



Annual Report: 2021

1. Administrative Details

1.1 - Name of National Committee: Blue Shield Austria

1.2 - Date Report Completed: 1 March 2022

1.3 - Reporting period covered: 28 May 2021 – 31 December 2021

1.4 - Names, positions and emails of all those who were the governing body/ trustees / principal officers on the date the report was approved or who served during the reporting period:

Karl Habsburg-Lothringen
Peter Harold
Friedrich Schipper, Executive Vice-President
Leylya Strobl, Secretary General
Anna Puhr, Deputy Secretary General
Constantin Staus-Rausch, Treasurer

1.5 - Address of the main office:

Austrian Commission for UNESCO
Universitätsstraße 5
1010 Vienna

1.6 - Website and social media: www.blueshield.at (soon transferred to new domain)

2. Income

The Committee has no direct income but long-lasting cooperations with government and non-governmental organizations to fund activities.

3. Report of Activities: Achievements & Performance

28 May 2021: Extraordinary General Assembly

On 28 May Blue Shield Austria held an extraordinary general assembly via Zoom including a review of the past board and its activities and concluded in the election of the new board:

- President: Karl von Habsburg
- Vice President: Peter Harold
- Executive Vice-President: Friedrich Schipper
- Secretary General: Leylya Strobl
- Deputy Secretary General: Anna Puhr
- Treasurer: Constantin Staus-Rausch

3.1 - Law, policy development and implementation:

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3.2 - Education, training, and capacity building:

1-15 July 2021: Blue Shield Summer Academy

From 1st - 15th July, the annual summer academy took place across Austria, focusing on the UNESCO World Heritage cities of Vienna (with the old town and Schönbrunn Palace), Graz (with the old town and Eggenberg Palace) and Salzburg as well as World Heritage regions of Semmeringbahn, Wachau / Krems and Hallstatt / Dachstein - Salzkammergut. On site, discussions took place with scientists, conservators, cultural managers, tourism experts, architects, politicians, entrepreneurs, and communication experts to gain insight into the complex structure of the preservation of cultural heritage, but also to identify the communication services required to meet the requirements of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention with regard to participation, city marketing and urban development.

21 October 2021: Mongolia – Ulaanbaatar, online meeting

The board members Dr. Friedrich Schipper and Leylya Strobl gave a lecture on "Civil-military cooperation as an essential condition for effective protection of cultural property in times of emergencies" as part of the capacity building workshop for the Hague Convention of 1954. The aim of the workshop was to strengthen national capacities to implement the Hague Convention of 1954 and its two protocols (1954 and 1999) and to strengthen the efficiency of cooperation between the various actors in the implementation of the above-mentioned standardizing instruments in Mongolia. The event was supported by various institutions and agencies of Mongolia, including the Department of Culture and Art, the Implementation Agency of the Government of Mongolia, the National UNESCO Commission of Mongolia, the General Intelligence Service of Mongolia, the Institute for Strategic Studies, the National Police Department etc.

4-5 December 2021: Russia: St. Petersburg, online meeting

The board members Dr. Karl Habsburg, Leylya Strobl and Caroline Jäger-Klein were invited to the case of the Heumarkt projects in Vienna, which led to the inclusion of the historical center of Vienna in the UNESCO list of endangered cultural heritage, at the international scientific-public conference on the question of Presenting preservation of the cultural heritage of St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg faces the same challenges as Vienna due to the chaotic development of the historic city center, which is a unique cultural heritage. At the conference, Russian and foreign scientists, researchers, and public figures will give lectures and reports on the current situation in St. Petersburg. The discussion will focus on the preservation of cities and sites as world cultural heritage.

3.3 - Proactive protection and risk preparedness:**7-8 July 2021: Estonia – Tallinn, Tartu**

At the invitation of the Estonian Roerich Pact Committee and the Peace Banner, Karl von Habsburg took part in two seminars in Tallinn and Tartu, which enabled a wide range of Estonian cultural heritage institutions, the military and public figures to share the experiences of the Blue Shield Organizations operating under the 1954 Hague mandate discover convention. Blue Shield's latest know-how in this area was successfully tested during the rescue work after the explosion in Beirut on August 4, 2020. As part of the seminar, information on the initial securing of cultural property, damage assessment and first aid as well as the effective exchange of information between all people involved in rescue operations was conveyed. The reason for this seminar was to share information and expertise as 12 tons of ammonium nitrate were stored in the port of Tallinn.

7 September 2021: Event on Tur Abdin

BSA President Habsburg spoke on September 7, 2021 in the Kardinal-Schwarzenberg-Haus in Salzburg about his travel experience in the Tur Abdin. From August 28 to September 3, 2020, he visited the historical churches and monasteries of Syro-Aramaic Christianity in southeastern Turkey. In the public event "Responsibility of the World Church and World Community for the Christian Heritage of Tur Abdin", the President emphasized the historicity of Tur Abdin as a world cultural heritage, which with the Aramaic language Jesus belongs to the origin of Christianity and should therefore be brought to the attention of the world community.

8-12 September 2021: Armenia – Yerevan, Vagharshapat

Ms. Leylya Strobl and Jasmine Dum-Tragut, the board members of Blue Shield Austria, take part in the conference on international religious freedom and peace that was organized by the Holy See in Etschmiadzin. The topics of the conference included access to places of worship in conflict areas, the protection of religious and ethnic minorities, and the preservation of cultural heritage. The conference also discussed the recent conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh), an area in the Caucasus between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the international status of which remains unresolved. The speakers reported on numerous incidents of desecration of churches and monasteries and the destruction of religious and cultural sites. Another meeting with representatives of BS Austria takes place in the Museum of Genocide in Yerevan. The result of the meeting was the decision to set up an Armenian Committee for the Blue Shield.

3.4 - Emergency response in disaster, domestic emergencies, and armed conflict:

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3.5 - Stabilisation, post-disaster recovery, and long-term/ongoing support:

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3.6 - Co-ordination (of Blue Shield and with other relevant organisations):

30 June 2021: Blue Shield anniversary event at Theresien Military Academy

At an event on June 30, 2021 in the Maria-Theresien-Rittersaal of the military academy with the title "Cultural Heritage in the Crossfire - 25 Years of the Blue Shield", the cooperation between the Austrian Armed Forces and the BSA was confirmed. In the presence of Defence Minister Klaudia Tanner, the foundation stone was laid for the possible development of a competence center for the protection of cultural property, and the head of the UNESCO headquarters in Paris was also connected digitally. Defence Minister Klaudia Tanner emphasizes that the protection of cultural property is also essential for international peace work. BSA President Habsburg reported on the activities of the last 25 years and focused on the future. Major General Karl Pronhagl shed light on the prospects for the Austrian Armed Forces. GS Friedrich Schipper presents the newly elected board of directors of Blue Shield Austria to the visitors.

26 September 2021: Austrian Monument's Day

With the topic "Cultural Heritage: Mission and Legacy", BSA invited to an event at Grades Castle in Carinthia on September 26, 2021, the Austrian National Committee Blue Shield is organizing a symposium that addresses the relevance of cultural heritage and the protection of cultural property on a national and international level, Nicole Gruber from the National Defense Academy and the art historians Wilhelm Gabalier and Constantin Staus-Rausch.

4. Main issues faced

Election of the new Board due to president's resignation and further re-organisation of the Committee.

5. Future goals

- *Awareness Raising:* Regional events, Blue Shield Award, Conference on 50 Yrs. WHC 2022
- *Education and Training:* IHL, peacekeeping
- *Building bridges:* National Contact Organization in CPP & CIMIC regards for govt. and NGO sector, support of new committees and interested partners
- *Strengthening national & international network:* military, academics, civil society, NGOs

6. Other

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