



Second Meeting of the Blue Shield National Committees from Europe

Report

3-5 November 2019
Brussels, Belgium

Organisers: Austrian and Belgian National Committees of the Blue Shield, with the support of the City of Brussels, the Flemish Interface Centre for Cultural Heritage (Faro) and the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA).



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1. Goals of the meeting

The main goals of the meeting were:

- to enhance networking amongst members of Blue Shield National Committees in Europe;
- to discuss achievements and issues Blue Shield National Committees are facing in Europe;
- to receive advice by the Head of the Fair Societies and Cultural Heritage at the European Commission about the upcoming (now current) call for the EU Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020 and to inquire whether the network of Blue Shield National Committees in Europe may serve as research consortium;
- to investigate with (former) MEP how to lobby politicians, how to develop peer groups in Brussels or at the EU Parliament in order to establish a collaboration with the EU;
- to consult with members of the EU CULT Commission on the future of cultural property protection policies in the EU;
- to explore with the EU CULT Commission possible ways to establish a permanent intergroup of the Blue Shield at the EU Parliament.

2. Participants

Seven EU national committees were represented at the meeting: Austria, Belgium, France, Ireland, Norway, Poland, and United Kingdom. The President and the Vice-President of BSI, together with a member of the Secretariat, also joined the event.

In addition, the Secretary-General of the World Association for the Protection of the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Times of Armed Conflict (WATCH) attended the event.

For the list of participants, see [Annex 1](#).

3. Programme

3.1 Sunday, November 3rd

The event commenced with a visit to the Town Hall in the Grand Place conducted by Dr Philippe Sosnowska, archaeologist and post-doctoral researcher at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Participants had the opportunity to learn more about the history of the square and the building and to reach the top of its tower to enjoy the view of the city. After that, a visit to the Brussels City Museum, organised by the City of Brussels, allowed participants to:

- understand the history of the Grand Place including the bombardment of Brussels by French troops in 1695, and the resulting fire (Fig.2);
- examine the current emergency plans, and safeguarding measures;
- learn about the ongoing restoration work to stabilise the conditions of the main buildings along the main square to prevent them from further damage or decay. Participants were shown the drawings made in the end of the 19th century and which have facilitated the restoration of the façades.



Fig.2 The Bombardment (Anonymous, 1965). The Grand Place on fire on the night of the 13 August 1695. Credit: © Brussels City Museum.

The visit to the museum was followed by an evening reception kindly offered by FARO in the building De Priem, in the heart of Brussels, from where the organisation operates.

3.2 Monday, November 4th

SESSION 1

-**Friedrich Schipper** (Austria) and **Christina Celeumans** (Belgium) welcomed participants and set the agenda for the day.

-**H. De Clercq**, Director KIK-IRPA, opened the second day of the meeting briefing participants about the activities KIK-IRPA is currently conducting, its areas of expertise, and future projects. More information about KIK-IRPA can be found on the online website of the organisation: <http://www.kikirpa.be/EN/>

-**Peter Stone** (Vice-President of Blue Shield International)

Reported on the activities of the BSI Board and the Secretariat. A Strategic Plan template has been produced to help BS national committees in prioritising their goals and future actions in view to become to become more fundable organisations. The Strategic Plan for BSI and UKBS were shown as examples. Similarly, a standardised presentation about the work of the Blue Shield is under final revision. Once approved by the Board, together with the Strategic Plan, the presentation will be circulated among BS national committees so that it can be used for presentations at events (conferences, training, workshops, etc.). Prof Peter Stone and Dr Emma Cunliffe are also working on the production of a podcast, with the support of Newcastle University, to provide audio/visual instructions on the use of these two documents.

NOTE:

In relation to the BSI Strategic Plan, some recommendations were made by the Belgian committee:

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- 1) To lobby for the participation of BSI representatives as observers to the meetings of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) at the Council of Europe (Nicosia Convention);
 - 2) To lobby for the participation of BSI representatives at the meeting of the UNESCO Committee for the protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict;
 - 3) To consider the possibility to plan something on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

SESSION 2

- **Karl von Habsburg** (President of BSI) formally thanked the Austrian and Belgian Committees of the Blue Shield for the efforts, time and dedication in organising the event.

- **France** (Françoise Collanges)

In the last years, the French Committee of the Blue Shield had to face several issues such as lack of funding, lack of permanent staff, and poor coordination. However, this year the committee had decided to revamp its image by adopting the new Blue Shield logo, and reactivating its social media (Twitter and Facebook) to raise the profile of the committee at a national and international level. In this regard, the committee has recently employed a one-year contract person to look at funding possibilities.

Some of the activities mentioned included:

- Conference 'Rebondir après le drame : patrimoines et résilience', organised in collaboration with the French Ministry of Culture, on December 19th, Paris. The press release for the conference is available on the website of the French committee: <http://www.bouclier-bleu.fr/blog/2019/10/31/journee-detudes-du-cfbbrebondir-apres-le-drame-patrimoines-et-resilience-19-decembre-2019-paris/>
- IDRIM 2019, side event on 'Cultural Heritage Risk Management', on October 18th, Nice
- Advice the Ministry of Ecological and Solidarity Transition on how mitigating damage caused to buildings by floods. The committee will advocate because also other threats are taken into consideration
- Supervise the Alpine Space Programme - AdaptAlp Project. More information about the project can be found on the website dedicated to the initiative: <https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/cheers/en/about/overview>.

- **Poland** (Lidia Klupsz)

Reported on activities conducted by the committee. These included:

- Popularisation and promotion of the Hague Convention and its Second Protocol which entered into force on April 3rd, 2012
- Dissemination of knowledge on the protection of cultural heritage in danger through courses, workshops, and conferences (e.g. international conference 'Protection of cultural property in the event of special threats – modern technologies in heritage protection')
- Cooperation with the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of National Defence to establish an International Centre for Training and Research on Cultural Heritage in Danger. The agreement between the two ministries was signed on July 11, 2019. The centre will

open on May 1, and a conference to inaugurate it will take place in June 2020. National committees and experts and institutions are invited by the Polish committee to cooperate in the project

For 2020, the committee outlined its priorities among which there are: conducting discussions on the need of a possible Third Protocol to the Convention, organising regional meetings, signing of an agreement between the Ministry of National Defence and the Polish Committee on the implementation of tasks of protection of cultural heritage in the event of an armed conflict, preparing guidelines of the best practices handbook on the protection of cultural collections in armed conflicts, collaborating with other BS NCs.

More information about Poland BS can be found on its new website: <https://bt.mkidn.gov.pl>

-Harald Hartung (Head of the Fair Societies and Cultural Heritage, at European Commission)

Horizon 2020 is a €80 billion research and innovation funding programme which aims at responding to the economic crisis to invest in future jobs and growth. Addressing people’s concerns about their livelihoods, safety and environment, strengthening the EU’s global position in research, innovation and technology. Cultural heritage is part of Societal Challenge 6 which looks at the safeguarding and valorisation of heritage (Fig.2 and Fig. 3). Of these two categories, the former would be of the greatest interest for BS.

4. Societal Challenge 6 – Europe in a Changing World: Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies

"The specific objective of the societal challenge 'Europe in a changing world - Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies' will **support social sciences and humanities research...**" [which] "is needed to **understand identity and belonging** across communities, regions and nations. Research will support policymakers in designing policies that **foster employment, combat poverty and prevent the development of various forms of divisions, conflict and political and social exclusion, discrimination and inequalities**, such as gender and intergenerational inequalities, discrimination due to disability or ethnic origin, or digital or innovation divides, **in European societies and in other regions of the world...**"

(Extracts from the Regulation establishing Horizon 2020)

European Commission

Fig.2 Societal Challenge 6 – Horizon 2020 © Harald Hartung, 2020

Cultural Heritage in H2020

- Safeguarding**
 - restoration, protection, preventive conservation, archiving
- Valorisation**
 - access (3D modelling, virtual reality), cultural tourism, promoting European identity

Sustainable Development (SDGs)

Digitalisation

Fig.3 Cultural Heritage – Horizon 2020 © Harald Hartung, 2020

Three are the main funding schemes for Horizon 2020 societal challenges:

- Research and innovation actions (RIA): collaborative research action primarily consisting of activities aiming to establish new knowledge and/or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution;
- Innovation actions (IA): activities directly aimed at producing plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services;
- Coordination and support actions (CSA): activities to accompany research, such as standardisation, dissemination, awareness raising and communication, networking coordination or support services, policy dialogues...

For each of these three schemes, at least three EU Member States are recommended, while there is no specific number for associate countries. Proposals are evaluated by at least three external experts who consider: excellence, impact and quality/efficiency of each proposal received.

For the UK, everything will depend on whether the country will leave the EU with or without a deal. If there is no deal, the UK will receive no financial support and this will need to be covered by the UK Government. In case a proposal is successful, if UK leaves without a deal, some renegotiations to the contract will be made.

On November 15th, an information session will take place in Brussels for H2020 participants, discussing legal aspects, business processes and IT tools. The deadline for the submission of project is March 12th, 2020.

More information about Societal Challenge 6 Work Programme 2018-2020 can be found on the EU Commission website: https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018-2020/main/h2020-wp1820-societies_en.pdf

List of eligible countries, admissibility conditions, etc. can be downloaded in the General Annexes to the Work programme 2018-2020: https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2018-2020/annexes/h2020-wp1820-annex-ga_en.pdf

- **Austria** (Johannes Göllner and Friedrich Schipper)

Presented on the project 'Sustainable Historic Environments holistic reconstruction through Technological Enhancement and community-based Resilience' (SHELTER), recently funded by the EU-Horizon 2020. Over the last decades, as a consequence of the effects of climate change, cultural heritage has been impacted by an increasing number of climate-related hazards, posing new challenges to conservators and heritage managers. SHELTER aims at developing a data-driven and community-based knowledge framework that will bring together the scientific community and heritage managers with the objective of increasing resilience, reducing vulnerability and promoting better and safer reconstruction in historic areas. More information about the project, its objectives and partners can be found on the EU Commission website: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/223273/factsheet/en>.

-**Friedrich Schipper** (Austria)

Invited all participants to consider joining forces and using the network of the European Blue Shield National Committees as a basis for a research consortium that would submit a research proposal to the European Commission in response to the current call.

The second day of the meeting ended with a presentation of KIK-IRPA further projects they are carrying on in the field of preventive conservation (risk analysis, conditions reports, and measurements), Afterwards the participants visited the KIK-IPA laboratories where experts briefed participants about their work in digitalisation of old photo archives, restoration of fabrics, and paintings with a focus on preservation and protection.

3.3 Tuesday, November 5th

SESSION 1

- **Belgium** (Christina Ceulemans)

Informed on the goals, member composition, and recent activities of the committee (in particular awareness raising through the sharing of information, training, and networking). Examples of these activities are:

- The designing of a new website which will help in better promoting its initiatives nationally and internationally
- Organisation of a seminar, in partnership with the City of Leuven, FARO, and ICOMOS on four elements which can impact cultural property. The first conference on water will be on November 22nd. For registration: <https://www.erfgoedcelmijnerfgoed.be/agenda/studiedag-erfgoed-en-de-4-elementen-water/>
- Preparation of a practical exercise at the Royal Library of Belgium in collaboration with the Security Working Group
- Collaboration with heritage organisations such as UNESCO through a working group dedicated to issues relating to cultural property as the enhanced protection developed by the Interdepartmental Commission of Humanitarian Law
- Attendance of the Brussels Prevention and Security meetings in order to push the agenda to include cultural heritage in the next emergency response plan and combat illicit trafficking

Next year will mark the 20th anniversary of the Belgian committee, for this reason, a new membership scheme, new partnerships and sponsors are currently investigated

-Ireland (Patrizia Lapiscopeia)

Reported on the issue that the committee is having at a national level, in *primis* lack of funding. This undermines the ability of the committee to have a voice on the political and heritage field. Ireland has ratified the 1954 Hague Convention and its Second Protocol but not the First one. For this reason, the committee is lobbying for having also the First Protocol ratified. In addition, Brexit represents an element of great concern since the border issue will increase the likelihood of illicit trafficking of cultural property (Ireland has also not ratified the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property).

Among the main activities of the Irish committee:

- Submission of the Blue Shield to Heritage Ireland 2030
- Training of the Irish Defence Forces in November 2019, organised with the support of the Irish Defence Forces and Blue Shield International
- Lobbying for the registration under enhanced protection of two WHSs in Ireland: Skellig Michael and Brú na Bóinne.

- **Norway** (Axel Mykleby)

Presented on the activities of the Norwegian committee which included:

- Lecture on Risk Preparedness in Muscat
- Participation in the Annual National Conference of Risk Preparedness
- Establishment of contacts with the Ethical Committee on Military Affairs

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- Establishment of contacts with the Forum for Risk Preparedness and Securing Rest Values. Police, fire brigades, banks and insurance companies are part of the Forum
 - Reprinting of the Blue Shield Card deck: because there are different partners to the project, in order to avoid issues of copyright the committee is currently investigating the best way to proceed

The committee is exploring possible funding opportunities for the coming year.

- **UK (Valentina Sabucco)**

Briefed on the activities of the UK committee, in particular:

- Collaborate closely with the new Cultural Property Protection Unit of the British Army (e.g. organisation of the first UK's CPP Special to Arm course)
- Seek collaboration with heritage organisations in the UK such as National Trust and English Heritage
- Draft a Proposal for Assisting the UK Government, EU National Committees and BSI on the lobbying and implementation of the EU Cultural Property Regulations
- Conducting research through ArcGIS and Google Earth to assess the possibility for WHSs in the UK to be registered under Special and or Enhanced Protection
- Dissemination of information about the 1954 Hague Convention and its Two Protocols through conferences, and workshops
- Raising public awareness about the activities of the committee and the Blue Shield via social media
- Preparation of documents to register the committee as a charity for 2020

More information about the committee can be found in the section 'national committees news' on the BSI website: <https://theblueshield.org/news-and-activities/>.

SESSION 2

Meeting with Daniel Dalton, former MEP for the West Midlands

Karl von Habsburg opened the session stressing the importance of having a commission at the EU Parliament dealing primarily with culture. Soldiers are individuals working at the best ability and knowledge with the tools they have. The rules of engagement are based on the mandate soldiers receive. If culture is not part of the mandate, soldiers will not deal with it. In the last couple of years cultural heritage has received increasing attention (e.g. UN Security Council Resolutions). The MINUSMA mission in Mali has been the first mission where cultural heritage was mentioned in the mandate. Most missions we are now dealing with are inter-cultural, inter-religious, where people's identity is at stake. At the European level, we need to raise awareness of the importance of including heritage in the political agenda. This also applies to the issue of illicit trafficking which has been used, and continues to be used, to finance insurgencies.

Soldiers have received training in fighting illicit trafficking in Beirut, one of the source countries. Now, since technology is evolving rapidly, there is an urgent need for the political side to respond.

The former MEP agreed with what stated. However, he noted that most MEPs are not specialist in these sectors, for this they rely on experts who explain to them how these processes work. In the case of BS, the BS will be the expert who needs to identify the key people who will feel comfortable enough to take decisions influencing other MEPs. In addition, BS should also try to identify who are the technical advisers who prepare the reports for the MEPs since these are also very important.

It is not uncommon for MEPs to receive opposite feedback on a specific matter. For this reason, it is important to provide evidence to back up one's positions (e.g. figures, statistics, etc.). For example, the UK Cultural Goods Legislation is currently under implementation: some elements of it needs to be further clarified such as what counts as a license for the export of cultural goods. In this sense, it is important to talk to the Commission (the implementation will be fully in force by 2025).

In relation to the rules of engagement, the EU Parliament will have a significant role: BS can advocate to have cultural heritage as an element of these rules. This applies especially on the peacekeeping operations, where the EU military forces will focus on.

Karl von Habsburg further noted that MEPs, because of the number of papers to read, do not read documents more than one-page long. Therefore, the more concise a report will be, the more likely it will be read. BS needs to consider who may be its opponents (mainly auction houses) and what type of arguments they can bring to the attention of the EU in order to be ready to counterargue.

Daniel Dalton further suggested that BS should try to have a conversation with auction houses since a possible common ground may be found.

During the meeting, three possible options were identified for BS:

- 1) Join a current intergroup (e.g. Paneuropean working group, or European Tourism Development, Cultural Heritage [on e.g. Ways of St. James, and other European Cultural Routes] intergroup). Intergroup meetings are usually attended by many MEPs because in these short sessions (c. 45 minutes) they get lots information about a specific topic. To become part of an existing intergroup would allow representatives of BS to identify important MEPs.
- 2) Set up a new intergroup. This would provide some benefits like rooms and translators for conferences but no financial funding. More than two MEPs are needed for creating an intergroup.
- 3) Set up a Friends Group. For this only one/two MEPs are needed, it is easier to be created and would give BS room for discussion, although this type of groups is not officially recognised by the EU.

Moreover, the possibility of having an exhibition at the EU Parliament was also suggested. In order to achieve this, it is important to define what the exhibition will be about before approaching one or more MEPs, who are needed to sponsor the exhibition. This will allow BS to have an exhibition space at the EU, however, BS will have to cover the costs of catering, transports of objects etc. It is a good strategy to choose the period of the year where most MEPs are in Brussels (e.g. plenary session). The exhibition should be set up in a strategic space, possibly nearby a coffee, so that it is clearly visible. Objects can be brought inside the Parliament if necessary.

SESSION 3

Meeting with MEP Dace Melbarde, Vice-Chair of the Committee of Culture and Education at the European Parliament

Karl von Habsburg gave an introduction on the activities of the Blue Shield, in particular in relation to illicit trafficking, and stressed the willingness of BS to collaborate more closely with the EU to improve the current legislation.

MEP Dace Melbarde asked if BS has evidence (general statistics, figures) proving the happening of illicit looting since she was approached a couple of weeks ago by a group of antiquarians who were supporting an exactly opposite position from the BS'one. The President of BS noted that there are no general statistics but some specific case studies have been conducted. Therefore, the BS could provide names of experts in illicit trafficking that can be contacted (e.g. Neil Brodie, Fionnuala Rogers).

The MEP asked if BS has any kind of monitoring system for illicit antiquities trafficked on eBay. BS collaborates with some organisations which have databases of illicitly trafficked objects such as Carabinieri, but it does not own one itself.

In this regard, the MEP asked if the regulation in the EU should be improved according to the BS's point of view. The answer was affirmative so the group decided to keep in touch and discuss further what the issues are and what can be done (e.g. capacity building for police forces). The BS was advised to contact follow-up group for cultural heritage in order to discuss its attendance to their meetings.

4. Conclusions and future actions

The meeting offered participants the opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss challenges that NCs will need to overcome in the short and medium terms. NCs also received an overview of how the Horizon 2020 programme is structured and can now discuss the feasibility of preparing and submitting an application. In this regard, it was agreed that the group will:

- 1) Look at current projects about proactive protection which are already funded by Horizon 2020 (e.g. ILUCIDARE led by the University of Leuven: <https://ilucidare.eu/>), to avoid duplications;
- 2) Decide within 4 weeks from the EU meeting if, as European BC NCs, it is possible to submit a research proposal for Horizon 2020 (e.g. a project about capacity building);
- 3) If a project is possible, identify possible partners who need to be qualified for the tasks proposed.

Following the meeting with the former MEP, Daniel Dalton, and the MPE Dace Melbarde, the following course of actions was identified:

- 1) Define what BS wants to lobby for
- 2) Identify champions (usually the coordinators of the working group in the field of interest). A member of the Belgian Committee, Gislaine Devillers, suggested to participate in the working group set up by the Commission by contacting: catherine.magnan@ec.europa.eu or erminia.sciacchitano@ec.europa.eu
- 3) Create relationships
- 4) Arrange a meeting with one of the intergroups and explore the possibility to become part of them. Alternatively, explore one of the other two options (either create a new intergroup or a friends group).
- 5) Meanwhile, the date for a first Pan-European Intergroup meeting on Cultural Property Protection at the European Parliament has been set: April 2, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. – Representatives of all European Blue Shield National Committees and BSI are invited to join. **Please, save the date!**
- 6) Explore the possibility of an exhibition at the European Parliament (no valuable objects, but informative panels), including funding
- 7) Contact Maria Gabriella, or Margaritas Schinas to investigate the possibility for BS representatives to attend meetings of the follow-up working group for cultural heritage created by the European Commission. participation in the working group set up by the Commission: contacts: catherine.magnan@ec.europa.eu or erminia.sciacchitano@ec.europa.eu

According to the decisions taken, BS may be able to successfully dialogue with the EU and play a key role in relation to the protection of cultural heritage and the fight against illicit trafficking. For this, national MEPs can be contacted to be involved since they can ask questions to the EU Commission.

Finally, in the light of the GA 2020 (November 25-27, 2020, in Prague), participants agreed to not have a European Blue Shield meeting in 2020 but to e.g. plan for a compact European round table within the context of the GA 2020.

Annex A – List of participants

First Name	Family Name	Citizenship	Status
Christina	Ceulemans	Belgium	
Claudio	Cimino	Italy	
Britt	Claes	Belgium	
Françoise	Collanges	France	
Livia	Depuydt	Belgium	
Françoise	Descamps	Belgium	
Gislaine	Devillers	Belgium	
Benjamin	Goes	Belgium	
Johannes	Göllner	Austria	
Gustaaf	Janssens	Belgium	
Lidia	Klupsz	Poland	
Griet	Kockelkoren	Belgium	
Patrizia	Lapiscopia	Ireland	
Isabelle	Leroy	Belgium	
Axel	Mykleby	Norway	
Anne-Cathérine	Olbrechts	Belgium	
Valentina	Sabucco	Italy	UKBS Secretariat
Krzysztof Tadeusz	Salaciński	Poland	
Friedrich	Schipper	Austria	
Myriam	Serck-Dewaide	Belgium	
Peter	Stone	UK	BSI Vice- President
Markus	Swittalek	Austria	
Lucas	Verhaegen	Belgium	
Karl	Von Habsburg	Austria	
Viliam	Zathurecky	Czech Republic	