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POLAND'S NEW INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The process of ratification by Poland of two important multilateral international agreements on the protection of cultural heritage has been completed. These agreements are: the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe signed in Granada on 3 October 1985 and the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict signed in the Hague on 26 March 1999. The adoption by Poland of these two documents has been an important step to overcome the pre-existing backlog in international cultural relations. The conventions cause certain effects for the domestic legal system as it is an obvious consequence that a state bound by an international agreement is obliged to fulfill all obligations imposed by this act. They are complementary to the system of norms adopted to protect historical monuments belonging to the category of the European architectural and cultural heritage in the event of an armed conflict. However, the attention should also be paid to the need to revise the current regulations of national law, and - perhaps more importantly - the practice of applying the law by state authorities and local government units. In the latter aspect - the practice of law application - it can occur that, especially in case of the first convention above mentioned, Poland may be accused of not obeying international law.