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Blue Shield National Committees Inspiration & network meeting

This is the final report of the Blue Shield meeting held in Milan on the 6th of July 2016. The meeting was organised to strengthen the network of the Blue Shield national committees. This final report is distributed to all participants and to the interim board of Blue Shield. It will be published on the websites of Blue Shield Netherlands and ICOM Netherlands.

Kristel Witkam
Andrea Kieskamp

Why?

The board of Blue Shield Netherlands experienced the need to know more about the other national Blue Shield committees and their activities. To be inspired about what a national committee can mean for a community and what the Blue Shield can do to protect heritage and educate the public about this subject. The websites of the national committees contained too little information to satisfy that need and the most recent meeting of the Blue Shield National Committees was 2 years ago in 2014 in Rome. That is why Blue Shield Netherlands took the initiative to organise a meeting with the national Blue Shield Committees. A call to the committees showed that they all feel great need to be more in touch with each other to exchange ideas, learn from one another, initiate partnerships and help each other if possible. Goal of the meeting was an interactive program that would lead to an inventory of what the committees are working on and what their wishes are for the future. In the ICOM DRTF meeting at the 23rd ICOM General Conference in Brazil, this need was already expressed and a spontaneous meeting was organized. The 24th ICOM General Conference was an ideal opportunity to organize a well prepared meeting. An additional advantage was that many participants already planned to be present in Milan.

Who?

Organising Committee

Angela Dellebeke	Secretary General Blue Shield Netherlands
Kristel Witkam	Intern Blue Shield Netherlands, Reinwardt Academy Amsterdam
Andrea Kieskamp	Vice President Blue Shield Netherlands

Support (from or on behalf of) ICOM Conference team

Alberto Garlandini	President of the Italian Organising Committee of ICOM Milano
Barbara Landi	K.I.T. Group, conference management
Amélie Zanetti	K.I.T. Group, conference management
Giulia Robbiani	K.I.T. Group, conference management
Maria Aliprandi	ICOM Accommodation Expo College

Participants

Over 50 people attended the meeting. The group consisted of representatives from national Blue Shield committees (17) and other conference participants who were interested in the subject. Several national committees could eventually not attend due to lack of financial resources. Some of them sent brochures to be distributed at the meeting.
For detailed information on participation please see Appendix 1 *Participants inspiration and network meeting.*

What?

Secretary General of Blue Shield Netherlands Angela Dellebeke opened the meeting with a warm welcome to all the participants. Robyn Riddett, moderator of the meeting, member of the interim board of the Blue Shield (international) and inaugural convenor and a past President of Blue Shield Australia introduced the speakers and gave a short introduction. Unfortunately, the first keynote of Mrs. Tiziana Maffei (Blue Shield Italy) concerning the commitment of ICOM Italy, had to be cancelled for personal reasons.

The second speaker, Peter Stone, UNESCO chair holder in Cultural Property Protection and Peace, chair of Blue Shield UK and Secretary-General of the interim board of the Blue Shield (international) informed the participants about recent developments within Blue Shield. He apologized for the lack of communication during the last two years, and explained the activities as of 2014 until now and touched on the future plans of Blue Shield for the coming months.
Peter explained how for the last two years, the interim board of the Blue Shield and representatives of ICBS have primarily been occupied with revising the statutes of the Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS) in order to establish a new organisation: Blue Shield international.
These new statutes are based on the agreements made in 2014 at the last General Assembly held in Rome. The new statutes have been signed on the 6th of April 2016 under Dutch law. One significant change has been made: the new board will consist of a president, 4 representatives of the founding fathers and 4 individual committee members instead of 6 individual members.
This means that the current board has too many members and has been designated as an 'interim' board. The new board will be elected under the new statutes at the next General Assembly which is to be organized next year (around May 2017).
Peter related that thoughts on the GA 2017 focus on three elements:

- An open conference day about cultural property protection
- A General Assembly day including elections and national committee reports and

- A third day of national committee reports followed by a new board meeting

Important for the future, Peter stated, is the need for a strategic plan for the organization in the form of a doctrine or standard policy will be made. He also mentioned the creation of a new website to be launched in September or October at the latest.
For the present time, the interim board will provide standard general information about the new Blue Shield as soon as possible to put on the websites of the national committees. This new website will contain a 'mother site' and 'sub sites'. These sub sites will contain a standard template for the national committees to present themselves, to create a more uniform and cooperative identity of the Blue Shield in general. For that purpose, a new design will be launched for the logo of the Blue Shield. The French design will be used for this. [note: it is the logo of the Blue Shield with the light blue circle around it). Use of this logo will be made available to all committees by the interim board. Until there is a newly elected board, Peter stated, the interim board will be meeting via Skype and it promises to deliver a monthly update of these meetings to the national committees.

Peter also shared activities of the Blue Shield UK. The government of the UK finally agreed to ratify The Hague Convention of 1954 and its protocols at the end of the year. Next to that, the UK government created a project-based Cultural Property Protection Fund of 30 million Pounds to be spent in four years. Peter suggested that the interim board applies for financial support. This might generate the necessary means for getting an office and full time employees installed for Blue Shield International.

Peter ended his keynote with the mentioning of three UNESCO initiatives related to the protection of cultural property (by the military). For more detailed information about the speech of Peter Stone please consult Appendix 2 *Summary presentation by Peter Stone*.

Network sessions

The plenary session was followed by 3 interactive network sessions.
Blue Shield Netherlands wanted all committees/participants to have a fair level of interaction with each other to get creative juices flowing, to get to know each other (better), to share ideas, problems and thoughts and to use the collected information to strengthen the network and to help it move forward.

Session 1 Communication and Collaboration Blue Shield Network
Moderator Blue Shield Netherlands
Kristel Witkam

During this session, participants were asked for ideas to improve communication and collaboration within the network.
This resulted in a range of solutions stated below, ranked by importance put upon them by all participants:

1. **Creation of a joint Blue Shield website with international and national pages**
   The website should have the possibility for the national committees to chat, discuss and find partners for joint projects. It should be simple and clear. All the board members of the national committees should be listed with a photo and contact information. The website should have a project page for the national committees to share their activities. Furthermore, it should be possible to download documents from the website and upload working documents in the cloud. The website should be split in a public and private section,

to secure the working documents.

Additional to the website it is recommended to create an email group and a social media crosslink, for example a Facebook page or Twitter account. A requirement for the website is naturally that all the private information should be safely stored.

2. **Hold regular meetings/conferences**
   Meetings concerning a specific theme, could also be done online. Some participants proposed that this regular meeting will be directly after an ICOM General Conference, because of the travelling costs, but not all the participants agreed with this statement, because this would be very exhausting etc.

3. **Create a communication team (working group).**
   This team would assist with the communication between:
   - the national committees
   - the national committees and Blue Shield (international)
   - the national committees, Blue Shield and the public

   Also in every national committee one person should be responsible for the communication.

4. **Regular updates**
   Each national committee should make an annual report and make this available. This also applies to the interim board/Blue Shield International. A newsletter (monthly or quarterly) with activities from the national committees should be available online. Also Blue Shield (international) should give a regular update on their activities. Regular updates could also be in the form of blogs and columns on the new website.

5. **Other proposals**
   Several ideas were not discussed in detail during the session but could be interesting to discuss in the future.
   1. Organising working groups on areas or sites
   2. Workshops and training programs internal and external. This could also be online with e-learning materials
   3. Setting up of a buddy system: two national committees will be linked and can help each other
   4. Development of a track system for applicants
   5. Committees were recommended to make use of the different (international) heritage days that are organised. (i.e. the 19th of April and the 1st Sunday in September)

Session 2 Best Practices. Pitches by national committees
Moderator Blue Shield Australia
Robyn Riddett

In this session each participant was asked to contribute with any comments on best practice in emergency response related to cultural heritage.

Shared Network
The creation of an active network of Blue Shield national committees could be a valuable mechanism for national committees to become more familiar with the work, focus and personnel of other committees and to share experiences with a view to developing a formal best practice standard - this would also enable cross-cutting activities and lessons learned to be shared.

Technology
Today there is a lot of technology which can be of great assistance in the monitoring of an emergency and the damage to historical monuments and sites which would assist a more integrated (humanitarian and cultural heritage) initial emergency response. We need to create a consciousness of these capabilities and train people specifically to utilize appropriate technology at the disaster site. This might be medical or military personnel who are already amongst the first responders and who can be directed to also investigate damage to cultural heritage or it might be cultural heritage experts embedded in the first response deployment.

Standards for Roles and Training
Blue Shield could and should be instrumental in establishing standards for the training of emergency responders specifically in relation to cultural heritage. This will require a consciousness of the significance and importance of cultural heritage to be instilled in emergency response training manuals and procedures.

National committees should raise awareness of the need to protect cultural heritage amongst volunteers at training events.

Establishment of National Committees of the Blue Shield
Many countries have significant cultural heritage monuments and places which are at risk because of a poor appreciation of the importance of cultural heritage, particularly when the initial, or perhaps only, organized or formal focus is on physical humanitarian needs. The Blue Shield should actively encourage the establishment of national committees in countries where they do not exist presently.

Emergency Response Plans, Mutual Co-operation and an International Task Force
The issue of placing signs on valuable objects in museum storage areas indicating that they should be rescued as a priority was raised as was the issue of cultural heritage repositories (museums, galleries, libraries, archives etc.) working together by way of mutual assistance in times of need.

By way of example, this occurs in Australia, but the right protocols regarding insurance, liabilities etc. need to be in place beforehand. At an international level this might take the form of a special Blue Shield task force which has the essential logistical back-up arrangements (accommodation, food, transport, administrative protocols, personnel responsibilities and duties etc. in place permanently so as to be able to deploy quickly when necessary. This would be seen as a gesture of international solidarity. We need to commence to build a model on-line – a "first aid kit".

This would also require the establishment of a database of Blue Shield personnel with the appropriate expertise who are willing and able to be part of a response team.

It would be useful to establish an equipment lending network.

Emergency Response to be Appropriate for Local Conditions
A Blue Shield response needs to be based upon local conditions and local models and this needs to become a key part of any training. A basic model might be the concept of Heritage without Borders. This would be assisted by information on websites and apps which Blue Shield should develop. There is a need for the development of GPS co-ordinates in each area which locate significant monuments and collections.

Focus of the Blue Shield
Blue shield needs to prepare a list of all signatories to the Second Protocol, of the Hague Convention and then to advocate in those countries which are not signatories.
Blue Shield, apart from focussing on armed conflict, must also focus on natural disasters as these are also destroying the world's cultural heritage.

Session 3 Challenges and possibilities for mutual support
Moderator Blue Shield Guatemala
Samuel Franco

This session focussed on 4 challenges formulated by the organising committee beforehand. Participants were asked to formulate new challenges as well.

1 Ratification of The Hague Convention and protocols.
How can a national Blue Shield committee stimulate the government in the ratification of The Hague Convention?
This challenge could be met by:

- Organizing expert meetings
- Joining other stakeholders in the field of the protection of cultural heritage
- Visualizing the importance of protection with best practices
- Bringing policy makers into your own network
- Using (social) media to create pressure and raise awareness, write articles/blogs etc.
- Collaborating with environmental agencies, military etc. to increase pressure on politicians
- Making politicians aware of their responsibilities
- Briefing at least the cultural institutes about their responsibility to behave according The Hague Convention (soft law)
- Making clear why protection of cultural property is important with examples of what could go wrong when they are not prepared

2 Finances.
How can national committees raise their budget/get structural financial support?
Results:

- Create projects that match with the national strategy
- Private donation with something in return, like guided tours
- Sponsorship by insurance companies
- Develop a 'rescue box' for culture containing tents, blankets, water purifying tablets etc. that can be sent immediately in case of emergency
- Fund raising on concrete projects
- Make a membership system
- 1 budget accessible to all (yearly donation of the 4 pillars), pull resources of the National Committees together
- Establish collaborations both nationally and internationally with big national and international corporations and institutions
- EU/VN funding
- Founding fathers should provide funding
- National government funding
- Be a part of the national rescue system (regular funding)

3 Awareness raising.
How can national committees raise awareness about the need for protection of cultural property?
Results:

- School education for children and military organizations
- Attend local and international conferences
- Make a plan for different target groups:
    - Policy makers (lobby)
    - Security institutes & personnel (training, raising interest)
    - Heritage professionals (training and share knowledge)
    - General public (awareness campaigns, events, exhibitions), work with local examples and initiatives to make general public understand connecting not only with the mind but with the heart
    - Partner organizations and NGO's (awareness campaigns, events, joint training sessions)
    - Use (social) media and website
    - Schools, museums, libraries (special programmes)
    - Special groups: military, police etc. (workshops)

4 In what way can national committees improve their role and influence in society?
Results:

- Use the media (social)
- Find 'simple' examples for everyone to understand.
- Open up membership
- Show the benefit: what could happen if not?
- Find advocates/ambassadors in the country to speak for the committee
- Create international standards/symbols that are recognizable in the media in any country.
- Visit policy makers to influence their policies
- Start an awareness campaign (use school systems, libraries and museums for various ages in the target groups)
- Train professionals and make them aware, make them ambassadors of the BS ideas

- Get visible through special exhibitions, events and workshops
- Let the general public participate

Additional challenges

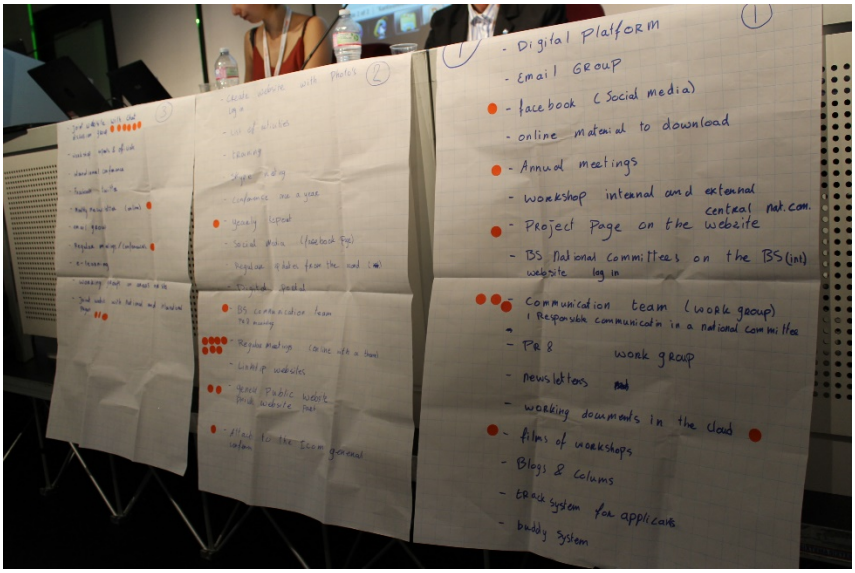
- How to get a steady connection between existing national disaster networks?
- How do you promote Blue Shield and make it an effective force when domestic cultural heritage managers are resistant to international methods (we can figure it out better ourselves, we don't need outside assistance or collaboration)?
- How do we get all four founding organizations active in the Blue Shield?
- In what way can a committee contribute to the implementation of the 2 protocol of the Hague Convention?
- What can we do to speed up the process of being recognized as an national Blue Shield Committee?

Blue Shield Poland

Lidia Klupsz presented the best practices of the Blue Shield Poland during the discussion of the meeting. The powerpoint of this presentation will be sent to all national committees.

Overall conclusion

The organising committee received many positive responses from the national committees and other participants. Attendees were all enthusiastic about the interactive approach of the meeting and were happy to share experiences and participate in a debate or discussion. The organising committee was grateful for the high level of participation, the willingness to be critical and the ability to not only think about problems but also about formulating possible ways to make things better.



Challenges for the Blue Shield network!

Recommendations

1. All committees could make better use of knowledge within the network by organising more practical meetings to share thoughts, discuss ideas and come up with solutions.

2. The Interim Board must organize a Blue Shield General Assembly as soon as possible to be able to make a move forward.

3. Create a new website for the whole Blue Shield organisation (part BS international, parts for the separate committees).

4.The (Interim) Board has to draw up and distribute a transparent procedure how the approval of a national committee application is processed, who is responsible for what and what is the response time.

5.The Interim Board must approve or disapprove ongoing applications for establishment of national committees before the end of 2016.

6. Organise a communication team/working group to improve communication within the entire network. Get all committees involved by sending regular updates of their activities.

7. The interim-board/new board must discuss financial support from the Founding Fathers with the presidents of ICOM, ICOMOS, ICA and IFLA.

Final thoughts from the organising committee

It was an inspiring experience and a real energy boost to meet so many colleagues from other Blue Shield Committees and discussing issues we all have to cope with. We are happy with the positive impulse and trust that the interim board will do its best to incorporate the recommendations and conclusions of the meeting in its strategic plan. One last recommendation for the upcoming General Assembly: we would welcome a day prepared by national committees as a concrete follow-up of the meeting in Milan (instead of theoretical presentations on heritage in danger). Who is interested in taking part in the communication group? What best practice(s) of a national committee could be transferred to other committees, how can we start up coalitions to be more visible and effective?

And finally: a great thank you for all those who participated or/and supported us making this meeting successful.

Kristel Witkam/Andrea Kieskamp

September 2016

Appendix 1 Participants network and inspiration meeting

	Name	Committee / Country	Email Address
1	Luigi Petti	BS Italy (u.c)	luigi.petti@gmail.com
2	Peter stone	BS UK BS international	peter.stone@ncl.ac.uk (peter.stone@newcastle.ac.uk)
3	Axel Mykleby	BS Norway BS international	axel@mykleby.no (post@blueshield.no) (mykleby@ancbs.org)
4	Marlene Kloster Hedegaard	BS Denmark	marlene.kloster@gmail.com
5	Ian Jones	UK	ianhjones27@gmail.com
6	Vasyl Rozhko	Blue Shield Ukrain	Vasyl.rozhko@gmail.com
7	Hyojung Cho	USA	Hyojung.cho@ha.edu
8	Kidong Bae	ICOM Korea	bkd5374@gamil.com
9	Sif Johannesdottir	Iceland	safnahus@husmus.is
10	Inga Jonsdottir	Iceland	inga@listasafnarnesinga.is
11	Jana Souckova	Czech republic	jana.souckova@volny.cz
12	Ornella Foglien	Macedonia	ofoglie@gmail.com
13	Davorin trpeski	Macedonia	Davorin777@gmail.com
14	Constanze Fuhrmann	DGKS	constanze.fuhrmann@gmx.de
15	Elke kellner	ICOM Austria	icom@icom-oesterreich.at
16	Rene Klomp	Ethische code commissie Netherlands	rjgklomp@hotmail.com
17	Kae Shihara		kae@filmpres.org
18	Susanne Beckmann	Representing BS Sweden (u.c)	Susanne.beckmann@malmo.se
19	Katherine Hauptman	ICOM Sweden	katherine.hauptman@historiska.se
20	Lina Ahtola	ICOM Sweden	Lina.ahtola@vasteras.se
21	Maciej Janicki	Poland	mjanicki@nitc.pl
22	Nigel Sadler		Nigel.sadler@talk21.com
23	Melissa Rinne	Japan	melissarinne@yahoo.com
24	Cori Wegener	United States	wegenerc@si.edu
25	Soren la CourJensen	BS Denmark	slc@indmus.dk
26	Alessandra Rollo	Brazil	alessandra@expomus.com.br
27	Danusa Castro	Italy	castrodandan@yahoo.it
28	Andrea Jamrichova	Slovakia	Andrea.jamrichova@culture.gov.sk jamri@post.sk
29	Maria Ignez Montovani Franco	BS Brazil (u.c)	Icombrazilml.icom@gmail.com
30	Alexandra Bouina	Greece	abounia@ct.aegean.gr
31	Marjan otter	RWA Netherlands	Marjan.otter@xs4all.nl
32	Samuel Franco Arce	BS Guatemala	safra@kojom.org
33	Liwy Grazioso Sierra	Guatamala	liwygrazioso@hotmail.com
34	Sergio Servellón	Belgium	sergio@icom-vlaanderen.be
35	Friederike Rolle	Austria	Friederike.rolle@aon.at
36	Anastasia Karavasili	Greece	nancykoravasili@gmail.com
37	Inkyung Chang	South Korea	ironmuseum@gmail.com
38	Andrea Di Massa	BS Italy (u.c)	sibillacumana@libero.it

39	Lidia klupsz	BS Poland	l.k.kobidz@gamil.com
40	Krzysztof Salacinski	BS Poland	salaanskryzstof@gmail.com ksalacinski@mkidn.gov.pl
41	Nadine Panayot		nadinepanayot@yahoo.com
42	Hanna Pennock	OC&W Netherlands	Hanna.pennock@minocw.nl
43	Jan Melander	Sierra Leone	Jan.melander@vasteras.sl
44	Kristel Witkam	BS NL	kristel@witkam.eu
45	Andrea Kieskamp	BS NL	Andrea.kieskamp@nationalarchief.nl
46	Angela Dellebeke	BS NL	Angela.dellebeke@nationaalarchief.nl
47	Robyn Riddett	BS Australia	rgrd@bigpond.com
48	Abdulaziz Mohammed Alsaleh	Permanent Delegation of Saudi Arabia to UNESCO	a.alsaleh.sa@unesco-delegations.org
49	Pamela Hatchfield	BS United States	phatchfield@mfa.org
50	France Desmarais	ICOM France	france.desmarais@icom.museum
51	Valeria Suruceanu	ICOM Moldavia	lera.art@gmail.com
52	Aparna Tandon	ICCROM	aparna.tandon1@gmail.com
53	Kateryna Chuyeva	BS Ukrain	kateryna.chu@gmail.com

Appendix 2 Summary presentation by Peter Stone

Milan, 6 July 2016
By Peter Stone, Interim Secretary of the Blue Shield

This is a summary of the presentation given at the Blue Shield meeting at the ICOM Triannual.

Apologies – were given at the meeting on behalf of the President, Karl Habsburg, who was unable to be present. He asked that his thanks be noted for the Dutch national committee that had instigated the meeting. The Interim Secretary also apologised for the lack of communication but hoped that the following report would show that there had been significant activity.

1.0 LEGAL STATUS OF BLUE SHIELD

1.1 The revised statutes, first drafted in Rome in 2014, were signed on 6 April 2016 in The Hague by President Karl Habsburg. These unify the ICBS and ANCBS into one organisation – The Blue Shield. While there have been numerous changes made for legal reasons and for clarification, the main difference between the version agreed in Rome and the revised statutes is the reduction of individual members on the Board from 6 to 4. This was at the request of the four founding organisations and, additionally, makes that practical arrangement of the Board easier. The new Statutes will be put on the ANCBS website.

1.2 **Implications** [a] the board elected in Rome is therefore too big. On legal advice those elected in Rome should be regarded as an Interim Board until a General Assembly can be held where elections should be held for a new Board and officers. [b] National committees should continue as before. We all need to revise web-site information and we hope to be revising the ANCBS web-site as an interim measure soon – removing all references (except in historical notes) to either ICBS or ANCBS. General text about the Blue Shield will be prepared and circulated in August/September. We hope to be in a position to create a totally new web-site after September and before the end of the year that will have template 'sub-sites' for national committees – if you want to use them. We will be encouraging a standardised use of logos.

2.0 RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF MONTHLY SKYPE MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

The ANCBS Board had developed the practice of having monthly Skype meetings. We intend to reintroduce this from September 2016 for the Interim Board and then for the new Board elected at the next General Assembly. We hope that following these meetings there will be a monthly up-date for national committees and the founding organisations.

3.0 REQUESTS TO HOLD A GENERAL ASSEMBLY

3.1 As noted above we need a General Assembly as quickly as possible. The President has asked that all national committees and founding organisations be asked about what form the General Assembly should take and for all national committees and founding organisations to be given the option to bid to host the General Assembly.

3.2 The ***suggestion*** discussed was that the General Assembly be held over three days:

Day 1 Open conference on protection of cultural property

Day 2 General Assembly including:

- Election of new Board
- Election of President
- Reports from Interim Board and national committees

Day 3 Continuation of General Assembly reports from national committees

Meeting of the newly elected Board

It is suggested that there should be a maximum of 3 representatives from any single national committee or of those representing one of the founding organisation. This would give a maximum number of delegates of c.100. If organisers wanted, the Day 1 conference could be open to others not representing national committees or founding organisations (and perhaps charged for).

3.3 **The request** – national committees and founding organisation are asked to consider applying to host a General Assembly between March & May 2017. If committees or organisations cannot manage to organise something at this point they are welcome to suggest dates later in the year. Please see a separate expression of interest document that will be circulated. Bids should be submitted to the Interim Secretary by Monday 12 September 2016. Potential hosts should note the expectation to financially support the General Assembly with (if possible):

- Free venue
- Cheap accommodation
- Supported travel for colleagues unable to fund themselves to attend

4.0 UK RATIFICATION OF THE 1954 HAGUE CONVENTION AND BOTH PROTOCOLS

The UK has begun the Parliamentary process to pass a Cultural Protection (Armed Conflict) Bill that will enable it to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention and both Protocols. Assuming all goes well, and it is at present, we anticipate that this will enable ratification before the end of this year. This will catapult the UK from being one of the countries not to have ratified the 1954 Convention to being the only member of the Permanent Five Members of the UN Security Council to have ratified the Convention and both Protocols.

5.0 UK'S CULTURAL PROTECTION FUND (CPF)

5.1 As part of its new commitment to the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict the UK has set-up a Cultural Protection Fund. In the first instance the CPF will have a budget of £30 million and last until March 2020. At least for the first year of the CPF (financial year Aril 2016-March 2017) the CPF will focus on projects in the Middle East and North Africa.

5.2 **Newcastle/UKBS application** – for information: Newcastle University has submitted, in collaboration with the UKBS, the first phase documentation for a large grant from the CPF. Working with colleagues in Lebanon and four other Middle Eastern countries (Iraq, Jordan, Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Syria) this is intended to support proactive protection of the cultural heritage in Lebanon; provide training for colleagues from Lebanon and the other countries where requested/relevant; develop national committees in Lebanon and the four other countries; and develop formal and informal educational materials regarding the protection of cultural property and its importance to society in Arabic.

5.3 As only UK organisations can apply to the CPF at present, on behalf of the Blue Shield, the UKBS is in discussion with the managers of the CPF over the possibility of applying to establish a long-term central office for the Blue Shield by investing funding and working off the interest alone. There is no clarification on this point at present.

6.0 UNESCO INITIATIVES

6.1 **Training material for the military** – UNESCO commissioned Newcastle University to produce generic training materials for the military in late 2015. The final draft was submitted in late May and is currently being reviewed by UNESCO. As soon as the materials have been agreed

they will be circulated to all national committees and founding organisations (anticipated September 2016).

6.2 **ICOM Report** – UNESCO commissioned ICOM to prepare a report on cultural property protection in conflict. This is being drafted in cooperation with ICOMOS ICORP and the Blue Shield.

6.3 **International Institute of Humanitarian Law Sanremo report** - UNESCO commissioned the San Remo International Institute of Humanitarian Law to produce a manual for the military on their legal responsibilities regarding the protection of cultural property during conflict. The Interim Secretary has been in touch with the Chair of this group to ensure the three reports are complementary.

6.4 More information on these initiatives will be circulated as soon as it is available.

7.0 DEVELOPMENT OF A BLUE SHIELD DOCTRINE AND BLUE SHIELD STRATEGIC PLAN

7.1 '**Doctrine'** – For want of a better word the Blue Shield needs to develop a 'doctrine' or policy that will provide a context for and frame activity around our work. This is currently being drafted for general discussion and it is hoped will be in a state to be submitted for approval to the 2017 General Assembly. At present the doctrine, which focusses on the protection of cultural property during armed conflict and will need to be modified to include environment disaster, is being framed around:

- The 4 Tier Approach (long-term; immediate before deployment; during conflict; post conflict/stabilisation)
- The five areas of activity (coordination; training; proactive protection; emergency response; and long-term support)
- The six relevant UNESCO conventions and other relevant international humanitarian law (e.g. the Rome Statute)
- The seven reasons for damage/destruction during conflict (lack of planning; spoils of war; lack of military awareness; collateral damage; looting; enforced neglect; and specific targeting)
- The eight reason it is important to protect cultural property (Academic; Cultural/Social; Humanitarian; International law; Political; Medical; Economic; Military)

A small group is being put together to comment on the first draft of this.

7.2 **Strategic Plan** – In conjunction with this 'doctrine' we need a strategic plan to guide the organisation over the next period. Again, it is hoped that a draft of this will be prepared in time for the 2017 General Assembly.