



why are  
*crime groups*  
drawn to stealing  
heritage



## Financial opportunities

Stolen artifacts offer **lucrative profits** on the market and might serve also as valuable commodities for **quick cash, ransoms** and collateral.

*How much is the illicit trade in cultural goods worth?*



Quantifying the illicit market for cultural goods is challenging. The European Commission estimated the legal market at **\$64 million** to **\$318 million** in 2019, but precise data on the illegal market is lacking. A RAND Corporation study suggests the total market, legal and illegal, is worth a few hundred million dollars annually. Interpol's recent reports provide insights from anti-trafficking operations, but inconsistent data from member states hampers accurate measurement, **highlighting the difficulty in measuring this clandestine market.**

*(Brodie et al. 2019, Sargent et al. 2020, Interpol 2021 and 2022)*

## Reduced risks

Cultural theft presents **lower chances of detection** and less immediate danger compared to **other illicit activities**, thanks to lax regulations and minimal **public policing attention**.

According to a comparative study from 2011, European countries can be roughly categorized into three groups based on their prioritization of policing art crime.

### High Priority



Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Greece, France

### Medium Priority



Austria, Germany United Kingdom

### Low Priority



Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden,  
Netherlands

(L. Block, European Police Cooperation on Art Crime: a comparative overview. In Contemporary Perspectives on the Detection, Investigation & Prosecution of Art Crime, 2011)

## Opportunity for Planning

Criminals can meticulously plan thefts by conducting reconnaissance on potential targets, exploiting weaknesses in security systems with precision.

