

Dear Readers,

this newsletter contains information about the programme **Culture and Development**, which CulturCooperation e.V. is carrying out in the period 2005 to 2008.

In this edition we look back at a heated summer on the topic of "Protection of Cultural Assets". For autumn and winter 2006 we have news and dates: A film tour, a network conference on culture and development and notice of the campaign "Nofretete´s travels".

Happy reading

*Anja Kuhr and Lena Blosat*

**The CulturCooperation e.V. team**

## **NEWSLETTER September 2006**

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### **News: The debate on the protection of cultural assets**

In our last newsletter, we reported on the International Symposium "Protection of Cultural Assets" which took place in Hamburg in May 2006 at the invitation of CulturCooperation e.V.

The ratification of the UNESCO Convention of 1970 on the protection of cultural assets, which was discussed at this symposium and is currently being debated in the German Parliament, continues to be a controversial topic. It is still questionable whether those in responsible positions are seriously interested in reworking the planned draft law so that the actual protection of cultural assets is really effective in Germany. Despite massive criticism by renowned experts, the Minister of State for Culture in a statement made on 21st August categorically rejected all criticisms, maintaining that stolen goods are not being legalised, customs, import and export controls are to be optimised.

The law, which in its current form disregards central aims of the UNESCO convention, was severely criticised during the symposium. This criticism has been brought into the debate in the form of a memorandum on the protection of cultural assets. On the positive side, there have been reactions from important decision-makers who wish to see the comments and recommendations for improvement included in the forthcoming consultations.

As yet the law has not been passed and some individual papers expressing critical viewpoints from within the political parties indicate that the authors are in favour of the improvement of the protection of cultural assets and the correction of the draft law. The law will be the subject of an expert hearing of the committee for culture and the media on 27th September.

As well formulated suggestions for improvements have been made, the government can still make use of the opportunity to establish effective protection of cultural assets in Germany in the way intended by the UNESCO convention.

### **Protection of Cultural Assets Memorandum:**

[www.culture-and-development.info/project/memod.htm](http://www.culture-and-development.info/project/memod.htm)

## IKA Protection of Cultural Assets

As part of the project Culture and Development, CulturCooperation e.V. is working on the topic of the protection the cultural assets from theft, destruction and illegal trading, in particular in the interest of the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America which are particularly affected by such losses.

The IKA 65/66 edition **Protection of Cultural Assets**, which was published in August 2006, covers the dramatic loss of cultural assets on various continents. Reports from Iraq, Cambodia, Columbia and Turkey not only show the tragic extent of the loss. They also contain information provided by experts and examples of practical efforts for the protection of cultural assets with some regionally successful projects.

In addition to an overview of the conventions on the protection of cultural assets and the state of their implementation in the countries of Europe and of the South, this edition of the magazine contains critical analysis of the law-making procedure in Germany.



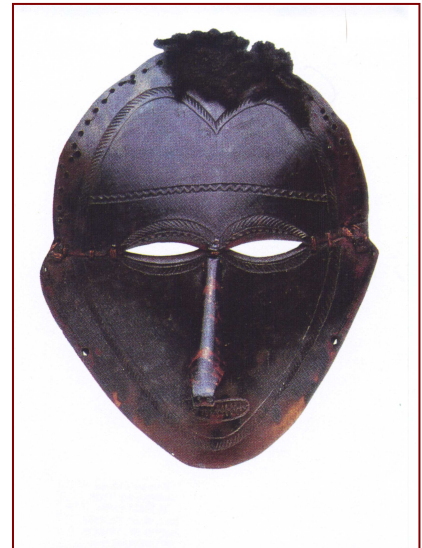
The magazine is published mainly in German.

It has 44 pages and can be ordered for 5.00 Euro plus postage from CulturCooperation e.V.: [info@culturcooperation.de](mailto:info@culturcooperation.de)

## Film Tour Cracks in the Mask

"Cracks in the Mask" is probably the only film communicating the significance of the loss of cultural assets in a sensitive and comprehensible way.

When the Briton Alfred C. Haddon set out on the Cambridge Scientific Expedition to the Torres Strait Islands in 1898, one of his aims was to investigate the way of life of these South Pacific islanders. The inhabitants were measured; their appearance and their customs were documented. Haddon took around 1250 objects back to England, including some impressive tortoiseshell masks as proof and to illustrate this foreign culture. Not one of the valuable tortoiseshell masks, artworks of mythical powers and significance was left for the inhabitants of the Torres Straits.



Mask of the Torres Strait Islands

The film is about an islander and his wife who set out to visit various European museums to find these masks which were lost to their ancestors. Their secret wish: to borrow some objects for an exhibition in Australia. Their secret hope: to be able to show some masks to their fellow inhabitants. However, Ephraim Bani and his wife return empty-handed.

In taking up this problem of stolen cultural assets, the film deals with a topic which up to now has been widely neglected in the politics of development and culture.

The tortoiseshell masks are an example of the loss of cultural goods suffered in the colonial period. Many communities were similarly affected to the inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands: According to UNESCO estimates, around 25-30 million art, cult and everyday objects are currently held in European museums, whereas many peoples in Africa, Asia and Latin America do not have any samples of some cultural of their own cultural assets.

This film cannot offer solutions to these questions. However, it poses the question of how much longer the Europeans can continue to regard their possession of these goods which are part of their colonial heritage as

legitimate today and makes clear that this debate is long overdue and should certainly not be limited to the museums involved.

The film will be shown in October and November in ten German cities.

Frances Calvert, the Australian director of the film, will be present at the showings and the following discussions.

For the dates and venues please contact [info@culturcooperation.de](mailto:info@culturcooperation.de) or look at [www.culture-and-development.info](http://www.culture-and-development.info).

### **Nofretete´s travels**

After the showings of the film, Cultur Cooperation e.V. will present the campaign **Nofretete´s travels**, which illustrates how fair political solutions can be achieved in controversial cases of claims for restitution.

### **Announcement**

#### **European Network - Conference "Culture and Development"**

From 25 – 27 January 2007 there will be a conference in Vienna for those actively working in the field of Culture and Development. The aim of the conference is to discuss common interest, methods and the aims of a European network for culture and development. The conference will be organised by the Vienna Institute for Culture and Development (vidc) in cooperation with CulturCooperation e.V.

Contact: [info@culturcooperation.de](mailto:info@culturcooperation.de)

### **The Vienna Institute for Culture and Development (vidc)**

The Vienna Institute for Development and Cooperation (vidc) is one of our partner organisations in the Project Culture and Development. In 1987 vidc founded the working area **cultures on the move** with the aim of promoting art and cultural in the development context. The main emphasis of the work is the dialogue in partnership between the cultures. The projects have many dimensions: cultures on the move carries out professional art and culture events, educational and informative work on questions of global development and the expert exchanges.



organisation

Since 1992 vidc has also been supporting some projects in the countries of the South such as the Ndere Center in Uganda.

Link: [www.vidc.org](http://www.vidc.org)

### **The next newsletter will be published in December 2006.**



*This Newsletter has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of CulturCooperation e.V. and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.*