

Joint statement of the Polish and German conservators, meeting in Warsaw, on the widespread destruction of cultural heritage resulting from Russian military aggression against Ukraine, 5 April 2022

We, the Polish and German conservators of monuments, gathered in this place of significant value for the history of conservation - the Royal Castle in Warsaw – concern the ruthless war in Ukraine.

The ongoing destruction, aggravated every day, results from incessant military aggression and deliberate attacks. Ukrainian culture, both cultural properties and intangible heritage, suffers grave damage. One of the most eminent Polish conservators, Jan Zachwatowicz, once said „[t]he nation and monuments of its culture are one.” With each victim of this war, the culture of Ukraine is being lost.

Cultural heritage, belonging to any people whatsoever, shall be treated with equal and due respect. It is a testimony of our common past and a part of our present that needs to be passed on to the future generations. We emphasize that the damage caused to culture of Ukraine „means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind, since each people makes its contribution to the culture of the world” as stipulated in the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

In this violent armed conflict, while representatives of various nationalities and communities are murdered and displaced, all manifestations of culture, including the diversity of local customs and traditions, are at risk. We call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an end to inflicting further irreparable losses on the heritage of Ukraine.