

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE BLUE SHIELD (ICBS)

Working for the Protection of the World's Cultural Heritage

The Blue Shield is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross. It is the symbol specified in the 1954 Hague Convention for marking cultural sites to give them protection from attack in the event of armed conflict. It is also the name of an international committee set up in 1996 to work to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by wars and natural disasters.

The International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) covers museums and archives, libraries, and monuments and sites. It brings together the knowledge, experience and international networks of the four expert organisations dealing with cultural heritage: an unrivalled body of expertise which is now available to advise and assist in responding to events such as war in former Yugoslavia and hurricane damage in Central America. ICBS is international, independent and professional.

The Mission of the ICBS is to work for the protection of the world's cultural heritage by co-ordinating preparations to meet and respond to emergency situations. Its objectives are:

- to facilitate international responses to threats or emergencies threatening cultural property;
- to encourage safeguarding and respect for cultural property especially by promoting risk preparedness;
- to train experts at national and regional level to prevent, control and recover from disasters;
- to act in an advisory capacity for the protection of endangered heritage;
- to consult and co-operate with other bodies including UNESCO, ICCROM and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

It achieves this by:

- collecting and sharing information on threats to cultural property world-wide;
- raising public awareness about damage to cultural heritage;
- promoting good standards of risk management among those responsible for cultural heritage at all levels, from institutions to national governments;
- working to make decision makers and professional staffs aware of the need to develop prevention, preparedness, response and recovery measures;
- providing professional expertise to help meet emergencies;
- identifying resources for disaster prevention and for rapid intervention in emergencies encouraging the establishment of national Blue Shield committees.

The vital work of the ICBS was recognised in the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention agreed in April 1999 by 84 countries. This gives ICBS a new role, to advise the inter-governmental Committee for Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

Local Blue Shield Action

It is vital that the international initiative is taken up and supported by local initiatives. Blue Shield Committees are being formed in a number of countries. They bring together the different professions, local and national government, the emergency services and the

armed forces. They provide a forum for them to improve emergency preparedness by sharing experiences and exchanging information. They provide a focus for raising national awareness of the threats to cultural heritage. They promote the ratification and implementation by national governments of the Hague Convention.

ICBS is formed by four non-governmental organisations:

- ICA – the International Council on Archives
- ICOM – the International Council of Museums
- ICOMOS – the International Council on Monuments and Sites
- IFLA – the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.

Requirements for National Committees of the Blue Shield

The following requirements are to be met by national initiatives that wish to seek recognition as national Blue Shield committees.

1. Initiatives for establishing a national committee of the Blue Shield should fully recognise the ICBS Charter as adopted by ICBS in Strasbourg, 14 April 2000:
In order to protect endangered cultural heritage, the International Committee of the Blue Shield has been created in 1996 by the four non-governmental organisations, which represent professionals active in the fields of archives, libraries, monuments and sites, and museums.
In the framework of the Hague Convention (1954) for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict, ICA (International Council on Archives), ICOM (International Council of Museums), ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), and IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) have taken up the emblem of the Convention as symbol of the International Committee of the Blue Shield.
The four organisations have decided to work together to prepare for, and respond to, emergency situations in case of armed conflict or natural disaster that could affect cultural heritage. They respect the following principles:
 - joint actions
 - independence
 - neutrality
 - professionalism
 - respect of cultural identity
 - work on a not-for-profit basis.
2. Initiatives for establishing a national committee of the Blue Shield should have the support of the national representatives of all four non-governmental organisations listed above, which together form the ICBS. In case of doubt, the bureaux of the four non-governmental organisations will decide on the respective representational claims.
3. An appropriate representative of initiatives to establish a national committee of the Blue Shield should inform the ICBS of the membership, contact addresses, meeting schedules and agendas and relevant national events of the proposed national committee.

4. An appropriate person or organisation on behalf of initiatives to establish a national committee of the Blue Shield may request the ICBS to grant official recognition. The ICBS has the sole right to decide whether to accord such recognition.

Approved by the International Committee of the Blue Shield at its meeting in Paris, 8th June 2001.

Secrétaire ICBS Secretary
Christiane Logie
boulevard de l'Empereur 4
1000 Brussels - Belgium
Tel/Fax 32 (0)2 519 54 40
e-mail: christiane.logie@kbr.be

LE COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DU BOUCLIER BLEU (ICBS)

Pour la protection du patrimoine culturel mondial

Le Bouclier Bleu est l'équivalent de la Croix Rouge pour le domaine culturel. C'est le symbole choisi par la Convention de La Haye (1954) pour marquer les sites culturels à protéger en cas de conflit armé. C'est également le nom d'un comité international créé en 1996 pour protéger le patrimoine culturel mondial en cas de guerre ou de catastrophe naturelle.

Le Comité international du Bouclier Bleu (ICBS) regroupe les musées, les archives, les bibliothèques, les monuments et les sites historiques. Il réunit le savoir, l'expérience et le réseau international de chacune de ces organisations oeuvrant en faveur du patrimoine culturel: il constitue un vivier exceptionnel d'experts disponibles pour conseiller et porter assistance lors d'événements tels que la guerre en Yougoslavie ou les ouragans en Amérique Centrale. L'ICBS est une organisation de professionnels elle est internationale et indépendante.

L'ICBS a pour mission de protéger le patrimoine culturel en coordonnant les actions préventives afin de pouvoir faire face et répondre aux situations d'urgence.

Les objectifs:

- faciliter l'intervention de la communauté internationale lorsque le patrimoine culturel est menacé ou lors de situations d'urgence;
- encourager la sauvegarde et le respect du patrimoine culturel et plus particulièrement la prévention des risques;
- former des experts au niveau national et inter-régional capables de prévenir et maîtriser une catastrophe puis d'assurer un retour à la normale;
- intervenir en tant que consultant pour protéger le patrimoine culturel en danger;
- travailler en liaison avec d'autres organisations notamment l'UNESCO, l'ICCROM et le Comité international de la Croix Rouge (CICR).

Les actions:

- collecter et partager les informations sur les risques menaçant le patrimoine culturel à travers le monde;
- sensibiliser le grand public aux dommages causés au patrimoine culturel;

- communiquer les règles de bonne gestion des risques aux différents responsables du patrimoine culturel (institution, gouvernement...);
- inviter les décideurs et les professionnels à prendre les mesures nécessaires pour la prévention et l'établissement d'un plan d'urgence, ainsi que l'intervention en cas de sinistre et la remise en état;
- offrir l'expertise de professionnels en cas d'urgence;
- identifier les ressources nécessaires à la prévention des catastrophes et à une intervention rapide en cas d'urgence;
- encourager la formation de comités nationaux du Bouclier Bleu.

Le travail essentiel du Bouclier Bleu a été reconnu en avril 1999 dans le Deuxième Protocole à la Convention de La Haye par 84 Etats membres. Cette reconnaissance renforce le rôle de l'ICBS qui agit dorénavant comme conseil auprès du Comité Intergouvernemental pour la Protection du Patrimoine culturel en cas de conflit armé.

Les comités nationaux du Bouclier Bleu

Il est vital que les initiatives internationales soient relayées et encouragées par des initiatives locales. Des comités du Bouclier Bleu ont été créés ou sont en cours de constitution dans plusieurs pays. Ils rassemblent des professionnels d'horizons variés, des instances gouvernementales locales et nationales, des services d'urgence et l'armée. En permettant l'échange d'expériences et d'informations, ces comités constituent un forum pour mieux réagir aux situations d'urgence. Ce sont pour chaque pays des foyers de sensibilisation aux dangers encourus par son patrimoine culturel. Ils encouragent la ratification et l'application par les Etats membres de la Convention de La Haye.

L'ICBS est constitué par les quatre organisations non gouvernementales suivantes:

- ICA – Conseil International des Archives
- ICOM – Conseil International des Musées
- ICOMOS – Conseil International des Monuments et des Sites
- IFLA – Fédération Internationale des Associations de Bibliothécaires et des Bibliothèques