

2022 Report on National Committee 2021 Annual Reports

- Blue Shield International Report -



1.0 Overview

The following report summarises the activities and plans of the national committees according to our six areas of activity, and the challenges the committees face. There is a considerable amount of overlap between the six areas, and for ease of collation and standardisation in this report, some activities might be in different sections to those in the submitted reports.

It should be noted that no attempt is made to compare committees or committee activities: both are highly variable. Given this, no summary statistics are provided, as this may obscure the variation in committees.

URLs to further information are provided where given in the annual reports.

1.1 Reporting

As of July 2022, Blue Shield International (BSI) has received 24 annual reports for 2021 and 23 Strategic Plans for 2022. These are from: Australia; Austria; Belgium; Cameroun; Curacao; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece/Hellenic; Guatemala; Iceland; Ireland; Korea; North Macedonia; Mali; Netherlands; Perú; Poland; Senegal; Turkey; UK; USCBS. Reports are outstanding for three committees. Slovakia and Niger received accreditation in 2022, and will begin reporting in 2023.

BSI would like to give our sincere thanks to the Czech Republic National Committee, who put in extensive work to try and host the Blue Shield Annual General Assembly in person. We regret that it no longer seems possible, but we are very grateful to them for their work. We thank Blue Shield Netherlands for their assistance in formalizing our registered postal address at the National Archives of the Netherlands, and for supporting the virtual General Assembly (in 2022), and for representatives from Blue Shield Netherlands and Blue Shield Turkey for standing for the Auditing Committee. We also thank those from the national committees who give their time on Blue Shield Working Groups, including the Illegal Trafficking working group and the Emergency Response Working Group under development.

1.2 Committee Income and Staffing

The vast majority of the national committees are entirely voluntary: Blue Shield Georgia has paid project staff, USCBS and Blue Shield France both have one temporary part time support staff member, and Blue Shield Belgium has just hired administrative and technical assistance for 6th months from December 1st at the rate of one day per week (freelance status) to support a new project.

Committee income varies considerably, and is primarily from membership and project grants, with some donations, although Blue Shield France, also generate income from the sale of Blue Shield reflective logos to identify objects/collections that should be prioritized in case of an emergency evacuation. Incomes are listed below where given: all other committees have no (identified) income.

(Amounts are approximate and all converted into Euros for comparison)

Australia	€ 3835 (membership / donations)
Austria	Grants (unspecified)
Belgium	€ 20477 (membership / grants / donations)
Czech Republic	€ 1230 EUR and project grants (unspecified) ¹
Denmark	€ 540 (annual operation costs donation by National Gallery, National Museum, Royal Library and National Archive) and € 241,331 in account balance.

¹ Managed by the Association of Czech Museums and Galleries: as a consortium, CRBS is not a legal entity and under Czech law cannot manage funds.



Georgia	€ 54145 (Project grants).
Germany	€ 2520 Euro (membership and donations) and € 20,630 (project grant)
Greece	€ 5000 (single donation), Horizon Project participation funding (unspecified)
Iceland	€ 5000 (project grant 2020-2022)
Korea (Rep. of)	€ 16306 (membership fees + account balance)
Macedonia (North)	€ 1500 (Ministry of Culture grant)
Perú	€ 400 (Board member website contributions)
Senegal	Membership fees (undisclosed)
UK	Website paid for by Newcastle University
USA	Membership fees (undisclosed), c. 100 members

2.0 Coordination and partnerships

2.1 *Coordination within Blue Shield*

First and foremost, we acknowledge the support Blue Shield national committees receive from their national founding four branches, ICOM, ICOMOS, ICA and IFLA.

There is good support between national committees, such as the assistance given by the Czech Republic and US committees to the Slovak committee when forming, and Austria to the proposed Armenian Committee. Blue Shield Denmark are currently working on establishing closer contact with other Nordic Blue Shield national committees in order to work towards collaborations and knowledge sharing. Volunteers from Blue Shield France and Netherlands helped after the floods in Belgium of July 2021.

The German Committee has been working with the African National committees to do a brochure about the work of the Blue Shield in Africa (available on the BSI website in English and French²) - we thank Blue Shield France for their assistance with the translation. The brochure covers the work of Blue Shield Committees, and committees in creation, in Cameroun, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, and Senegal.

² <https://theblueshield.org/blue-shield-in-africa-publication-launch/>



Following this, Blue Shield Senegal has defined a policy for Blue Shield activity in Africa, encouraging new work and mentoring other countries to create committees.

Blue Shield national committees supported the 25th anniversary of Blue Shield Movement. Blue Shield Austria (BSA) hosted a 25th anniversary event at the military academy with the title *Cultural Heritage in the Crossfire - 25 Years of the Blue Shield*, where the cooperation between the Austrian Armed Forces and BSA was confirmed, and discussions took place for the possible development of a competence centre for the protection of cultural property. Blue Shield Germany also supported the 25th anniversary by recording a series of interviews³ with actors and members of Blue Shield to talk about the role and importance of Blue Shield in light of its history. Blue Shield Turkey hosted a conference *Protecting Cultural Heritage in Disasters and Crisis* over two days. As part of the Blue Shield 25th anniversary celebrations, UK Blue Shield hosted a virtual panel, in collaboration with the British Army Cultural Property Protection Unit (CPPU) to discuss *What is Cultural Property Protection?*⁴

Blue Shield Perú has created a new branch in South Perú, in Arequipa.

³ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHAQYonBQzRAfmJZOdqib9w/featured>

⁴ <http://ukblueshield.org.uk/panel-registration-what-is-cultural-property-protection/>

2.2 Coordination nationally and internationally

National committees are engaging with their military and military academies, including building some new connections; as well as with international organisations such as:

- Calamities' Think Tank of the Faro Convention;
- UNESCO and its national commissions;
- National disaster management agencies of Curacao;
- Global Policy Project UNESCO Memory of the World;
- European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM); and
- UNITWIN Chairs of UNESCO that deal with the issues of natural disasters;
- as well as a massive number of local NGO partners and institutions and governments, including, local emergency response services, national heritage agencies, and local Red Cross Societies.

Various manuals have been translated into international languages. These include:

- *Manual on preventive measures and rescue work in emergency and afterward* from Polish to Czech;
- *ICCROM First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis Handbook and Toolkit* into Georgian;
- *ICCROM / UNESCO Manual Endangered Heritage* into German.
- *Universal Declaration on Archives* is translated to Papiamentu (local language Curacao) and available on ICA's website.

3.0 Education, training, and capacity building

The work of the Blue Shield national committees has great global reach. National committees have been involved in, or have directly organised, a large number of webinars, conferences, workshops and summer academies on heritage protection, disaster prevention, world heritage, and information and awareness raising, covering not only their own areas, but also Azerbaijan, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, and Mongolia. Many of the conferences attended and organised are not only heritage protection conferences, but disaster conferences, and conferences on, for example, religious freedom (attended by Blue Shield Austria and organized by the Holy See in Etschmiadzin), highlighting the diversity of areas heritage protection.

Some examples (but by no means all) include:

- Blue Shield Austria gave a lecture *Civil-military cooperation as an essential condition for effective protection of cultural property in times of emergencies* as part of a workshop aiming to strengthen national capacities to implement the 1954 Hague Convention 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.



- Blue Shield Germany published its first issue *Kulturerbe in Gefahr*, a brief dedicated the risk cultural heritage faces in armed conflicts around the world. The issue focused on the threatened cultural heritage of the Tigray region in northern Ethiopia. The publication was accompanied by an organised event.
- The Hellenic Committee, in collaboration with the University of Nicosia and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, organised as conference and a series of webinars⁵ to raise awareness regarding the protection of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, in emergency situations, in cases of armed conflict and environmental disasters.
- Together with Emma Cunliffe, the chair of GNCBS, Manana Tevzadze presented a virtual paper at the international conference – *Cultural Heritage Preservation on Occupied Territories: Georgia and an International Experience*⁶ organized by the George Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation and Blue Shield Georgia. Conference proceedings were published online as well as in print⁷.

Blue Shield Austria co-hosted a summer academy focussing on Austrian World Heritage 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. In the same way, they also supported the World Heritage site of St Petersburg in Russia. Blue Shield Guatemala also carried out training of CNPAG staff (Consejo Nacional para la Protección de Antigua Guatemala), a UNESCO World Heritage site.

There is increasing military training and collaboration carried out with national committees:

- USCBS provided *Leader Professional Development* sessions for the 10th Mountain Division JAG Corps and through their work as staff of the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (CRI), members support an agreement with the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command related to implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention. Among these activities is a working group on Department of Defense policies.
- Guatemala gave an online presentation about cultural property protection (CPP) to Honduran and US Bravo Joint Task Force soldiers.
- Ireland supported BSI to prepare and deliver CPP training for the United Nations Training School Ireland (UNTSI) at the start of 2022.
- Blue Shield Denmark and Senegal are now developing cooperation with their Military Academy and Ministry of the Armed Forces of Senegal, respectively, to integrate Blue Shield objectives.
- The Georgian National Committee participated in *Paldo-2020*⁸- a joint field exercise by the Georgian National Guard and the Emergency Management Agency of the Ministry of Internal

⁵ <https://hellenicblueshield.com/en/webex-meeting-recording-cultural-heritage-webinars-20210223-1601-1-2/>

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY8Q7tdAEDo>

⁷ <https://bit.ly/35esBgR>

⁸ <https://blueshield.ge/?p=8899&lang=en>



Affairs of Georgia. As part of the exercise, the team coordinated the emergency protection and evacuation of an imaginary cultural heritage (archaeological) site and evacuating movable CP by the participants during a simulated forest fire. This event marked the start of collaboration which continues into 2022 and will include a joint civil-military training in CPP and a field exercise.

- Through the newly created International Center for Training and Research on Cultural Heritage in Danger, Blue Shield Poland, in cooperation with their Ministry of National Defence and Ministry of Culture & National Heritage, supported the development of Poland's Cultural Properties Protection (CPP) capability; co-organise workshops and trainings on CPP with the Military Training Centre for Foreign Operations in Kielce, and the Military Center for Civic Education.
- Poland also prepared a publication on legal provisions regarding the protection of cultural property in the event of an armed conflict and crisis situations, as well as exemplary model documents.
- BSI invited Blue Shield UK to support a two-day training workshop for UNIFIL, Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities in Beirut. The course was organised at the request of UNESCO Lebanon.

In addition to a wide number of professional training courses, committees are also working to improve formal education. For example, Blue Shield Curacao has been working to support a new University level Bachelor's Education Program on Archive Management. Members of Blue Shield Ireland, Blue Shield Guatemala, Blue Shield Senegal, and Blue Shield UK gave guest lectures on various university courses, and Blue Shield Perú are carrying out activities with school children. Blue Shield Poland gave lectures at the School of International Humanitarian Law, organized by the Polish Red Cross. They are also participating in the project *Cross-sectoral challenges: specialist in the protection of cultural properties in the event of a crisis and war - development of a postgraduate study program, dedicated to employees operating on the borderline of fields* - financed under the EEA Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021.

Many other courses are covered in the respective sections, particularly with regards to risk preparedness.

4.0 Proactive protection and risk preparedness

Blue Shield national committees around the world are very active in risk preparedness and risk mitigation. Many national committees are carrying out training and working with governments and institutions to improve their risk preparedness. Training courses, exercises, and workshops have included emergency planning in libraries, museums, crisis management, flood response, and object evacuation. Some examples include:

- Blue Shield France carried out extensive training in emergency planning in libraries, museums, flood response and object evacuation, and ran a course on *The international legal framework for the protection of cultural property in times of crisis*.

- Blue Shield Ireland have been identified to have a key role in providing disaster risk management training to staff in the Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage as part of a five-year implementation plan.
- The Georgian National Committee are carrying out the multi-year project *Planning for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage of Gori* funded by the ALIPH Foundation. They held a stakeholder meeting to identify priorities; carried out first aid training with simulation exercise⁹; began documentation and inventorying of Gori's museum photo archive; carried out GIS training; and work began on a Disaster Risk Management plan for the museum.
- The Netherlands National Committee co-hosted an online table-top exercise on crisis management in the Netherlands in cooperation with Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO.
- Belgium, Perú, and others are training volunteers in emergency response.

Direct Risk mitigation advocacy and support (rather than training) includes:

- Blue Shield Australia uses UN International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction on 13 October as a focus to raise awareness of preparedness at the start of the Australia Disaster Season (fires, floods, cyclones). Promotional material was used and social media postings around the day had good reach¹⁰.
- Blue Shield France are assisting Blue Shield Mali in the development of an emergency plan.
- Blue Shield Guatemala is actively supporting a number of risk assessments across Guatemala, along with risk management training. They also carried out a Risk Assessment at the Foreign Affairs Ministry Archives and Library of El Salvador, and a workshop *Risk Management to Documentary Heritage*, to personnel of the National Archives and the National Library of Panama, coordinated and sponsored by UNESCO Multipais office in Costa Rica as part of UNESCO's Memory of the World programme.
- Blue Shield Curacao are working to include Cultural Heritage as an Emergency Support Function (ESF) in the National Disaster Plan of Curacao, along with updating national plans of various institutions (e.g. national archives). They are working closely with the Caribbean Heritage Emergency Network (CHEN) of CARBICA, and have launched a new website¹¹, and created a database of experts willing to help in the disaster management cycle. CHEN has also applied for funding for a Caribbean hub with a mobile conservation lab. The intention is to store the container at the naval base in Curacao: in the event of a hurricane, the materials can then be transported to affected areas. This model is already used successfully in a partnership between

⁹ <https://blueshield.ge/?p=8951&lang=en>
<https://blueshield.ge/?p=9053&lang=en>

¹⁰ <https://blueshieldaust> Planning for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage of Gori ralia.org.au/day-for-disaster-risk-reduction/.

¹¹ www.carbica.org



Blue Shield Guatemala and Blue Shield Netherlands. Blue Shield Guatemala is also supporting museums of the Caribbean islands, providing an online course on Risk Management and First Aid to Cultural Heritage in times of Crisis, coordinated and sponsored by UNESCO Cuba.

- Blue Shield Belgium received a grant of €12,000 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.*

Committees are also working to draft practical guides and collate web resources¹² on topics such as fire risk mitigation, security measures, and supporting surveys on the status of emergency care for cultural property.

- Australia held a disaster planning workshop with Australian Library and Information Association. The workshop provided practical exercises in assessing disaster risk and preparing preventative plans, as well as creating a poster-sized calendar¹³ with the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material and their Disaster Preparedness Committee to be used by cultural organisations and individuals in planning for annual disaster preparedness activities with stickers.
- France are collaborating in the *Notre Dame project*, led by the French Federation of Firefighters (FNSPF) to draft a practical guide for fire risk mitigation and security measures in heritage buildings; Blue Shield Perú, Blue Shield Guatemala, and Blue Shield Poland are also collaborating closely with firefighters.
- Ireland are supporting *Guidance for First Responders to an emergency situation at a Cultural Property or Heritage Site* for Ireland's National Emergency Planning Committee.
- The Hellenic Committee participate in the initiative of Unitwin Chairs of UNESCO that deal with the issues of natural disasters. The goal of this initiative is to compile an index of natural and human-made dangers regarding Greek World Heritage monuments. HCBS have been providing information regarding the dangers facing individual sites. The ultimate goal will be to provide specific instructions in a Manual or Guide to contribute to the protection both of monuments and visitors.
- As part of a cooperation with the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK), SILK (Safety Guide for Cultural Property) and the Leopoldina (National Academy of Sciences), Blue Shield Germany supported a survey on the status of emergency care for cultural property, which is expected to contribute to a publication in 2022.

¹² For example, <https://blueshieldaustralia.org.au/resources/>

¹³ <https://aiccm.org.au/disaster/disaster-preparedness-calendar/>

5.0 Emergency preparedness and response

Blue Shield Committees have been heavily involved in emergency response to conflicts and disasters, not only in their countries but supporting colleagues abroad following floods, fires, landslides, tornados, hurricanes/tropical storms, and volcanic eruptions, as well as in the wake of conflict.

- The Belgian, German, Netherlands, and French National Committees were all heavily involved in the response to the floods in 2021 (reports available¹⁴). For example, Blue Shield Germany supported the salvage of the Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler municipal museum collection. The President, Susann Harder, coordinated the collection salvage on site as a task force member of the THW (German Federal Agency for Technical Relief). Other members of Blue Shield were active in the operation of a first aid centre for recovered pieces. Volunteers from Blue Shield France helped with the emergency stabilisation of collections in Belgium, and after assisting in their own flood response, Blue Shield Netherlands also assisted in Belgium.
- Blue Shield Turkey was involved in responding to the 2021 summer wildfires (reports available¹⁵).
- The Czech Republic Committee offered assistance to communities severely affected by the tornado in southern Moravia in June 2021, but no cultural heritage was damaged severely enough to need assistance.
- The Guatemalan and Curacao Committees, supported by Blue Shield Netherlands, have been providing conservation advice on damage to buildings and repositories caused by volcanic ashes (in cooperation with CARBICA CHEN and UNESCO Jamaica) following the volcanic eruption St Vincent and the Grenadines. Blue Shield Guatemala also conducted a Post Disaster Damage Assessment at Quiriguá and Yaxhá archaeological sites after ETA and IOTA tropical storms.
- Blue Shield Netherlands provided conservation advice to UCT Libraries in Cape Town after a fire.
- Blue Shield Iceland Committee representative provided advice in the aftermath of the Seyðisfjörður Landslide in the early part of the year, both to local curators at Seyðisfjörður and officials at government emergency bodies. Committee members also took part in helping local museums in salvaging holdings through their jobs.
- Members of the US Committee engaged with a number of partners to provide emergency assessments in Puerto Rico and the Bahamas following hurricanes/tropical storms.

With regards to conflict,

- Cameroon carried out a rapid damage assessment mission to seven cultural sites and museums, with particular emphasis on safeguarding built heritage and securing museums and their collections as part of a response to the Boko Haram crisis, with particular focus on the damage to the Royal Palace of Bafut and the Goto Goulfey Tower, and the Babungo Museum all inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List.

¹⁴ <https://theblueshield.org/disaster-response-throughout-the-summer/>

¹⁵ <https://theblueshield.org/disaster-response-throughout-the-summer/>

- Blue Shield UK has also been providing support for those affected by the conflict in Ngorno-Kharabakh, specifically through working to provide information on preventing illicit trafficking and on the applicable legal framework.

6.0 Stabilisation and post-disaster recovery

Following the immediate disaster response, committees are also engaged in the long-term work resulting from this. For example:

- Following the floods across Europe in 2021, Blue Shield Belgium co-created a crisis committee with the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA): they now have insured and authorized volunteers, and are meeting donors and looking at lessons learned. However, there is a clear need for a permanent centre that can be activated in crisis.
- Following the wildfires in Turkey, Blue Shield Turkey are involved in a fires working group, who prepared a report on the situation, and they are conducting a research project on the protection of wooden mosques in the Mediterranean region from fire risks.
- At the invitation of the Estonian Roerich Pact Committee and the Peace Banner, Karl von Habsburg, President of Blue Shield Austria, took part in two seminars in Tallin and Tartu (Estonia), which enabled a wide range of Estonian cultural heritage institutions, the military and public figures to share the experiences and expertise of the Blue Shield movement following the disaster in Beirut, as 12 tons of ammonium nitrate were stored in the port of Tallinn.
- Blue Shield France have created a database on disasters that affected cultural heritage in France, in order to make a yearly overview and statistical analysis of key information such as the type of disasters that occurred, the type of cultural heritage at risk, damage to collections etc. The yearly overview is shared with local government bodies and decision-makers.
- Since 2019, Blue Shield Georgia is finalising a report and map of heritage damage in areas that have been occupied since 2008, together with Newcastle University. The report aims to investigate and document the condition of cultural heritage in the Tskhinvali Region of Georgia since the 2008 war. The team have compiled and verified the information from various sources: satellite imagery from Google Earth, comprehensive media monitoring, eye-witness reports, and interviews.
- US Committee members affiliated with the Smithsonian gave ongoing support to stabilization projects in Iraq such as the rehabilitation of the Mosul Cultural Museum and the archaeological site of Nimrud, the National Museum of Afghanistan's ongoing CPP efforts, and support for Syrians for Heritage (SIMAT) to continue protection and stabilization activities in Northern Syria. They are also involved in ongoing collaboration with heritage professionals in Iraq and Georgia about risks to cultural heritage in situations of conflict and prepared a report on damage to the Mosul Cultural Museum for the Smithsonian Institution and Louvre Museum's *Mosul Museum Project: Phase 1*.



7.0 Law, policy development and implementation

Almost all of those committees which are still voluntary groups are actively exploring how to legally register as organisations to better fundraise.

There are many excellent examples of work to encourage better implementation of law, and policy work. Many are working on better implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention:

- Australia is actively advocating to their government to ratify the Second Protocol (1999).
- Several committees provided input into their national Periodic Report to UNESCO on the implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention, including Australia, US, and the Netherlands. They commented on gaps in heritage protection legislation, value of training for heritage professionals and emergency management personnel.
- Blue Shield Poland is a member of the Polish Advisory Committee for the implementation for the 1954 Hague Convention, which is an auxiliary body of the Council of Ministers competent in matters of coordination of activities related to the protection of monuments in the event of an armed conflict, in accordance with the Hague Convention of 1954.
- The UK Committee commented on the Cultural Property Protection Section of the first two drafts of the Ministry of Defence Human Security Directive, and submitted a paper to a UK Government Call for Evidence regarding the 1954 Hague Convention, CPP and National Security Machinery with a colleague from the V&A Museum.
- Germany developed of a questionnaire for parties running for the elections of the German parliament in September 2021 which sought to analyse the work and plans of the various parties with regards to cultural heritage protection and the implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and its protocols. The result of the response of the respective parties were published on their website¹⁶ and distributed on Twitter.
- Blue Shield Perú supported the implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention in the placement of three blue shields in Lima and Lambayeque¹⁷. Blue Shield Guatemala also supported the placement of 12 new Blue Shield emblems by the Ministry of Culture and International Red Cross at sites in Flores, Quetzaltenango and Guatemala city.

Of course, work extends beyond the 1954 Hague Convention and Protocols:

- Blue Shield France hosted an online course on *The international legal framework for the protection of cultural property in times of crisis*.

¹⁶ <https://www.blue-shield.de/wahlpruefsteine-bundestagswahl-2021/>

¹⁷ <https://tvrobles.lamula.pe/2021/07/05/basilica-de-maria-auxiliadora-de-lima-un-simbolo-de-nuestra-sociedad-y-cultura/tvrobles/>



- The Netherlands National Committee replied to the consultation of the *Draft Policy on Cultural Heritage of the Office of the Prosecutor's Working Group on the Protection of Cultural Heritage*: the final publication was released in July 2021¹⁸.
- Blue Shield N. Macedonia are supporting the Head Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the creation of a *National Strategy for Protection and Use of Cultural Heritage (2021- 2025)*, and various inventories (as recommended in the 1999 Second Protocol). These include a list of national cultural heritage whose export is prohibited; a National inventory of dispersed cultural heritage under the regime of permission for export; a National inventory of dispersed cultural heritage; a National inventory of protected goods in case of armed conflict; and a National list of collectors and private collections. They have also been promoting their publication *Legal Protection of the Macedonian Cultural Heritage – Views on Protective Awareness in the Post Socialist Period*, by (now deceased) member Jovan Ristov.
- Blue Shield Belgium is part of a working group for the protection of cultural property within the Interdepartmental Commission for Humanitarian Rights (ICHR).

Many committees are lobbying for better disaster and emergency planning in government structures:

- Following initial work by Blue Shield Curacao, the Director of the Directorate Disaster Management and Security of the Government of Curacao included cultural heritage as an area of interest in the National Disaster Plan with the advice to raise awareness among cultural stakeholders on matters of security. Blue Shield Curacao are now working to include cultural heritage as a full Emergency Support Function.
- Blue Shield Iceland met with the Ministry of Culture and Education regarding the absence of a substantial Emergency policy for cultural heritage in crisis in the country. Further dialogue is planned to take place.
- Blue Shield Perú contributed to the development of the law declaring the recovery of the historic centre of Lima to be of national interest, approved by the Peruvian Congress and to be published by the executive branch of Perú¹⁹, and are supporting the Shoring program for cultural heritage in high risk implemented by the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima.

Several committees have also made illicit / illegal trafficking a priority (in addition to any contributions to the Blue Shield International Illegal Trafficking Working Group).

- The UK Committee has been focusing on illicit trafficking. Work includes acting as a source of information and support for the UK Metropolitan Police, and assisting the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in lobbying for Amendments to the AML Regulations to include antiquities (announcement of amendment expected 2022); and looking at the problems caused

¹⁸ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-prosecutor-fatou-bensouda-publishes-policy-cultural-heritage-cultural-heritage-repository>

¹⁹

https://leyes.congreso.gob.pe/Documentos/2016_2021/Dictamenes/Proyectos_de_Ley/04108DC05MAY20201127.pdf



by the repeal of the EU Illicit Trafficking legislation, and how to tackle that with practical measures, including circulation of a government briefing paper (which was cited heavily during the government debate²⁰) and government lobbying.

- Blue Shield N. Macedonia hosted a forum: *Thefts of Museum Objects and Illegal Trade with Cultural Goods* in cooperation with MNC ICOM.
- Denmark's Heritage Friday series explored *Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property and the 1970 UNESCO Convention*.
- USCBS also contributed to legal investigations concerning illegal cultural property.

8.0 Challenges in 2021

The challenges for national committees are common. Most members are volunteers, and lack of capacity is a constant challenge. Many national committees face a lack of qualified and motivated specialists to engage in their activities, and help with fundraising, research, training, and voluntary activities – most volunteers require extensive training, which is difficult for those who are volunteers themselves to provide. For three committees, these problems were compounded by the death or resignation of key staff members.

Funding (or lack of) remains an ever-present challenge. As evidenced in section 1.0, committee income is very limited, and for some committees non-existent.

COVID has continued to impact travel, the ability to hold events, and income, and has presented a significant barrier, particularly in countries with weaker health support, and / or more limited internet.

There are also problems with for example, political issues, where government collaboration is not possible or is made extremely difficult, although governments have the critical responsibility to oversee implementation of international law and disaster preparedness and response management.

Lastly, there is a lack of technical ability amongst some committees. The website of Blue Shield France was hacked; recovery has been difficult and time consuming. The US Committee website was never fully recovered. [We note the Blue Shield International website received 123,090 attacks in the last month alone]. We remind all national committees (particularly those looking to develop new websites) of the need to ensure they have strong website protection, and to back-up websites regularly.

9.0 Looking Forward: Strategic Plans for 2021 and beyond

Improving committee profiles and fundraising are a core priority for many committees, along with developing national and international profiles (through greater public engagement and developing

²⁰ [https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-06-30/debates/CD09C85A-81D1-4CB7-8239-C8F4C755ADA4/IntroductionAndTheImportOfCulturalGoods\(Revocation\)Regulations2021](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-06-30/debates/CD09C85A-81D1-4CB7-8239-C8F4C755ADA4/IntroductionAndTheImportOfCulturalGoods(Revocation)Regulations2021)



websites, as two examples). Capacity building amongst members is also seen to be critical. Nonetheless, despite the setbacks and challenges of the lack of funding and the problems posed by COVID in the last two years, many committees seek to expand their work in 2022, although others are taking stock and refining their core activities.

9.1 *Cooperation and Partnerships*

Most national committees listed strengthening their national and international networks and partnerships, and capacity building, as key goals.

Partners included their armed forces, academics, civil society, NGOs, governments, and traditional authorities.

Some specific examples included the importance of:

- Maintaining contact with the volunteers who supported the 2021 crisis response for the floods in Europe, and particularly in Belgium.
- Developing new collaborations with emergency services in Australia and Peru.
- Senegal is looking at how to improve cooperation with other national committees in the West African region.

9.2 *Law, policy development, and implementation*

Again, there is considerable planned work in this area, and this presents only a few examples. Numerous committees are aiming to improve dialogue with government departments and Ministries to improve emergency response, including Iceland and Curacao. Australia intend to lobby to implement the Second Protocol (1999). Perú, Poland, Cameroun, Senegal, and the UK plan to work to promote implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention. Mali are planning an emergency inventory programme in the most threatened cultural areas. North Macedonia is preparing a brochure with the Regulation on the special measures of protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict and emergency. Prevention of illicit/illegal trafficking is also a common core goal: BS UK and USCBS, for example, intend to continue to advise law enforcement on potential cases of illicit/illegal trafficking, and to lobby for legal improvements in the case of the UK. North Macedonia is preparing a new journal edition to publish the articles presented at the Forum *Thefts of museum objects and Illegal trade with cultural goods*.

9.3 *Education, training, and capacity-building*

Education and training remain one of the core activities for national committees. For example, the Hellenic Committee intends continue its successful programme of webinars and to undertake initiatives and educational activities in collaboration with state organizations, NGOs, and universities. Other committees are planning conferences and lectures on a wide variety of aspects of cultural heritage protection, including Iceland and Austria (who are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention).

France, Mali, Guatemala, Curacao, and North Macedonia, amongst others, intend to carry out more disaster response / management training in 2022.

Some intend to increase collaboration and training with their armed forces: Austria, for example, intends to continue its work with the peacekeepers and work to develop closer contacts in CPP and civil military cooperation in government and the NGO sector. The Czech Republic are seeking close cooperation with Czech partners of the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and with the CPP unit in the headquarters of the Czech Army. Mali is looking at how to train and build the capacity of institutions and actors responsible in the defense and security sector, and to raise awareness of the Blue Shield and its importance in the protection of cultural property in crisis situations. They also aim to sensitize and inform local communities regarding the importance of blue shields and their importance in the protection of cultural property in crisis situations. Blue Shield Poland will continue their cooperation with the Military Training Centre for Foreign Operations. Blue Shield Denmark are increasing collaboration with the military academy. Blue Shield Senegal and Cameroun are also looking to improve cultural property protection amongst their defence sector.

9.4 Proactive protection and risk preparedness, Emergency preparedness and response, and on-going work

Many committees plan to undertake emergency response in case of an emergency, and are planning to continue with risk preparedness measures in 2022. Many more expect problems due to previous experience of “natural” disasters²¹ (such as Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Iceland, and Turkey), or as a result of conflict and insecurity (such as Georgia, Mali, and Cameroun) in particular, and are proactively developing plans and contacts, or continuing with work resulting from some of the disasters mentioned above.

Some work in this area is planned to continue based on 2021 work. For example:

- Following the floods in Europe, Blue Shield Belgium has highlighted the need for 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).
- Having successfully worked to include cultural heritage as an area of interest in the National Disaster Plan, Blue Shield Curacao are now planning to work with the Director of the Directorate Disaster Management and Security of the Government of Curacao to include cultural heritage as a full Emergency Support Function, and to include the Database of experts online.
- Blue Shield Netherlands plan to help set up a national contact point for expertise on emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation in the Netherlands and get greater national recognition for the protection of cultural heritage by including the safety of cultural heritage as part of the National Safety Strategy.

²¹ (Recognising that today all disasters affecting people have a human element).



- Guatemala are planning on training a dedicated task force for Cultural Heritage in times of Emergency, integrated by members of Culture sector, Civil Protection, University, Environmental, Communities living near the sites.

10.0 Summary

National committees all have different capacity, and different models of staffing and governance, which renders comparison difficult. Most members of Blue Shield are also part of other organisations and institutions, and carry out activity on behalf of both organisations, particularly if they represent well-resourced institutions and organisations.

While COVID-19 was a challenge for all national committees, some were more affected than others, travel was banned, the heritage sector suffered from a significant drop in income; and meetings became very difficult, particularly in countries with poorer internet. However, it is clear that, in comparison to last year, those who are in a position to resume activities are doing so. In addition, countries that previously focussed on a single project are expanding their work.

Given the background of most members of Blue Shield, national committees have tended to focus strongly on risk management and disaster preparedness and response. 2021 saw a significant increase in intent to work with armed forces and better implement the 1954 Hague Convention – the other side of the work of the Blue Shield. This is an extremely positive step for the wider movement, and reflects the holistic nature, and legal underpinnings, of our work. The move towards legal registration for many committees is also positive, and indicates the growing recognition of the importance of the work, the need for funding to undertake it, and the growing coherence of the Blue Shield Movement.

We welcome those committees who are new, and congratulate all our national committees on a very successful 2021.