



SECOND BLUE SHIELD RESCUE MISSION FOR THE DESTROYED CITY ARCHIVE OF COLOGNE

On Monday 3rd August an international Blue Shield team will go to Cologne to support the rescue work on the valuable collection of the collapsed City Archive of Cologne. Throughout week about 60 heritage professionals from France, The Netherlands, Belgium, Great-Britain and Sweden will try to save as much of the collection as possible.

The Blue Shield is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross or Doctors without Borders, with a network of experts working for the protection of the world's cultural heritage (museums, monuments and sites, libraries and archives). This body of expertise wants to make its knowledge available to advise and assist in responding to damage to cultural heritage caused by armed conflict or natural disasters. The Blue Shield is still young; every year new national Blue Shield committees are founded. Worldwide twenty committees already exist and more than twenty new committees are being currently set up.

Since 2008 the Blue Shield organization has a coordination centre in The Hague. Thanks to cooperation with several partner associations like Blue Shield France, the International Council on Archives, Archivists without Borders (French Section), the SNCF Archives (French rail company), the Association of French Archivists, the graduated students in archives from Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines and others, the call for participants for this mission was distributed and recommended all over the world. Within a few weeks more than 60 highly motivated professionals, who were deeply touched by the tragedy, applied. The team is limited to 60 persons, because the facilities in Cologne cannot accommodate more rescue workers than this at any one time. However, there were more applicants, and they may be called upon in the near future.

A first Blue Shield mission was deployed there at the end of April 2009. This mission was successful : with 80 volunteers, we succeeded to treat around 2 linear kilometers of documents. It was a very great experience for all the volunteers.

On Wednesday 5th August, the volunteers will meet some archivists and curators from the city of Köln and have some fruitful exchanges about their organization and their capacity to manage such a disaster.

More information:

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Factsheet International Blue Shield mission

Date: Monday 3rd August till 7th August.

Organization: The Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS), The French Committee of the Blue Shield, Archivists without Borders (French section), SNCF Archives, Association of French Archivists, Association ADEDA78.

Composition of the Blue Shield team: 55 heritage professionals from Blue Shield France (25), The Netherlands (22), Belgium (6), Great-Britain (1) and Sweden (1).

Tasks: Sorting material (rubble/collection), select dry and wet materials, clean, register, dry partly wet material and prepare other material for freeze-drying on other locations.

Accommodation: The city of Cologne offers all Blue Shield volunteers free sleeping places, and free food and beverages.

Insurance: The city of Cologne provided the Archive with insurance for all volunteers.

Blue Shield:

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