

English Summary:

Fighting the illicit Traffic in Cultural Property on a National Level

Due to a lack of authoritative figures to estimate the extent of the illicit trade in cultural property, the development of effective strategies to combat related criminal activities proves difficult.

The National research project ILLICID focuses on the illicit traffic in archaeological objects in Germany.

Starting in 2015 the project undertakes a 3 year explorative study with special attention to archaeological objects from Iraq and Syria (object types, turnover, operation modes etc.). 'In the light of the Resolution 2199 of the UN Security Council (15 February 2015) the urgency and importance of such a project becomes more apparent', said Prof. Dr. Markus Hilgert, director of the Museum of the Ancient Near East of the Berlin State Museums and ILLICID network coordinator.

Next to comprehensive data collection, the project aims to develop recommended actions for actors in the trade with cultural property, to set up a database to collect information, for instance, about suspicious auctions. These data will then be made available to investigators via a dedicated app.

The unique transdisciplinary research design combines research in empirical social and information sciences and technologies, as well as the study of classical antiquity with non-academic expertise (e.g. law enforcement and customs authorities).

The project was initiated by the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (SPK), Berlin, the Fraunhofer Institute for Secure Information Technology (SIT), Darmstadt, and GESIS – Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences, Mannheim and finances by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research with 1,2 Mio. € (2015-2018).

Associated partners include the German Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media, the German Commission for UNESCO, as well as the ICOM International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods.