

PROVENANCE

The "Working Group on Provenance Research in Central and Eastern Europe – ProvenanCEE" was established in November 2022. Recognising that this part of Europe needs transnational and interdisciplinary tools and methodologies for provenance research and the safeguarding of art heritage, five researchers from Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Poland decided to strengthen their professional exchanges in the framework of a working group that brings together experts working on provenance research and the safeguarding of art heritage in Central and especially Eastern Europe. As the gap between Member States with advanced strategies and policies in provenance research and restitution and those lagging behind is deep, the need for creation of a sustainable working group on provenance research in the CEE region was understandable and urgent.

Following issues were identified as the Group's priority target areas:

- insufficient provenance research in art history;
- issues of art heritage restitution and repatriation;
- lack of knowledge about WWII-related dispossessions in most CEE countries;
- lack of supervision in the art market.

Main midterm goals:

- networking with institutions wishing to resolve issues of unknown provenance of art and cultural heritage objects;
- understanding the key historical events and developments in Central and Eastern Europe that have affected and still affect art heritage;
- engagement in cultural and political dialogue;
- raising wider awareness and understanding of the cross-border and internal restitution and repatriation;
- better and more effective communication between different stakeholders and researchers.

Long-term objectives:

- to identify differences and common practices in provenance research in territories with former totalitarian governments;
- to provide guidelines for research across national borders and to trace provenance research risks typical for post-socialist states;
- to help promote EU high standards of provenance research and presentation of research results in the spheres of public and private collections, education, legislation and art market.

The Group intends to create and disseminate knowledge on provenance research and art heritage protection. As an international and interdisciplinary group of highly motivated researchers with rich experience in provenance research, ProvenanCEE will ensure the long-term sustainability of its mission and the ongoing achievement of its goals and objectives. As the UNESCO *Declaration on the Responsibility of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations*, adopted 12 November 1997, provides that 'present generations have the responsibility of ensuring that the needs and interests of present and future generations are fully safeguarded', one of main long-term goals of ProvenanCEE is to protect and safe-guard art heritage. Furthermore, the *Mondiacult Declaration 2022* positions culture as a global public good. It also refers to the need of cooperation in terms of fight with illicit traffic and stresses the importance of the object's provenance, cooperation with different stakeholders, the art market and engagement of the large public. The ProvenanCEE initiative thus actively

responds to *Mondiacult Declaration* with participation in the international debate on the role of provenance studies in cultural policies.

Alicja Jagielska-Burduk (*Wydział Prawa i Administracji Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, Opole*)

Renata Komic Marn (*Umetnostnozgodovinski inštitut Franceta Steleta ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana*)

Marcela Rusinko (*Seminář dějin umění Masarykovy univerzity, Brno*)

Šárka Radostová (*Národní památkový ústav, generální ředitelství, Praha*)

Kristina Uhlíková (*Ústav dějin umění AV ČR, Praha*)