

UNESCO UCH convention

Official reference	UNESCO 2001 convention on the protection of the underwater cultural heritage and its context	
Official website	www.unesco.org	
Relevant dates	Document	2/11/2001
	Entry into force	2/01/2009
	Ratification by Belgium	6/07/2013
	Ratification by Flanders	16/07/2010
Policy level	International	
Type of instrument	Convention	
Geographical reach	Sea and ocean bottoms, including the subsoil, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction	
(Legal) coverage in the BNS	Internal waters, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone, continental shelf	
International contact point	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	
Competent authorities in Belgium	Flemish authorities; policy domain Spatial planning, Housing policy and Immovable Heritage; Agency Immovable Heritage	
Federal ratification law	Wet van 6 juli 2013 houdende instemming met het Verdrag ter bescherming van het cultureel erfgoed onder water, aangenomen te Parijs op 2 november 2001	
Flemish ratification decree	Decreet van 16 juli 2010 houdende instemming met het verdrag ter bescherming van het cultureel erfgoed onder water, aangenomen in Parijs op 2 november 2001	

// abstract:

The objective of this convention is to protect the underwater cultural heritage. This heritage is defined as all traces of human existence having a cultural, historical or archaeological character which have been partially or totally under water, periodically or continuously, for at least 100 years. The convention stipulates the core principles for the protection of the underwater cultural heritage, offers a framework for the cooperation between states and provides practical rules for the treatment and the research of this heritage. The main principles of this convention are:

- An obligation for the Contracting Parties to protect their underwater cultural heritage, and to take measures in this context;
- (In situ) conservation of underwater cultural heritage;
- The ban on underwater cultural heritage being commercially exploited for trade or speculation;
- The importance of cooperation and information exchange between states, inter alia with regard to education and awareness regarding underwater cultural heritage.