



Department for Culture Media & Sport

Minister for Culture and the Digital
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Our Ref: 275784/ao/10

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Professor Eleanor Robson
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Dear Professor Robson,

Thank you for letter of 24 November 2015 to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sports, The Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP. I am responding as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in replying.

We are delighted to receive you and your colleagues' support for our plans to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention and its two protocols, and for the Cultural Protection Fund.

The Department is firmly committed to introducing new legislation to enable the UK to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocols at the earliest opportunity. We believe that doing so will ensure the UK and its cultural experts and practitioners in the field are seen to be not only serious about cultural protection, but world leaders in this area.

On 25 November 2015, as part of the Spending Review, we were delighted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £30million in Official Development Assistance funding for the establishment of our Cultural Protection Fund. Planning is currently underway towards implementing the Fund with the expectation of accepting grant applications in the spring.

We have sent out our consultation document to you and your co-signatories, and would warmly welcome your views on the Cultural Protection Fund. Your expertise would help inform its further development. In addition, we are holding a stakeholder workshop on 11 February which I believe a number of your co-signatories are attending.



I have taken Peter Stone's points and your support of them into serious consideration - and it is precisely such strategic thinking and expertise which we are seeking with our consultation. I agree entirely with the principles behind the points on combatting duplication of effort; on the need for training; proactive prevention; emergency response; and long term support. These points cohere with the principles of the Fund as outlined in our consultation document, and correspond with the outcomes I announced at the Cultural Protection Summit of 28 October 2015, namely: cultural heritage protection, training, and advocacy and education. Indeed, the British Museum's Iraqi Rescue Archaeology Programme, a pilot programme of the Fund, is already adhering to these aims, and we will be encouraging grant applications from other programmes and organisations who can provide services pursuant to these outcomes.

We will be providing further information about the Cultural Protection Fund and on the Government's approach to ratifying the Hague Convention in the spring of this year.

Thank you again for your support and your offer of assistance in this area. I do very much hope that you will respond to our consultation document and am delighted that some of the signatories have made to time to come along to our workshops.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ed Vaizey'.

Ed Vaizey MP
Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy