

2023 Report on National Committee 2022 Annual Reports

- Blue Shield International Report -



<https://theblueshield.org/about-us/around-the-globe/>

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. URLs to further information are provided where given in the annual reports, but more information on many of these activities is available via the Blue Shield International website¹.

¹ <https://theblueshield.org/category/national-committee-news/>

Committee reports from Mali and Cameroun were submitted in French: these were translated via Google Translate. For any errors that occur as a result, we apologise to them.

1.1 Reporting

As of December 2022 (the end of the reporting period), Blue Shield International (BSI) has 30 national committees around the globe². BSI has received 24 annual reports for 2022 and Strategic plans for 2023. These are from: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cameroon, Curaçao, Czechia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Ireland, North Macedonia, Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Perú, Poland, Senegal, Slovakia, Türkiye, UK and USA. Reports are outstanding for Argentina, Denmark, Lebanon, Pasifika and Rep of Korea.

The Accreditation Committee are currently supporting eight committees under construction (five in Europe, two in Africa, and one in Canada), and those expressing interest around the world (including in Asia and South America).

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. A key goal for 2023 for BS Belgium is to recruit a part time staff member to support their work.

UKBS has now finalised its legal and charitable structure, and is in the process of opening a bank account.

Committee income varies considerably, and is primarily from membership and project grants, with some donations (which may be from the member associations), 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.

Committee income was still impacted by the ongoing impacts of COVID in 2022: Blue Shield Australia, for example, report that fees were held at a reduced rate for the 2022 year to acknowledge ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

Incomes are listed below where given: all other committees have no (identified) income.

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

| | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Australia | € 3 511,12 (membership / donations) |
| Austria | € 2 000 (single donation) |
| Belgium | € 26 865,21 (membership / grants / donations; in addition € 19 026,79 rollover from 2021) |

² Croatia received accreditation in January 2023, and will begin reporting in 2024.

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Curacao | € 4 662,52 (grants) |
| Czechia | € 1 260 (membership) ³ |
| France | € 55 148,37 = € 23 502,37 (membership) + € 1 000 (grant) + € 26 803,61 (training) + € 3 843,00 (sale of logo) |
| Georgia | € 30 600 (Project grants) |
| Germany | € 2 225,00 (membership) + € 11 109,56 (€ 10 609,56 specifically for Ukraine) as well as receiving and managing €12 525,53 to support BSI activities. |
| Greece | € 5000 (single donation), Horizon Project participation funding (unspecified) |
| Guatemala | Activities conducted through CER Cultural Emergency Response Grant awarded to Casa K'ojom, Cultural Rescue Centre, as a regional Hub for Central America and the Caribbean. |
| Iceland | € 9 326.80 = € 4663,00 x 2 (project grants) |
| North Macedonia | Unspecified Ministry of Culture grant |
| Norway | € 1 000 (€ 250 each founding national ICOM, ICOMOS, IFLA, ICA-Norway) |
| Senegal | € 76.59 Membership fees (€ 15.30 each from the Board) |
| Slovakia | € 700 (donations) |
| UK | Website paid for by Newcastle University |
| USA | € 6,836.68 Membership fees (undisclosed), c. 100 members, and donations. ⁴ |

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. In addition, many national committees have highlighted attendance at the international conferences of the Founding Four as a key coordination activity.

Blue Shield International would like to give our sincere thanks to many members of the national committees for their support to us.

³ Managed by the Association of Czech Museums and Galleries: as a consortium, CRBS is not a legal entity and under Czechia law cannot manage funds.

⁴ Fiscal year runs July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022.

- To the representatives of Blue Shield Committees in Germany, Poland, Republic of Korea, and Senegal for serving as elected representatives on the Blue Shield Board for the last three years;
- To representatives from Blue Shield Netherlands and Blue Shield Türkiye for serving as the Auditing Committee;
- Blue Shield Netherlands for their ongoing assistance in enabling our registered postal address at the National Archives of the Netherlands;
- Blue Shield Germany for its support to BSI in banking matters;
- Those from the national committees who give their time on Blue Shield Working Groups, including the Countering Trafficking Working Group and the Emergency Response Working Group under development;
- The BSI representative for EU Digital Cultural Heritage from Blue Shield Austria, and the BSI representative to the EU Heritage Alliance from Blue Shield Germany.
- All those who prepared presentations and material for the Blue Shield National Committee Training course.

As well as support for BSI, there is good support between national committees: for example, Austria is providing strong support to the proposed Armenian Committee. Volunteers from Blue Shield France and Netherlands helped after the floods in Belgium of July 2021 and have continued their collaboration in the context of aid and training at the CCE (Centre de Conservation et d'étude de biens archéologiques Wallons/ Center for Conservation and Study of the Archeological heritage of Wallonie) in 2022. Blue Shield Guatemala have been working civil protection with community leaders at Piura, Perú. Mali and Senegal are discussing collaboration on a potential military training programme. 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, contacting colleagues from Gambia, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, Togo, and Mauritania for the establishment of their national Blue Shield committee. Senegal is also working closely with Niger, following their successful ratification in 2022. Blue Shield United Kingdom has been supporting other national committees by providing advice in countering illicit trafficking, including Blue Shield Georgia.

As the EU Cultural Heritage Blue Shield representative, Blue Shield Austria engages with the European Commission/DG CONNECT to look at opportunities and challenges regarding a European Data Space on cultural heritage. Our representative ran a roundtable event to explore view of the heritage sector.

Blue Shield North Macedonia celebrated their 20th anniversary with an event *20 years of the Macedonian National Committee of the Blue Shield*, which highlighted the extensive work of the Committee over the last 20 years. The event also highlighted the significant contributions of all the members towards the establishment of the organization as a serious partner of cultural institutions.

Certificates of appreciation were also awarded to the most deserving members of MNK Blue Shield. Congratulations to them!⁵

We also highlight the work of committees to raise awareness about their work, including the new newsletter from BS Belgium, new YouTube and Instagram channels for Georgia and Iceland and new websites for Blue Shield Czechia, Norway, Slovakia, as well as redesigned websites for Austria and the USA, who also relaunched their Facebook page⁶.

2.2 *Coordination nationally and internationally*

National committees continue to develop strong coordination across their networks, reaching across the heritage sector and developing ongoing programmes of coordination and cooperation with fire and other emergency responders, flood commissions, and hazard and risk groups, amongst many others. Our newest committees, Niger, Slovakia, and Türkiye are working hard to establish their networks and reaching out to a wide spectrum of national partners.

Very few of the projects highlighted throughout this report are done in isolation: they are in support of, or supported by, or in full partnership with, more national partners than we can name in this report. Several committees, including France and Greece, participate in the European ProCultHer project⁷. National committees are engaging with their military and military academies, including building some new connections, as well as engaging with a wide number of international organisations on crisis and disaster management, heritage management, international law, and other areas, such as:

- Calamities' Think Tank of the Faro Convention;
- Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab, Virginia Museum of Natural History, USA;
- European Commission/DG CONNECT;
- European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM); and
- EU Task Force on Enforcement of Art and Heritage Crimes;
- ICRC
- National disaster management agencies of Curacao and CARBICA-CHEN (Caribbean Branch of the International Council on Archives – Caribbean Heritage Emergency Network);
- UNITWIN Chairs of UNESCO that deal with the issues of natural disasters;
- International Center for Training and Research on Cultural Heritage in Danger, Poland;
- NATO ARRC and NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Greece (NRDC-GR)

⁵ The early history of the Blue Shield, including the founding of the first national committees, was chronicled by the former President of Blue Shield North Macedonia and can be found here: https://theblueshield.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Krste-Bogoeski_Twenty-Years-Blue-Shield-1996-2016-1.pdf

⁶ All Blue Shield national committee contact details, websites, social media, etc are available via the Blue Shield International website: <https://theblueshield.org/what-we-do/national-committees-around-the-globe/>

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<https://www.proculther.eu/#:~:text=Protecting%20Cultural%20Heritage%20from%20the%20Consequences%20of%20Disasters,at%20risk%20of%20disaster%20at%20all%20territorial%20levels.>

- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE);
- Rotary Club Erlangen – Antigua Guatemala;
- UNESCO Memory of the World Global Policy Project;
- UNESCO and its national commissions;
- UNESCO Associated Schools;
- Unidad Nacional de Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres of Colombia;
- 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.

Here we also flag US Board members who participated in the publicity and grading of entries in the American Red Cross essay competition on the subject of protection of cultural property in armed conflict, demonstrating the novel and no-less-important ways of working with the humanitarian sector on matters of mutual interest, other examples of which are highlighted throughout the report.

It is also important, however, to highlight the work of Blue Shield in areas that have no national committee, but where heritage – and just as importantly heritage professionals - are no less in need of support during crisis. The Chair of Blue Shield United Kingdom has been working with BSI to try and provide support to Afghan cultural heritage workers and their heritage following the Taliban takeover. Much of this work is, of necessity, confidential. Similarly, members of the US National Committee have worked (extremely hard) to obtain visas for at risk colleagues from Afghanistan and Ukraine to enter the US. Three individuals met the high-risk requirement and placements were found for them at Harvard and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Additional placements are planned. Blue Shield Committees have also provided support in Honduras, Columbia, and Khazakstan ([see 3.0 Education, Training and Capacity Building](#)).

A large number of national committees provided support to Ukraine and a national committee is in formation there. Their work is discussed in section [5.0 Emergency Response](#).

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, amongst other topics, illicit trafficking, looting, and other topics, highlighting the diversity of areas heritage protection. Many events were online, and received global viewing.

Some examples (but by no means all) include:

- A member of the US national committee presented a lecture on the Blue Shield at “Diplomacy and Management of Cultural Heritage, Historical and Cultural Heritage Capacity Building Program”, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 2022. Also in Kazakhstan, a member presented information on the Blue Shield at a meeting in Almaty, to a group of young Kazakh diplomats at a capacity building program.

- In addition to supporting Honduras with mapping of risk and impact at key sites, the Guatemalan National Committee are also giving online lectures with Colombian Civil Protection Agency, as well as in person workshops with local community leaders and civil protection at Piura, Perú.
- Given the conflict in Ngorno-Kharabakh, several committees have held activities, often together with the Armenian National Committee Under Construction. In addition to the US General Assembly, the Austrian Committee of the Blue Shield, together with University of Salzburg, the Vienna Museum of Historical Arts and the Etchmiadzin Mother See's Office for the Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of Artsakh organized the conference *Culture in Conflict: South Caucasus Today* focusing on the protection and preservation of Artsakh's Armenian cultural heritage, together with an exhibition titled *Culture in Conflict: Artsakh Armenian Cultural Heritage*. They also hosted two roundtables at the *27th Cultural Heritage and New Technologies Conference*, organized by the CHNT-ICOMOS Austria association and the City of Vienna, looking at digital data spaces for cultural heritage, and CPP and law enforcement. UK Blue Shield has worked extensively to support colleagues in Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Chair prepared a paper for conference organised in partnership with Blue Shield Austria on the legal issues surrounding protection of cultural heritage in Nagorno Karabakh. Topics addressed at the US National Committee General Assembly⁸ included Russia and heritage sites during the armed conflict in Ukraine and the situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan.



Culture in Conflict: South Caucasus Today conference group photo, 14 May 2022 © Blue Shield Austria

- Blue Shield Australia hosted several network meetings in different regions of Australia, bringing together a wide variety of cultural heritage organisations and stakeholders, such as the State Fire

⁸ Available online: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=us+committee+of+the+blue+shield.

Management Council. France also have strong collaboration with the French Federation of Firefighters (FNSPF).

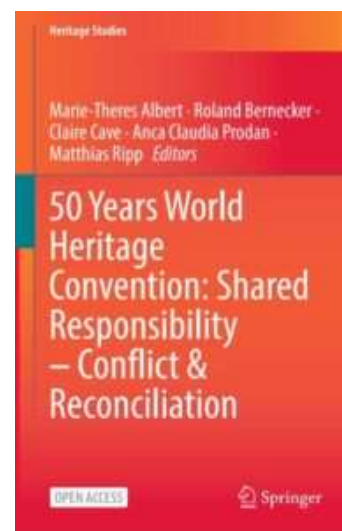
- Blue Shield Perú are giving lectures to volunteers at from Cultura Intacta.
- World Heritage and Memory of the World remain a focus. Blue Shield Senegal organised an exhibition on *The history of education in Senegal through documentary heritage* during the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the creation of the Memory of the World Programme, organised by the Directorate of Archives of Senegal and the Senegalese Blue Shield Committee in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office. Blue Shield France held National Memory of the World Days with UNESCO raising awareness on emergency plans⁹. Many national committees have carried out work relating to World Heritage, or given talks on the topic, such as Blue Shield Poland, who spoke on Management and protection strategies to preserve World Heritage properties endangered of armed conflicts at the international conference *1972-2022. World Heritage in transition. About management, protection and sustainability*. Blue Shield Niger hosted a communication campaign whose aim is to raise awareness through a series of activities on the challenges of sustainable conservation of the Historic Center of Agadez, a World Heritage Site. The Czechia National Committee published a paper on the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention for the AMG Newsletter. Further examples are highlighted throughout this report.



Memory of the World

⁹<https://unesco.delegfrance.org/Journees-nationales-Memoire-du-Monde-a-la-Bibliotheque-francophone-multimedia-4947>

- The conference *50 Years World Heritage Convention — Times of Peace, Conflict and War* was hosted in Berlin, with six core topics. The topic *War and Terrorism* was chaired by the Executive Vice President of Blue Shield Austria, who also moderated the session *Visions from the Civil Society – 50 Years of World Heritage – What has been achieved – What has not been achieved – What has to be done in the face of this war?* The Vice President of BS Germany also participated in the round table on *The Future – Discussion with Former, Current and Future Experts*. The conference ended with the presentation of an open access book: *50 Years World Heritage Convention: Shared Responsibility — Conflict and Reconciliation*¹⁰.



- Blue Shield Slovakia, one of the newest committees, has given a wide range of talks to introduce the committee to the Slovak Archaeological Society at the Slovak Academy of Sciences; ICOM Slovakia; to the Forum of Partners of the Slovak Commission for UNESCO and to others invited to the Slovakian General Assembly.
- Blue Shield Austria invited national and international speakers to an information event about the war in Ukraine, its consequences for the country, its people and their cultural heritage. USCBS also spoke about Cultural Heritage Destruction in Ukraine to the American Association of Law Schools, as did several other committees.

Military training and collaboration with national committees continues to increase:

- Ireland supported BSI to prepare and deliver CPP training for the United Nations Training School Ireland (UNTSI) at the start of 2022. This week-long residential course was the first international course on Cultural Property Protection run by the Irish Defence Forces and hosted students from several other European militaries.

¹⁰ <https://50yearsworldheritageconvention.wordpress.com/book/>



**1st International Cultural Property Protection Course
United Nations Training School Ireland
14th - 18th February 2022.**

- Blue Shield Austria were invited to speak at the 2022 National Conference of CPP Officers, organised by the Operational Command Division, the Centre for People-Oriented Leadership and Defence Policy, the Vienna National Defence Academy and the Austrian Society for the Protection of Cultural Property. All cultural property protection officers appointed in Austria were present.
- Blue Shield Guatemala, supported by CER, collaborated on the the Naj Tunich Initiative to conduct a Damage Assessment activity at the Naj Tunich Caves Site. They participated in a week-long Subject Matter Expertise (SME) Exchange about Cultural Heritage Protection in Honduras with the Honduras Army and US Army Joint Task Force (JTF) Bravo, coordinated by the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia (IHAI) and with support from Blue Shield International and others: Guatemala presented on *Lessons Learned from Disaster Risk Management in Central America* during the practical sessions.
- Through the International Centre 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 Property Protection (CPP) capability. This includes training experts in the protection of cultural heritage as part of the implementation by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of Objective L 3110 N, carried out jointly with the Military Training Centre for Foreign Operations in Kielce. Training has

included: training of the Polish Armed Forces in the protection of cultural property in the event of an armed conflict and catastrophe, carried out jointly with the Military Centre for Civic Education, and conducting lectures as part of training for various components of the armed forces in the field of protection of cultural property as part of the activities of the International Center for Training and Research on Endangered Cultural Heritage. They have also lectured at the Polish Naval Academy of the Heroes of Westerplatte. Poland also continues to consult with the Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in the development and delivery of training and educational materials for the heritage sector and the armed forces, including on information and training materials for soldiers.

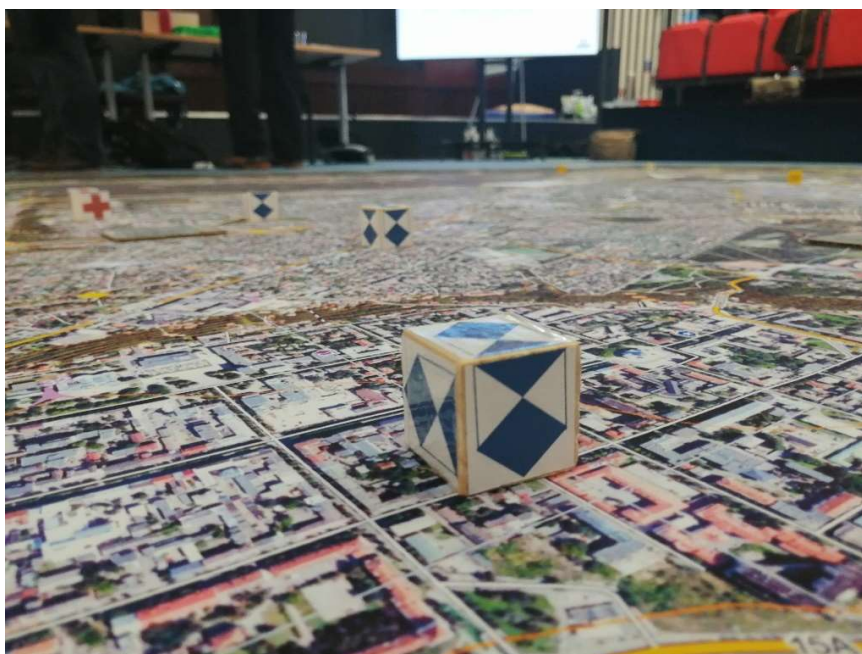
- The Georgian National Committee, funded by ALIPH, completed the project *Planning for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage of Gori*. As part of this they carried out a four-day theoretical and practical training *Protection of Cultural Heritage during the Armed Conflict* supported by Blue Shield International, at the at the National Guard HQ in Tbilisi, and at the Sergi Makalatia Historical-Ethnographic Museum in Gori. The training was attended by representatives of the following local and national agencies: The National Guard; Gori Municipality; Administration of State Representative – Governor of Shida Kartli; Defense Police; Staff of six Shida Kartli museums; General Mazniashvili Youth Legion and Georgia Red Cross Society. Representatives of the EUMM, the ALIPH foundation, and national agencies attended the training as observers, 43 persons in total. On the last day of the training a practical simulation took place. During the simulation exercise, the scenario of the impending armed conflict was played out. The training was televised by the local and national TV channels.
- Blue Shield Georgia also participated in field training Racha-2022 - a joint field exercise by the Georgian National Guard and the Emergency Management Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. As part of the exercise, the team coordinated the emergency protection and evacuation of the imaginary cultural heritage (archaeological) site and participants moved the museum artifacts during the simulated forest fire.



Top: Participants in the course *Protection of Cultural Heritage during the Armed Conflict*, organised by Blue Shield Georgia, supported by BSI and funded by ALIPH, 17-20 May 2022.

Bottom: Manana Tevzadze, Chair of BS Georgia, briefs the National Guard on Emergency Evacuation. © BS Georgia

- Blue Shield United Kingdom has continued to develop strong links with the British Army Cultural Property Protection Unit, who attend Blue Shield United Kingdom meetings. Blue Shield UK members also attended British Army CPP meetings in the first half of 2022, before they ceased. They conduct military training and support with UK based NATO forces, e.g., NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps. In 2022, Blue Shield UK attended 3 events and exercises with the NATO ARRC to provide cultural property protection subject matter expertise (for example, speaking at the NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Expert Panel ‘What constitutes a Commander’s dilemma?’ at the ARRCADDE EXPERT 22/1 study day – *Commander’s Dilemmas in Urban Warfare: Threats to Human Security as a Factor in Mission Success or Mission Failure*, and attending the MoD Human Security roundtable, and follow up discussions as a CPP Subject Matter Expert to provide a view on 1954 Hague Convention implementation.

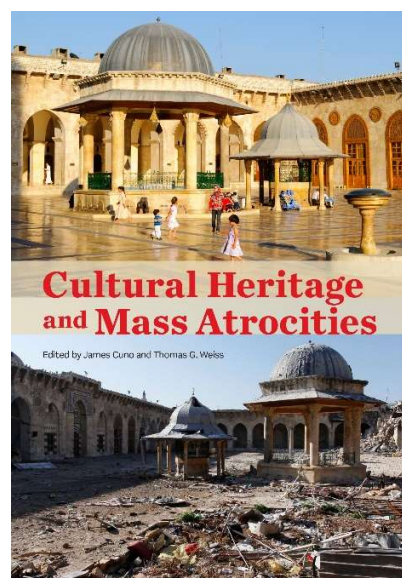


Protected cultural locations marked on the map at a NATO ARRC Study week, attended by Blue Shield UK, 2022 © BSI/BS UK.

- The Greek Committee gave presentations to the Greece-based NATO forces, the Rapid Deployable Corps Greece (NRDC-GR) School of the 3rd Army Corps, and presented at the seminar *NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Greece - Cross Cutting Topics in Armed Conflicts*; and is cooperating with the Legal Review of the Armed Forces and participating in a publication.
- Blue Shield Germany set up a working group for military CPP, which aims to protect cultural property in the event of armed conflicts. Its main focus will be awareness raising among politicians, civil society and the military as well as mediation between the cultural sciences, humanities and the armed forces.

- Through their work as staff of the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI), 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. USCBS also continued efforts to find a legislative vehicle to address the requirement for the US Department of Defense to appoint a cultural heritage protection coordinator as required under the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act but was not able to get this provision included in the 2022 NDAA.
- Blue Shield Mali and Blue Shield Senegal are looking to develop a military training and awareness project, potentially with the Bamako Inter-Army Military School.
- Blue Shield Norway provided resources for inventories with location data on protected sites for Northern Norway for exercise purposes in connection with upcoming NATO exercise (to BSI and NATO exercise personnel).

In addition to a wide number of professional training courses (many of which are highlighted below), committees are also working to improve formal education. For example, Blue Shield France are supporting University courses at the INP (National institute of Cultural Heritage); the Greek Committee is a member of UNITWIN UNESCO Chairs network that deal with the issues of natural disasters: they are working towards providing a Manual to contribute to the protection of monuments and visitors. Blue Shield Poland have been, and aim to continue to participate in the project *Cross-sectoral challenges: specialist for the protection of cultural property in the event of crisis and war - development of a postgraduate program dedicated to employees operating on the borderline of fields*. Blue Shield Senegal trained UGB (Université Gaston Berger) students of UFR CRAC (Civilizations, arts and communications) through the Heritage Trades Department (MDP) in



the various UNESCO Conventions and on training in heritage trades. Blue Shield Slovakia has approached numerous professionals in the cultural heritage field and hopes to be able to sign MoUs with them, in particular here, the Museology Department at Comenius University in the hope of developing a program that would include students in their work. Blue Shield Türkiye has developed strong connections with Istanbul Technical University (ITU), one of the best universities in the country. Members of Blue Shield UK lectured on various student courses (Sotheby's Summer School, Christie's Education, Institute of Art and Law and MA courses at Durham and Newcastle Universities), and two Blue Shield UK members contributed to movable and immovable heritage chapters in the forthcoming academic Cultural Property Encyclopedia, dealing with national case studies on heritage law¹¹. The Chair of USCBS also had a

¹¹ Vigneron, S., Cunliffe, E., Harrison, S., Olteanu, L., and Rogers, F., (submitted). United Kingdom. In: Francioni, F., Vrdoljak, A., Blake, J., and Stamatoudi, I. *Elgar Encyclopedia of Art and Cultural Heritage Law*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

publication in the open access book *Cultural Heritage and Mass Atrocities: Legal, Political and Humanitarian Perspectives*¹². 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.

Lastly, we note here the internal capacity building of Blue Shield UK, which has expanded its representation to cover intangible cultural heritage, and underwater heritage, and which is developing a structure to leverage this expertise.

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 Belgium and partners ran two training days for archives and for museums on emergency planning, and supported fire drills and other disaster preparedness events by partner organisations. Blue Shield France carried out extensive training in emergency planning in libraries, museums, and archives, training 283 people over 21 days of training. Topics included Awareness of Cultural Property Protection Plans; Safeguarding plans; Handling of damaged objects; Drafting of safeguarding plans / emergency plans and Emergency first aid for collections. Their regional sections ran training on Emergency response for heritage collections; Evacuations; and Flood response. As well as their own training, Blue Shield France also supported awareness raising events with firemen; participated in Plouf 75, a Forum on flooding risk of the Seine¹³; a research day at the C2RMF (National Center for Research and Restoration in French Museums); and a Workshop at C2RMF on *Acting against floods*¹⁴.

¹² Protecting Cultural Heritage: The Ties between People and Places, in *Cultural Heritage and Mass Atrocities: Legal, Political and Humanitarian Perspectives*, Getty Institute 363-380. <https://www.getty.edu/publications/cultural-heritage-mass-atrocities/contents/>

¹³ <https://episeine.fr/agenda/2022/05/plouf-75-du-10-au-12-mai-un-village-forum-gratuit-sur-le-risque-de-crue-de-la-seine>

¹⁴ Journées inter-SDIS <https://www.bouclier-bleu.fr/blog/2022/02/14/journee-detude-inter-sdis-7-03-2022/> and <https://unesco.delegfrance.org/Journees-nationales-Memoire-du-Monde-a-la-Bibliotheque-francophone-multimedia-4947>

- Training in disaster planning for fire, flood, earthquakes and other crises is a core activity. Blue Shield Australia held several disaster planning events with South Australian cultural heritage organisations looking at fire and flood response.



In-person attendees at the training in an integrated approach to Disaster Risk Management for Heritage (DRM4H) course by Blue Shield Australia members and members of AICOMOS (ANZCORP)
© Blue Shield Australia September 2022

- Blue Shield Germany are also looking at flooding, including hosting a public panel *Lessons from the Flood Disaster - How Do We Strengthen Cultural Property Protection*. Other workshops included an *Emergency Response Seminar* which looked at lessons from the floods and a previous fire; a cultural property protection seminar which sought to provide capacity building in cultural property protection for regional crisis management teams; and a Survey on Prevention and Mitigation efforts in Germany with regards to CPP (publication of results due 2023).
- Blue Shield North Macedonia co-organized a Forum on dealing with flood situations for cultural heritage protection on the 60th anniversary of a major flood in Skopje. Presentations looked at plan for protection and rescue from natural disasters and case studies of successful evacuations.
- Blue Shield Curacao and the National Archives Curacao organized a *Water Emergency Workshop*.
- Blue Shield Perú have identified all monuments in the HC of Lima and made them known to other institutions. They are also undertaking works with the risk management area of PROLIMA in their shoring program for historic buildings with high risk of collapse in the Historic Centre of Lima, and working in coordination with the Municipality of Lima and Fire Fighters to train and include procedures for the rescue of cultural heritage of Lima during emergencies. They are part of the response protocols and procedures for Emergencies in the Historic Centre of Lima, published by the Municipality of Lima.

- Blue Shield Türkiye worked on the *Evaluation and Reduction of Fire Risks of Historical Wooden Mosques in Konya - Karaman Region of Türkiye* (with Konya Chamber of Architects and Konya Regional Directorate of Foundations, Ministry of Culture and Tourism). As part of this project, they also hosted a symposium on *Fire Risks of Wooden Mosques of Konya*, with six speakers from different universities and 50 attendees.



Mosque included in the Project © Blue Shield Türkiye, 2022.

- Blue Shield France have also now started the process of obtaining official certification within the National Emergency Response Mechanism, to become deployable in a national emergency. Good luck to them! Similarly, in 2021, 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*. Following this, in 2022, an agreement was signed with the Governor of the Province of Walloon Brabant under which the Belgian Blue Shield Committee will act as a point of contact for heritage professionals (Heritage Experts or EXPATS) within the framework of the emergency plans of the province in which heritage is involved. Discussions are now ongoing in two more regions.
- Blue Shield Committees are also increasingly involved in institutional and regional disaster scenario exercises. Blue Shield Belgium participated in a lockdown exercise in the Museum of Fine Arts of Ghent and Blue Shield Netherlands participated in a table top exercise with a variety

of (heritage) institutions in The Hague in the vicinity of the Central Station. The goal was to discuss roles, responsibilities and ways of communication and sharing of relevant information with each other in different emergency situations (fire, demonstrations with a threat of escalating violence). Blue Shield Poland has been giving lectures on preparing and conducting evacuation exercises in cultural facilities, looking at good practices and recommendations.



Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent, Belgium. Romaine, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

- Blue Shield Poland held a session looking at *Preparations in the event of sudden threats to library collections and archives*, co-organized with the National Library, and carried out training of experts in the protection of cultural heritage as part of the implementation by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of Objective L 3110 N, with the International Center for Training and Research on Cultural Heritage in Danger. Blue Shield Poland lectured on the practical aspects of preparing planning documentation in the protection of collections for participants of the training *Protection of monuments, museum, library and archival collections in the event of war and crisis threats – practical aspects*. The training, which ran twice, was co-organised with the School of Aspirants of the State Fire Service in Krakow.
- US Members who hold positions in government are engaged in the interagency Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee (CHCC), which is directed to confer with USCBS as part of its authorizing legislation. Members of USCBS hold a variety of positions with allied NGOs and in government and support projects and ongoing programs including with the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), AIC and FAIC, FEMA, HENTF, US CHCC, CRI, ALA, Archaeological Institute of America, and IFLA. USCBS members also participate in projects through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF). Collectively, these agencies and their partners presented training on developing disaster

response plans and salvaging collections, as well as convened teams to monitor developing severe weather events to provide information to collections at risk.

- The Georgian National Committee have completed 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 exercises; documented and inventoried Gori's museum photo archive; carried out GIS training; and have finalized a Disaster Risk Management RM for the museum in Gori, which was approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs Department for Emergency Services. This is the first DRM plan for a Cultural institution in Georgia. The project also worked to improve the storage conditions for up to 5,000 artifacts in Gori museum, providing special, archival-quality storage boxes, new shelved, hangers and wrapping, along with essential materials and equipment for monitoring the museum environment, handling the exhibits, relocation, first aid and stabilization.
- Climate change is also an increasing concern. Blue Shield Ireland have been invited to join two working groups as part of the Climate Change Adaptation Sectoral Plan for Built and Archaeological Heritage Planning: Working Group C - Cross Sectorial Engagement and Working Group E – Community Engagement & Training. Niger also attended conferences on the impact of climate change on heritage. Blue Shield Norway continue to survey resources on securing museum buildings from damage caused by climate change. Addressing the issue with the state to secure more funds for the maintenance of museum buildings will be prioritized as the work progresses. Blue Shield United Kingdom note this is a concern, but they were unable to progress any work in this area due to a lack of capacity.
- Guatemala and Netherlands are both members of CARBICA/ CHEN. Supported by CER, they are establishing a Caribbean Hub with a Cultural Ambulance for the region, established on the premises of the National Archives Curacao, with sub hubs in the region.
- Guatemala have been carrying out land based and sub-aquatic Risk Preparedness and Mapping at sites including Tayasal, Yaxhá, Flores, Ixlú, Lake Petén Itzá around Petén and have visited Tikal to further assess risks¹⁵. Work was also carried out mapping impacts and risks at Copán, Las Mesas and Ostumán archaeological sites in Honduras.

Examples of risk mitigation advocacy and support (rather than training and direct activity) includes:

- Blue Shield Austria together with Roerich Pact Austria, Europahaus Burgenland, Forum Katholische Erwachsenenbildung, Katholisches Bildungswerk and Forum Martinus of the Diocese of Eisenstadt organized the lecture evening *PAX CULTURA* on cultural heritage protection in times of crisis.

15

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And

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=548436693949713&id=100063501612371&sfnsn=mo&mibextid=RUbZ1f



Blue Shield Austria at the PAX CULTURA Symposium, 2022. © Blue Shield Austria.

- Blue Shield Iceland ran a symposium on *Protection of Cultural Heritage: Collective Responsibility*. The event generated significant positive press for Blue Shield Iceland, including radio interviews.



Nathalie Jacqueminet and Heiðar Lind Hansson after the interview in Iceland's Channel 1's studio.

- 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 reach¹⁶. In addition, they provided a submission to the National Recovery and Resilience Agency on the Second National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction recommending increased training, coordination and targeted initiatives relating to cultural property protection.



- Blue Shield Niger have published on the management of cultural heritage in Niger, and published in the newspaper *Sahel Sunday*.
- Blue Shield Netherlands also took part in exploratory meetings with interest groups to discuss ideas for an integrated approach to heritage protection in the Netherlands.
- Blue Shield Türkiye was a key supporting partner of a *Symposium on the protection and research of cultural heritage*.

Committees are also working to draft practical guides and collate web resources¹⁷ on topics such as fire risk mitigation, security measures, and supporting surveys on the status of emergency care for cultural property.

- Australia released the second Disaster Preparedness calendar¹⁸ with the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material and their Disaster Preparedness Committee, to be used by

¹⁶ <https://blueshieldaustralia.org.au/day-for-disaster-risk-reduction/>.

¹⁷ For example, Blue Shield Australia <https://blueshieldaustralia.org.au/resources/>; see also the website of Blue Shield Iceland <https://blaiskjoldurinn.is/>

¹⁸ <https://aiccm.org.au/disaster/disaster-preparedness-calendar/>

cultural organisations and individuals in planning for annual disaster preparedness activities, alongside a wide number of resources for emergency and disaster planning and response.

- 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;
- The Greek Committee participate in the initiative of UNITWIN UNESCO Chairs 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. They aim to provide instructions in a Manual or Guide to contribute to the protection both of monuments and visitors.
- The Czechia Committee wrote in the thematic issue of the AMG Newsletter No. 4/2022 "Museums and war", including basic points for emergency measures in memory institutions.

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 ongoing conflict against Boko Haram is now reaching its 9th year in Cameroun. In 2022, Blue Shield Cameroun carried out a rapid damage assessment mission to seven cultural sites and museums, with a particular focus on safeguarding built heritage and securing museums and their collections. This assessment revealed that the built structures, such as the Royal Palace of Bafut , Mankon and the Goto Tower Goulfey , and the Babungu Museum all on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List , were damaged. Stone shrines were demolished, monuments were hit by bullets and some museum collections were destroyed. The recurring violence has also led to the displacement of entire communities, which has had the effect of disrupting practices and expressions of intangible cultural heritage. They are now seeking assistance to provide support for cultural heritage and affected communities across the country.
- Blue Shield Georgia participated in geolocation seminar at the invitation of the Media Development Fund, an NGO working on media literacy and against false news. The participants of the seminar received information about the importance of using satellite footage for monitoring and protecting cultural heritage in the occupied territories.
- 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.

Blue Shield Committees have all provided significant support for Ukraine and carried out many awareness raising activities.

- Many European Committees supported the call for relief supplies and funding for the protection of cultural heritage in Ukraine and sent shipments of heritage aid with partners (for example

Czechia, France, Germany, Netherlands, Georgia, and others); provided storage space, and carried out general fundraising; Netherlands participated in a winter ‘wants and needs’ meeting organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Blue Shield Georgia jointly with ICOM Georgia prepared and submitted a project proposal under ICOM International special grants program for the support of Ukrainian museum workers and collections.

- Blue Shield Austria and ICOM Austria were in contact with national committees located in neighbouring countries to Ukraine and compiled information on the initiatives with regards to cultural heritage protection to reveal which further support was needed. Blue Shield Austria set steps to liaise persons with Ukraine-relevant knowledge and/or competence mainly within Vienna in order to coordinate support for heritage experts in Lviv and other regions.
- Many committees also provided information as well as aid supplies. Blue Shield Netherlands took part in online meetings with other experts to answer questions from heritage workers in Ukraine on salvage and conservation, packing etc. of all types of collections, materials, buildings; Blue Shield Norway gathered information on fire protection of wooden buildings for a coordinated information package delivered by Norwegian cultural institutions to Ukraine.
- Damage documentation is critical: Blue Shield Netherlands acted as the liaison between various groups to help assess damages to cultural property. Blue Shield Germany started a Ukraine Monitoring group in March 2022 with the aim to document damages and destruction of CPP in Ukraine and assess the damage. The Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Planning and Construction has approved funding to develop recommendations for actions with regards to rebuilding efforts in the field of architectural heritage and its urban context (beginning 2023).
- Blue Shield Slovakia mobilized international support for basic documentation of cultural heritage in the Transcarpathian Regional Historical Museum at Uzhgorod Castle. With the support of the Slovak ICOM Committee, PRO Laika, private donors, and several collaborators of the committee (J. Džoganík, director of the Slovak National Museum of Ukrainian Culture; V. Piatra - transport), Blue Shield Slovakia was able to provide photographic equipment to the director of the museum, Mihajlo Delehan, and the head of the department of history and local history, Valéria Ruszinová. By digital archiving of inventory, the museum hopes to prevent the loss of irreplaceable cultural assets, which are threatened in multiple ways in the chaos of war - by fighting, merchants and smugglers. Their patron was able to bring the equipment to Uzhgorod on April 7, 2023.¹⁹
- US Members participated in proactive digital archiving projects for Ukrainian government, news, and cultural information online, including the Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Online initiative (SUCHO) and projects hosted by universities, NGOs, and government agencies. Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI), Virginia Museum of Natural History Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab, and the University of Maryland Center for International Development and Conflict Management initiated a program of ongoing remote sensing and satellite imagery monitoring and analysis to record evidence of damage to cultural sites. The Conflict Observatory

¹⁹ [Закарпатський обласний краєзнавчий музей імені Тиводара Легоцького: МУЗЕЙНИКИ ВСЬОГО СВІТУ ЯК ОДНА РОДИНА - СЛОВАЧЧИНА ПРОТЯГНУЛА РУКУ ДОПОМОГИ \(zkmuseum.com\)](https://zkmuseum.com)

project is supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations. Individual members participated in work of the Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Online project. Members coordinated with CHCC agencies to share information about known risks, threats, and capabilities to support response. In a partnership with the Fulbright program, four Ukrainian scholars received full-time summer placements with various units at the Smithsonian Institution. Members have worked to obtain Visas for at risk colleagues from Afghanistan and Ukraine to enter the US. Three individuals met the high-risk requirement and placements were found for them at Harvard and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Additional placements are planned. USCBS board members also supported a special presentation about the safety of at-risk Ukrainian cultural heritage professionals with the Penn Cultural Heritage Center and the Smithsonian Institution in July 2022. USCBS had previously developed no-strike lists for Ukraine and provided these to the US Defense Intelligence Agency. DIA reported that they were in use and providing valuable information. A workshop for protecting Ukrainian Museums [in winter] was jointly led by USCBS members, ICCROM, and Smithsonian institution.

- Blue Shield United Kingdom engaged in discussions and webinars regarding forfeiture obligations under the 1954 Hague Convention, specifically on illicit objects exported from Ukraine.
- Many also issued their own statements and supported statements of others, and wrote to their governments, asking them to write to the Russian Federation to ask for their assurance that, as a signatory to the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its First Protocol (1954), and to the 1972 World Heritage Convention, Russian Federation troops will abide by their responsibilities under both the international agreements.
- Several committees, such as Belgium, North Macedonia, Norway, Slovakia, and Poland, have presented briefings to government, carried out press interviews, and given lectures to various institutions on the cultural heritage situation in Ukraine, reviewing the implications for heritage protection in their country. For example, Blue Shield Belgium discussed consequences of the war in Ukraine on cultural heritage and the actions undertaken by organizations and institutions in Belgium in this regard at the working group for the protection of cultural property within the Inter-ministerial Commission for Humanitarian Law (ICHR), as well as participating in the roundtable of Belgian NGOs (6/04/2022) on the state of heritage in Ukraine. The Slovakian Ministry of Culture created a Working Group with the aim to protect Slovak cultural heritage in case of armed conflict in Slovakia. Blue Shield Slovakia took active role in the Work Group which aim was to 1) identify cultural heritage sites to be labelled by blue shield emblem, 2) educate of application procedure, 3) develop emergency preparedness plan, 4) assist Ministry in any other way necessary.

Disaster response is no less important:

- Once again, the Belgian National Committee was all heavily involved in the response to the floods in 2022. For example, volunteers with Blue Shield Belgium were asked to support heritage institutions affected by the flood in Pépinster, Eupen, Jambes (CCE), Namur (Library Moretus-Plantin), Liège (State Archives).

- The work of USCBS is closely integrated in the United States with other organizations, including National Heritage Responders (NHR), CRI (Cultural Rescue Initiative), and Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF). Collectively, and with support from a variety of local responders, these organizations responded to storm-related disasters in the Gulf Coast and fire-related disasters in the western States.
- Following a devastating fire, Blue Shield Türkiye was heavily involved in supporting the Istanbul Balikli Greek Hospital with post disaster documentation and recommendations for future. The national committee Fires Working Group prepared a report: *Post Disaster Documentation of Balikli Greek Hospital of Istanbul*. They are now working on a further project on Risk Evaluation and Mitigation of the Hospital Complex.
- Blue Shield Australia is a member of the ‘Cultural Response Roundtable’, a group of senior cultural and heritage institution leaders who met during the year at a crisis point with flooding in eastern Australia in order to provide easier sharing of information and collaborative activities.
- The Guatemalan Committee also conducted online post disaster damage assessment sessions and activities with a wide range of partners after the eruption of Le Soufriere volcano at St. Vincent and the Grenadines²⁰.



6.0 Stabilisation, post-disaster recovery and long-term situations

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

- In an important example of the support Blue Shield provides for affected people and intangible heritage, Georgia continues to support the Georgians displaced following the fighting in 2008. In the framework of the project *Protection of Intangible Heritage of Occupied Regions* implemented since March 2022, door-to-door interviews with 40 internally displaced people (IDPs) from the occupied Village Kekhvi were conducted. The goal of the interviews was to document the intangible heritage of this village community. A focus group meeting with IDPs was held at the Didi Liakhvi River Valley Museum-Reserve. Attendees were invited to share personal stories and experiences about cultural heritage, family, traditions, celebrations, folk stories, toponyms, traditional crafts and other tangible and intangible heritage. The project was funded by CER in

20

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partnership with Historical-Cultural Heritage Protection Center – a local NGO and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Cultural Heritage Center (PennCHC).

- Blue Shield Georgia also published a statement about the decision to demolish a historic bridge in occupied Tskhinvali. According to Russian and Ossetian media, the condition of the old bridge of Tskhinvali has been steadily deteriorating in recent years, and there is no money to repair it. Instead, the decision has been taken to demolish it and replace it, which will be cheaper.
- Members of the US National Committee also provided webinars and ongoing consultation on disaster recovery to institutions in Lebanon affected by the explosion of fertilizer storage in the Port of Beirut, and to the Jager Library at the University of Cape Town, SA, in partnership with Smithsonian CRI, Blue Shield Lebanon, IFLA, and US CHCC.

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:

- Blue Shield Australia is actively advocating to their government to ratify the Second Protocol (1999), as is Senegal, who met with the Minister of Cultural and Historical Heritage to gain support.
- Several committees provided input to governments regarding implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention. Blue Shield Belgium attend in the meetings of the working group for the protection of cultural property within the Inter-ministerial Commission for Humanitarian Law (ICHR). Following the 2022 ratification of the 1954 Hague Convention, the Icelandic Committee has offered support to the government in taking the next steps of implementation. Individual members of the Irish National Committee of the Blue Shield attend the Irish National Advisory Committee on Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (NAC) in their personal professional capacities: the Irish Committee itself will be invited as a member from 2023. After Norway ratified the Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention in 2016, it was included in the National Document for Heritage Protection: implementation was then paused. BS Norway is cooperating with the National Heritage Board to resume the implementation of the Hague Convention and its protocols. Two BS Norway representatives attended a first meeting with the Heritage Board in 2022.
- Germany set up a working group *Concept for Civil Defense*, which analysed the German lists of cultural property under protection according to the 1954 Hague Convention, which were partly set up by the monument protection authorities of the German federal states in the 1980s. They then reached out to the ministries of all 16 federal states to request information about the handling of these lists and any plans for evaluating them.

- Blue Shield United Kingdom attends the Cross-Government CPP Working Group to maintain links with the UK government Civil Service and politicians.
- 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. Krzysztof Sałaciński, President of the Polish Committee of the Blue Shield, was appointed as a member of the Council for the Protection of Cultural Property on September 27, 2022.
- Continuing their cooperation with the Polish Red Cross, the Polish Committee gave a lecture online for the students of the 24th edition of the School of International Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflict, organized by the Polish Red Cross, on the contemporary threats to cultural property in areas affected by armed conflicts. They have also lectured on the protection of monuments and collections in the provisions of international law, and on the practical aspects of preparing planning documentation in the protection of collections for participants of the training *Protection of monuments, museum, library and archival collections in the event of war and crisis threats – practical aspects*.
- At the invitation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Chair of Georgian National Committee of the Blue Shield participated in a military course on international humanitarian law held for senior officers of the Defense Forces of Georgia and gave a presentation on the Hague Convention and the BS movement.

In related work:

- Blue Shield Poland are working on promoting the person of Professor Jan Zachwatowicz, the designer of the blue shield distinctive emblem of the Hague Convention of 1954. He was Polish conservator of monuments who participated in the international Drafting Conference at The Hague in 1954, during which the Hague Convention was adopted. The Committee has been researching his history and spoke about his work at a conference.
- Blue Shield Georgia finalised the report *Implementation of International Humanitarian Law for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the Occupied Tskhinvali Region* and launched an online database of immovable cultural heritage sites of the Tskhinvali region. The report and the online database with a map-based visualization platform²¹ are the results of a joint project by the members of the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection and Peace, Newcastle University (UK), Blue Shield Georgia, and its local partner, Didi Liakhvi Valley Museum-Reserve. The report and its annexes provide detailed information on the damages and threats to each site and the sources of information, further describing the actions undertaken by the national and international actors, followed by the recommendations for the implementation of international legal instruments, such as the 1954 Hague Convention and the 1970 UNESCO Convention to

²¹ <http://map.blueshield.ge/en-US/Home/About>

See interviews about the situation here: <https://www.facebook.com/mythdetector/videos/464841455160877>

protect the cultural heritage of the Tskhinvali Region. Recommendations for tackling illicit trafficking were made with the support of the Chair UK Blue Shield. The presentation launch was televised: three tv channels and one radio station made short news stories about the presentation, that included interviews with the chairperson of the Georgian National Committee.



Manana Tevzadze, Chair of Blue Shield Georgia, and Dr Emma Cunliffe, of Newcastle University, present the report "Implementation of International Humanitarian Law for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the Occupied Tskhinvali Region" in Tblisi, Georgia.

Of course, work extends beyond the 1954 Hague Convention and Protocols. Many committees are lobbying for better disaster and emergency planning in government structures:

- Blue Shield Australia makes submissions to State and Federal inquiries that may relate to cultural property issues. These have included inquiries into specific disasters such as fire and flood, risk and resilience, movable cultural heritage, and cultural policy – for example, the development of a National Cultural Policy via the Office for the Arts.
- Blue Shield Curacao continued working to include Cultural Heritage as an Emergency Support Function (ESF) in the National Disaster Management Law of Curacao, with petitions and presentations. (In April 2023 it was confirmed cultural heritage will not be an extant ESF, but it will be included in the Crisis plan: they will have the opportunity to join in multidisciplinary trainings and simulation drills).

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

- Blue Shield Niger participated in carrying out an audit of museums as part of the project to strengthen mechanisms to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural property in Niger.
- Blue Shield Norway is an active driving force to change policy and regulations for the import and export of cultural objects to and from Norway. This is to ensure more consistent cultural heritage management, better cooperation with law enforcement and prevent Norway from becoming a transit country for laundering of illegal / plundered cultural objects from war and conflict areas. BS Norway has participated in the Ministry of Culture's Cultural Crime Group, and continued cooperation with the authorities to make national import/export regulations more coherent and in line with international commitments. The work will continue in 2023. The Committee has also led and participated in numerous conferences on illicit trafficking and led on a major (sadly unsuccessful) grant application.
- The UK Committee has been focusing on illicit trafficking. Work includes acting as a source of information and support for the UK Metropolitan Police; continuing to lobby for amendments to the AML Regulations to include antiquities (announcement of amendment expected 2022) to close loopholes; participating in bi-annual UK Government's Illicit Trade Working Group, acting as a source of advice. The Chair contributed to a study commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport who were sponsoring a Feasibility Study *Examining the Prospects for Criminal Prosecutions in Response to Antiquities Smuggling from Syria*. They also continue to assist UK Government on implementation of the EU Cultural Property Import Regulations, including developing and publishing an Antiquities Coalition Policy Brief titled: *Policy Brief 9: Following the UK's Repeal of the EU Import Regulation in Great Britain, will Northern Ireland become a gateway to Europe for illicit cultural property?* with a follow up Live Expert Panel in 2022²².
- USCBS also contributed to legal investigations concerning illegal cultural property.
- Blue Shield United Kingdom also supported Blue Shield Georgia in finalising the countering illicit trafficking recommendations in their report *Implementation of International Humanitarian Law for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the Occupied Tskhinvali Region*.
- Blue Shield UK presented virtually and in person to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) training and capacity building event, the inaugural Scenario-based Workshop on the Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property, demonstrating the work of the BSI, UKBS and the BSI Illegal Trafficking Working Group. A member of UK Blue Shield is also a member of the EU Task Force on enforcement of art and heritage crimes.

²² <https://theantiquitiescoalition.org/live-expert-panel-following-brexit-will-the-uk-become-a-center-of-cultural-racketeering/>

- Belgium wrote an open letter to Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden concerning the illegal trade in cultural property and more specifically the disappearance of the Art and Antiquities Unit of the Federal Police. The letter was not answered, but did receive attention in the press.

8.0 Challenges in 2022

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 need help with fundraising, research, training, and voluntary activities. Furthermore, most volunteers require extensive training and support, which is difficult for those who are volunteers themselves to provide. However, several committees are undertaking capacity reviews, and identifying key gaps they are seeking to fill, expanding and diversifying.

In one country, continuous changes in the government, municipalities, local authorities, and decision makers in public sector pose a critical challenge, compounded by problems retaining trained volunteers. Political turmoil has also complicated work elsewhere. 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.

COVID has continued to impact travel, the ability to hold events, and has restricted income, and continues to present a significant barrier.

Funding (or lack of) remains an ever-present challenge. As evidenced in [section 1.2](#), committee income is very limited, and for some committees non-existent: in addition, not all committees have their own bank accounts, which provides a further challenge in applying for grants. Although some Committees are successful in their grant applications, others (including Norway and Slovakia) report unsuccessful applications.

9.0 Looking Forward: Strategic Plans for 2022 and beyond

Improving committee profiles nationally and internationally and fundraising are a core priority for many committees – the lack of awareness of the Blue Shield (emblem and NGO) is a key problem. 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, many committees seek to expand their work in 2022.

9.1 *Cooperation and Partnerships*

Most national committees listed strengthening their national and international networks and partnerships, and capacity building, as key goals, along with raising awareness of the Blue Shield.

Partners included their armed forces, academics, civil society, NGOs, governments, and traditional authorities. Lack of coordination at different administrative levels amongst those with national/regional/local CPP responsibility is a key challenge which they seek to address. In particular, many committees highlighted working more closely with devolved governments, federal states and other forms of devolved administration with a responsibility for CPP. Several are either working at regional level, or seeking to create new regional sections and regional Task Forces, which will have wide involvement.

Some specific examples:

- Blue Shield Norway hopes to address the lack of national coordination between different museum owners (state, counties, private etc.).
- Australia aim to develop new collaborations with emergency services, and continuing such collaborations is a priority for Poland.
- Senegal is looking at how to improve cooperation with other national committees in Africa, particularly in the West African region. Senegal are also aiming to increase collaboration with religious and traditional authorities.
- Blue Shield Guatemala, supported by Blue Shield International, is aiming to organise a Central / South American / Caribbean regional meeting of Blue Shield members and stakeholders for 2023.
- USCBS obtained visas for at risk colleagues from Afghanistan and Ukraine to enter the US. Additional placements are planned.
- One project that should certainly improve coordination is from Blue Shield Georgia. Together with ICOMOS Georgia and the National Trust of Georgia GNCBS started working on the Heritage Platform project. The purpose of the Heritage Platform is to bring together non-governmental organizations operating in the cultural heritage field to promote heritage protection for the common good. The platform will be used by various civil organizations or initiative groups working in the field, whose voices are not clearly heard when it comes to the pressing issues of heritage. It will also be a space for sharing challenges and successful experiences. The Platform will become active in 2023.
- The UK National Committee is seeking to develop its intangible heritage work with new partners, and its underwater heritage protection.

Many intend to increase collaboration and training with their armed forces.

- North Macedonia is looking to establish cooperation with all institutions for the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict; and prepare a brochure with the regulations on the special measures of protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict and emergency.
- Australia aim to re-establish liaison with the Australian Defence Force to encourage the ADF to conduct internal CPP exercises and training to improve CPP integration and understanding in armed conflict or disaster response.

- The US are exploring new ways of engaging with, for example, the establishment of the U.S. Army's new 38G/6V Heritage and Preservation Officer program in the military working on cultural property protection and with the Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee.
- Germany aims to intensify networking with the Bundeswehr under Article 7.2 of the 1954 Hague Convention, focusing on civil-military cooperation.
- Slovakia are seeking partners and funds for the project Protection of cultural values and heritage in armed conflicts. The project is intended to support and improve the preparation for the protection of cultural heritage and historical memory in the event that Slovakia is threatened by armed conflicts or disasters and coping with their consequences.
- Belgium also plans to continue to participate in military exercises.
- Austria also highlight continuing military cooperation
- The Czechia Committee plan to seek contact with persons responsible for CPP in the headquarters of the Czech Army.
- Poland will continue its ongoing work with armed forces, including the Military Training Centre for Foreign Operations.

9.2 Law, policy development, and implementation

Again, there is considerable planned work in this area, and this presents only a few examples. A common goal is to act as an ongoing source of support and advice for partners regarding ongoing delivery of their responsibilities under the 1954 Hague Convention, both Protocols, the 1970 UNESCO Convention, the customary international law and other international frameworks, laws, and resolutions as appropriate, and to promote national and international law relating to CPP.

All committees are aiming to improve dialogue with government departments and Ministries to improve emergency response and state preparedness. They aim to work with relevant partner organisations and advocate to all levels of government for cultural heritage organisations and personnel to be involved in disaster planning to ensure that CPP is fully integrated in national, regional, local, and specific disaster risk reduction plans, disaster plans, and other risk mitigation strategies for dealing with emergencies.

Greater national ratification and implementation of international law is a common goal. Australia intend to lobby to implement the Second Protocol (1999). Germany, Norway, Poland, Georgia, Senegal, Türkiye, and the UK intend to work to promote implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and Second Protocol (where relevant). Several, such as Niger, also aim to encourage ratification of the 1995 UNDROIT Convention. Niger and Türkiye will also be participating in the revision of laws relating to cultural heritage management.

Prevention of illicit/illegal trafficking is also a common core goal. Blue Shield Norway expects to continue to participate in the Ministry of Culture's Cultural Crime Group, and to continue cooperation with the authorities to make national import/export regulations more coherent and in line with international commitments in 2023. Blue Shield Türkiye also plans to contribute to the reduction of illicit trafficking,

and it remains a core activity for Blue Shield UK and USCBS. 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.

9.3 *Education, training, and capacity-building*

Education and training remain one of the core activities for national committees. For example, the Greek Committee intends continue its successful programme of webinars and to undertake initiatives and educational activities in collaboration with state organizations, NGOs, and universities. The need for greater research and information sharing into new and improved CPP methods is commonly highlighted. Other committees are planning conferences and lectures on a wide variety of aspects of cultural heritage protection, including:

- A conference in North Macedonia on the topic: *Cultural heritage during military conflicts - situations, obligations and protection measures*. Next year will be the 60th anniversary of a major earthquake in Macedonia: the Committee are planning a workshop and forum looking at earthquake risks and heritage protection.
- The Greek Committee are planning on continuing their annual program of webinars on issues relevant to the Blue Shield.
- Poland are planning to co-organise the next international conference planned for 2023 on the protection of cultural heritage in situations of special threats.
- The Irish Committee will continue to build partnerships with the heritage sector in Ireland and internationally and is already planning to collaborate with ICOM Ireland and the Institute of Conservator-Restorers in Ireland (ICRI) to provide public events in 2023.
- Poland also aims to continue to develop training opportunities with the Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and other partners as opportunities arise. Polish Blue Shield experts will also continue to participate in the project *Cross-sectoral challenges: specialist for the protection of cultural property in the event of crisis and war - development of a postgraduate program dedicated to employees operating on the borderline of fields*.
- Germany, France, Curacao, Türkiye, and North Macedonia, amongst others, intend to carry out more disaster response / management training in 2022, and Niger and Senegal are looking to train civil protection agents on CPP techniques in the event of disasters.
- Georgia's key goal for 2023 is to collaborate with existing partners and donors and seeking further partnership for developing a curriculum for cultural heritage management study course.

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 or crisis, and are planning to continue with risk preparedness measures in 2022. Many expect problems due to previous

experience of “natural” disasters²³ (such as Belgium, Australia, and Türkiye), or as a result of conflict and insecurity (such as Georgia, Mali, and Cameroun), and are proactively developing plans and contacts, or continuing with work resulting from some of the disasters mentioned above. Greater connections with emergency services is a common future goal.

- Many Committees plan to continue to organise relevant training and educational events and development and make freely available resources to suit national contexts, increasing awareness and knowledge of disaster preparedness, risk assessment and disaster recovery. Identifying where these resources may already exist is a goal highlighted by several committees.
- Several Committees, including Austria, Netherlands, Poland, and Belgium, are looking to set themselves up as focal points for crisis response, with specific contact methods. Blue Shield France is defining its Emergency Response Mechanism (ORU), a strategic document to enable them to position themselves as a relief actor in the event of a crisis, upon request of cultural institutions or at the request of the State (ORSEC). The ORU has been submitted, and they are now waiting for the approval from the French Civil Protection. Once approved, they will train volunteers, according to the ProCultHer European Standards.
- Blue Shield Netherlands plan to get greater national recognition for the protection of cultural heritage by including the safety of cultural heritage as part of the National Safety Strategy.
- Curacao are planning further disaster management and risk reduction workshops, and continuing the Caribbean Hub Initiative
- Niger are planning to establish an inventory of important assets requiring proactive protection in the event of disasters.
- Norway highlight the risk from climate change as a significant concern: they hope to develop a systematic dialog with the governmental agencies and NGOs on risk preparedness.
- Perú aim to identify monuments with the emblem of the Historic Centre of Lima.

10.0 Summary

We welcome those committees who are new to the Blue Shield Movement: we are excited to have them join us as the Movement goes from strength to strength.

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.

Given the background of most members of Blue Shield, national committees have tended to focus strongly on risk management and disaster preparedness and response, but work with armed forces and better implementation of international law, such as the 1954 Hague Convention, continues to increase.

²³ (Recognising that today it is understood that all disasters affecting people have a human element).

This is an extremely positive step for the wider movement, and reflects the holistic nature, and legal underpinnings, of our work. The Annual Reports demonstrate a wide range of work, with dozens of training courses and workshops undertaken across multiple sectors. Proactive preparation and risk preparedness are understood to be critical. Blue Shield national committees are also actively involved in emergency response, supporting not only their own countries, but others as well, and are seeking to expand and professionalise their activities on this area. Partnership working is key, and the scale of national and international partners testifies to the importance of the work.

Three key gaps have been identified, all of which will require more capacity to address.

- Humanitarian collaboration is key. Just four committees, Poland, Georgia, the UK and the USA, mentioned collaboration with their national Red Cross Committee in their Annual Reports, and Georgia also work with the ICRC. Only Poland mentioned that in 2023 they intend to investigate the potential to work more closely with the Polish Red Cross, although some (very few) mention it in their Strategic Plans submitted to BSI.
- Intangible heritage is another area with little work. Only Georgia is currently working to protect intangible heritage, and the UK have identified it as an area for future work.
- Lastly, climate change is also a notable absence in the reports, despite its critical importance. Only the UK, Ireland, Georgia, and Norway mention it.

These are gaps that Blue Shield International will seek to support going forwards.

Unsuccessful grant applications pose another challenge: significant time is invested in them by the volunteers, who urgently needs greater resources to continue their work. While COVID-19 was a challenge for all national committees, some were more affected than others, and the heritage sector suffered from a significant drop in income; and meetings became very difficult. However, activities continue to increase and the impacts of COVID lessen.

The scale of work presented in the Annual Reports indicates the growing recognition of its importance, the need for funding to undertake it, and the growing coherence of the Blue Shield Movement.

Congratulations to all our national committees on a very successful 2022.