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Zadeva: Revision of ICOM Code of Ethics.

Dear members,

The committee would like to call your attention to an ongoing initiative of the ICOM ethical committee, the revision of ICOM's Code of Ethics. This process is ongoing in the past few years and members of ICOM are presently invited to send their comments as the deadline for the revision of the draft is set by 31.10.2024 as you can check here <https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Revised-ICOM-Code-of-Ethics-First-Draft.pdf>

Although E.C.C.O. does not have any affiliation to ICOM and absolutely respects its autonomy and competence in the wide field of museum practices, the committee does recognise that the recent revision of the Code of Ethics for museums, might have a direct impact on conservator-restorers professional life when working in museums that abide ICOM's code.

The revision of the Code of Ethics is a natural and due consequence of the recent decision of the new definition, by ICOM, of museum and the desire to reflect the present reality of the museum role in the world. Where for instance, global challenges such as sustainability and the role of museums in conflict realities are enhanced.

However, compared with the former version from 2017, as the paradigm of the museum role is shifting and moving the emphasis from collections, their care and research towards museums being in essence social institutions serving communities, the principle of cultural heritage assets as primary evidences of knowledge seems to be less present. As a result, the relevance of conservation-restoration of cultural heritage assets is made less obvious.

The former the Code is explicit in references to the necessary actions in the care of cultural heritage - and their pivotal contribution to daily museum work. This is no longer in place in the new proposal and the only used reference is that of "conservation". Considering the recent publication of the Museology Dictionary not being of open access to the wider public, we consider essential that at least to have an explicit reference in the new Code of Ethics to the term "conservation" as it is iterated in the ICOM-CC Resolution from 25th Tri-annual meeting in Shanghai, 2010, following principle 7 <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:EU:424126fd-88bf-41b0-9df6-da5a8cc22280> Hence, guaranteeing the visibility and acknowledgement of caring for cultural heritage assets as, still, part of the mission of museums in society.

We encourage our members that can contribute and express their views on the current ICOM public consultation, to convey the need for this clarity in regard to the practice of conservation-restoration and its fundamental role in the engagement and access of museums by their growing communities.

Your contributions will be essential for the further discussion of this topic within ICOM work and future implementation of the new Code of Ethics.

With regards,

Elis Marçal

E.C.C.O. President

[E.C.C.O. European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers Organisations](#)