision of recommendations concerning the improvement of their performance, and no reliable information necessary for policy-making in this area is available.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Ministry of Culture:

1. In order to ensure proper storage, maintenance, and use of movable cultural property and to avoid possible losses of this property, the Ministry should amend and supplement relevant legislation laying down that if the owner transfers an item of value for temporary storage or exhibition, he has to inform the Department of Cultural Heritage accordingly.
2. In order to speed up and simplify the inclusion of an item of movable cultural property in the Register of Cultural Property and to avoid duplication of functions, the Ministry should initiate consideration of the expediency of the participation of the State Commission on Cultural Heritage in the inclusion of a movable item in the Register of Cultural Property.
3. In order to ensure speedy establishment of the actual value of movable cultural property, the Ministry should develop methodologies for valuating movable cultural property in museums, libraries, and archives.
4. In order to ensure proper protection and maintenance of movable cultural property standing on the Register of Cultural Property, the Ministry should regulate the frequency and procedure of its checks.
5. In order to ensure proper management and maintenance of movable cultural property, the Ministry should supplement relevant legislation in the archive area laying down the scope of checks of the condition and number of property for archives, revise relevant legislation in the library area that govern the procedure for the storage of documentary heritage, and regularly check the inventories and protection of museums, libraries, and archives.

To the Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture:

1. In order to ensure the preservation of movable cultural property, the Department should issue certificates and regulations on the protection of movable cultural property to the owners of movable cultural property included in the Register of Cultural Property and regularly check the compliance with the regulations.
2. In order to ensure that all information concerning the compensation of part of the costs of research, conservation, and restoration works and protection measures for the movable cultural property entered in the Register of Cultural Property which are required to preserve this property is easily accessible to the property owners and convenient for use, the Department should place this information on its website in one place, giving an easily found link, and publish a call for applications for compensations.
3. In order to ensure the inventory of the movable cultural property entered in the Register of Cultural Heritage by the natural qualities of the items, the Department should revise the Register separating the movable cultural property from the immovable ones and lay down the requirements for the storage, maintenance, and use of movable cultural property.