

Completing new draft law on protection of Syrian archaeological heritage

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Under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture and within the framework of the project for supporting and developing the national museums and the sites of cultural heritage, which started in 2010 at the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM), and whose focal point is to analyze and identify the national needs so as to develop and invest in the archaeological sites, studying, analyzing and developing the current legislation governing issues related to Syria's antiquities have topped the priorities of this project.

After almost three years of hard work, the national team of the DGAM and the Ministry of Culture, headed by Mr Ayman Suleiman, director of the legal affairs in DGAM, has completed a new draft law on the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage which complies with the standards set out in international conventions, keeps abreast of the development of global thinking in this domain and is compatible with Syria's uniqueness and diverse cultural and educational heritage.

The draft law was discussed with the ministries concerned, namely the Local Administration, Tourism, Justice, Awqaf (Endowments), etc. Meanwhile, it is about to be presented to the Parliament for consideration and will hopefully be approved very soon.

This law is expected to change the prevailing view in the field of protecting, managing, rehabilitating and promoting the heritage of Syria. Moreover, it provides a higher level of legal protection for the sites inscribed on the World Heritage List and also provides the necessary ground to apply an institutional and administrative reform to the authorities in charge of safeguarding the heritage which will enable them to function in a better way. In addition, it ensures the active participation of local communities at all levels in protecting, managing and investing in heritage, and it enables Syria to make better use of the international conventions it ratified.

It is worth mentioning that the preparation for this draft law has coincided with the preparation for another draft law on introducing a public body for the Syrian archaeological heritage with wider powers and additional tasks in order to be able to better protect and manage Syria's heritage.

(Source: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1114>)