

Annual Report: 2021

1. Administrative Details

1.1 - Name of National Committee: Belgian Committee of the Blue Shield (BSB)

1.2 - Date Report Completed: 27 February 2022

1.3 - Reporting period covered: January 2021 – 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 in the reporting period:

Till 22/04/2021 the Board was composed as follows

Leroy Isabelle, President; Verhaegen Lucas, Vice-president, Serck-Dewaide Myriam, Secretary general, Claes Britt, treasurer, Delplancq Thierry - Devillers Gislaïne - Kockelkoren Griet - Patricio Teresa: members.

From 22/04/2021 the board is composed as follows

Janssens Gustaaf, president

Delplancq Thierry, vice-president

Verhaegen Lucas, vice president

Ceulemans Christina, secretary general <christina.ceulemans1@gmail.com>

Claes Britt, treasurer

Absil Nathalie

Guilardian David, member

Hanse Anne-Sophie, member

1.5 - Address of the main office: Parc du Cinquantenaire 1 - 1000 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

1.6 - Website and social media (if applicable):

www.blueshieldbelgium.be –

<http://www.facebook.com/BelgianCommitteeOfTheBlueShield?ref=hl>

2. Income:

Transfer 2020	€ 2062,16
Membership fee (20€/p)	€ 850,00
Donations (from private persons and associations)	€ 5565,00
Grant project AWaP (Agence wallonne du Patrimoine)	€ 12000,00
TOTAL	€ 20477,16

3. Report of Activities: Achievements & Performance

3.1 - Law, policy development and implementation:

- Participation of several BSB members in the working group for the protection of cultural property within the Interdepartmental Commission for Humanitarian R (ICHR) managed by Mr. Benjamin Goes at the Prime Minister's Chancellery (virtual).
We receive all documents and information on the preparation for the implementation of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property during armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954) and its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999. The Brochure is not yet published.
- BSB made an intervention on its actions during the floods (M. Serck, 29/09/2021) and contributed to the “Floods” report of the WG Cultural property. The ICHR would speak under the National Advisory Committee referred to in Resolution II of the 1954 Hague Conference.

3.2 - Education, training, and capacity building:

Due to the COVID pandemic, a few online sessions were organised

Webinar for members (max 20 participants)

18/01/2021 (Webinar, 2h)

Etienne CLÉMENT, *Back to the 1990s: why a second protocol to the Hague Convention and the creation of a Blue Shield?*

Anne DEGRAEVE, *Archaeology in the Brussels-Capital Region and the case of Parking 58: the reconciliation between heritage management and construction activities.*

22/02/2021 (Webinar, 2h)

Elke SELTER *Timbuktu, International Response to Heritage in "Remote" Areas*.

Marino FICCO *The disappearance of the Apollo of Gaza.*

22/03/2021 (Webinar, 1h)

Paolo PELLEGRINO, *Workshop on fighting the illicit traffic of cultural property* with a presentation of the Application ID-ART, organised by Interpol, an initiative of L. Verhaegen.

12/03/2021 (Webinar, 1 day)

Webinar in collaboration with the Heritage service of Louvain: *Heritage and the four Elements: AIR*: conferences and workshops online.

Guest lectures (for students)

22/09/2021 Guest lecture (online platform 2h)

Teresa PATRICIO, *How heritage is (and isn't) protected during times of conflict* within the framework of the course of Suzie Thomas, professor at University Antwerp, Conservation-Restoration department.

12/10/2021 Communication (group of experts)

Britt CLAES, *Crisis management: saving heritage after the July 2021 floods*, as part of BSB's participation in the Faro think tank (FARO = Flemish fulcrum for Cultural Heritage).

7/12/2021 Guest lecture (online platform: 2h)

Britt CLAES, *Idem*, within the framework of the course of Dr H el ene Verreyke, lecturer at University of Antwerp, Conservation-Restoration Department

3.3 - Proactive protection and risk preparedness:

- BSB received a grant of €20,000 for a project submitted to the AwaP (Walloon Agency for Cultural Heritage) "For the implementation of actions relating to the protection of protected heritage in case of disasters and emergency situations". The document was signed on November 12, 2021 by the Minister of Heritage Val erie de Bue. Duration: from September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022.
- As part of this project, administrative and technical assistance was hired for 6th months from December 1st at the rate of one day per week (freelance status).

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

The flood that affected mostly the Walloon Region was the result of the heavy rains on the 14th and the 15th of July. On the 20th of July a **crisis committee** was set up by the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) and BSB. The various institutions and governmental and private organizations, working in the field of cultural heritage, were invited to work closely together. Since then, the crisis committee has met (via Teams) 8 times: July 20 and 27, August 3, 10, 17 and 14, September 8 and October 22.

- **BSB actions in the context of this disaster:**

- July 15: BSB is alerted by the managers of the Museums of Liège and Verviers. The network is activated and specialists are on site July 17, 2021.
- July 16: a member of the Board of Administrators offers to be our SPOC with a unique telephone number.
- End of July: an online form is available on BSB website to both recruit volunteers and collect requests for intervention. < <https://blueshieldbelgium.be/fr/formulaires-pour-les-demandes-et-propositions-daide/> >
- For several months, and this on an almost weekly basis, calls for intervention were prepared and sent by email to volunteers with all the information required. The follow-up was quickly organized by a few members of the Board and is still active, with the administrative and technical assistance that BSB was able to recruit with the grant of the AWAP starting December 1, 2021.
- At the end of 2021, more than 170 people came forward as volunteers: specialists, institutions, heritage agencies, private firms and people interested in the field from all over Belgium and also from France.
- More than 100 man-days were supplied.
- Universities (conservation/art history/archaeology, etc.) have been contacted and are deploying their students in the field.
- Heritage institutions were asked to lend equipment, such as dehumidifiers and protective clothing for the affected places.
- BSB also worked on communication to strengthen the image of the association through conferences (communication by Mr. Serck on the floods at the WAPI congress in Tournai, 08/21/2021), interviews, the website, Facebook posts.....
- -At the request of BSI, the committees of Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany wrote a report on the situation (sent on 15/08/2021)
<https://theblueshield.org/disaster-response-throughout-the-summer/>

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

- A number of organizations present in the Crisis Committee met in a 'Circle of Donors', created within the King Baudouin Foundation. BSB made calls for donations and helped to activate the Circle of Donors (meetings 28/10/2021, 18/11/2021).
- BSB took part in the working group related to the insurance of volunteers (personal accidents). The Firm Eeckman, expert in the field, advised us free of charge. We are very grateful for it.
- BSB has received an authorization from the ONEM allowing the unemployed to carry out a voluntary activity while retaining their unemployment benefits.
- 26/10/2021 Some members of the Council visited a provincial heritage depot in Ename, specially equipped to intervene preventively and curatively in crisis situations.
- 23/11/2021 A study day "Drawing lessons from the crisis" is organized by the crisis committee to draw up an initial assessment (face-to-face at IRPA and remotely via Teams). Several organizations including BSB (G. Janssens, B. Claes, A.-S. Hanse) gave lectures.

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

- 14/10/2021
The Belgian Blue Shield Committee attended the UNESCO Vlaanderen meeting. A discussion on the impact of the flooding took place in a private session. B. Claes and M. Serck gave an overview of Blue Shield actions after the disaster and also explained

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- how Blue Shield deploys and guides the many volunteers. N. Absil (AWaP, Liège), gave an assessment of the state of the protected buildings after the flood.
- B. Claes and L. Verhaegen take part in the 'Calamities' think tank of Faro (meeting on 12/10/2021).

4. Main issues faced:

The great flood in Belgium, Wallonia, has forced BSB **to react quickly, appoint a SPOC and mobilize volunteers**. Fortunately, an existing network and a lot of voluntary commitment from some core members of the Board made this possible.

- BSB needs to develop a **permanent centre** that can be activated in time of crisis.
- It is also necessary to obtain a **representation in the crisis bodies** of the government on different levels (Municipality, Province, federal State).
- BS movement has to gain more fame by
 - o pursuing a high-quality media policy
 - o Organize own fundraising

5. Future goals

This are only a few goals on the short term

- Develop our organisation to be more efficient and to reinforce our financial strength
- Maintain the contact with our volunteers in the follow up of the disaster
- Prepare projects to obtain a better financial support of the government (different levels, Flanders, Wallonia, federation Brussels-Wallonia...)
- Encourage member to follow training in the areas of prevention of disaster and on good practices after the disaster
- Deliver this information to others inside and outside BSB

6. Other