

FOCUS ON PROCULTHER

Newsletter of the EU-funded Project on Protecting Cultural Heritage from the Consequences of Disasters



This 3rd issue reveals how in these last months the PROCULTHER Consortium has continued to pursue its objectives despite the difficult times we are all experiencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the [PROCULTHER Consortium Statement](#) released for the 50th Anniversary of the UNESCO's 1970 Convention and our participation in the Iberian Biennial of Cultural Heritage - AR&PA organized by our Spanish partner, we reiterated the call to integrate cultural heritage (CH) protection into Disaster risk management (DRM) processes advocating for shared standards and methodologies to ensure a coordinated and interdisciplinary approach in this sector. In the meantime, France and Italy have provided Lebanese authorities with their expertise following the Beirut explosion on August, while Turkey and Spain have taken further steps to consolidate the interinstitutional cooperation between civil protection and CH experts for the joint recovery of cultural assets affected by adverse events occurred in their territories. Last but not least, we are celebrating the 60th year of ICCROM's activities in Italy with an overview of the capacities developed to protect CH in times of crisis. Next issue of FOCUS ON PROCULTHER in Spring 2021. Past editions are available through the section [NEWSLETTERS](#) of PROCULTHER web site.



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PROCULTHER is co-funded by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations of the European Commission (DG ECHO) and implemented by a Consortium led by the Italian Civil Protection Department (Italy), and composed of the *Ministère de l'Intérieur - Direction Générale de la Sécurité Civile et de la Gestion des Crises* (France), the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Regional Government of Castilla y León (Spain), the Ministry of Interior-Disaster and Emergency Management Authority - AFAD (Turkey), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the Fondazione Hallgarten – Franchetti Centro Studi Villa Montesca. PROCULTHER Consortium is also counting on the expertise from UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe.

PROCULTHER aims at contributing to develop Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and Participating States capacities to protect cultural heritage assets at risk of disaster by placing their protection at the top of national European agendas and making the enhancement of their resilience a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder goal. The project is running from January 2019 and its duration, because of the pandemic crisis, has been prolonged until December 2021.



PROCULTHER

PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISASTERS

HIGHLIGHTS

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of UNESCO'S 1970 Convention: the Contribution of PROCULTHER to the Conference on Cultural Heritage and Multilateralism

From 16 to 18 November Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union organised, in partnership with UNESCO, the European Union and the Council of Europe, the Conference "Cultural Heritage and Multilateralism: Regional and International Strategies for the Protection of Cultural Heritage".



In the spirit of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, this three-day online event represented a **unique forum for multilateral cultural heritage protection** issues that brought together high-ranking representatives from international and nongovernmental organisations. These experts were called to animate panels on topics strictly related to the 1970 UNESCO Convention like the **mechanisms against trafficking in cultural property** but also on the importance of **reinforcing** and defining **synergies** and **actions** to enhance the **sustainable protection of Cultural Heritage (CH)** as well as its **effective risk management**.

PROCULTHER Director, Giovanni De Siervo – Head of the International Relations and Activities Unit – DPC, invited as panel speaker in the **session "Risk prevention and management – strategies and synergies"**, shared with the audience how the project, **pooling** together the **partners' capacities** for the **definition of common language, standards and procedures**, is contributing to **strengthening** the **protection of cultural heritage** at risk of disaster at national and European level. The main outcome from the session confirmed that PROCULTHER is hitting the right spot: the **importance of integrating cultural heritage protection in Disaster risk management (DRM) processes** and, in particular, of having **shared standards and methodologies** to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to the safeguard of CH in emergency.

"[...] the importance of integrating cultural heritage protection in Disaster risk management (DRM) processes and, in particular, of having shared standards and methodologies to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to the safeguard of CH in emergency."

In fact, **PROCULTHER'S strength** lies in a strict **collaboration among DRM and CH actors** for the promotion of **coordinated action and interdisciplinary preparedness and response** capacities for a better protection of cultural heritage at risk. Building upon the competences of the Consortium Partners, in a **participatory process** of scaling-up and capitalisation on the existing capacities for the protection of CH, the project is **elaborating a common European methodology** along with **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** digging out relevant good practices and lessons learnt from the project partners. [...]

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HIGHLIGHTS

PROCULTHER to the Iberian Biennial AR&PA 2.0: “The Resilience of Cultural Heritage”

By Cristina Escudero Unit for Risk Management and Emergencies in Cultural Heritage (UGRECYL)
PROCULTHER Focal Point (Spain)

The **Iberian Biennial of Cultural Heritage - AR&PA**, organized by the **Junta de Castilla y León**, is an event that has been held in Spain since 1998, with the aim of **bringing** together and showing all the **efforts and dynamics** involved in the various aspects starting from information, to participation, enjoyment and **conservation** of Cultural Heritage (CH). This event encourages the **exchange** of **experiences** and **knowledge** between researchers and experts from the various disciplines of the sector, **raising** the citizens’ **awareness** and enhancing participation through the enjoyment and understanding of this heritage.



Screenshot of the PROCULTHER stand at Bienal AR&PA 2.0

The theme of the **protection** of **cultural heritage** in emergency has been a **constant** in the last editions of the Biennial (1), through various technical **conferences** and **workshops organized** by the Unit for Risk Management and Emergencies in Cultural Heritage of Castilla and León (**UGRECYL**). This **2020 edition** has had to adapt to a digital format following the Covid-19 crisis, and the **motto** chosen this year is “**The Resilience of Cultural Heritage**”; nothing more appropriate given the effects of this pandemic in the world of culture. In this scenario, the **safeguarding** and **sustainability** of CH through **new approaches** that allow combining tradition and innovation, has been consolidated as a bastion in support of societies to cope with all kinds of disasters. **PROCULTHER** has continued throughout the pandemic to **disseminate** its **innovative strategies**, aimed at the **protection** of **Cultural Heritage** from the consequences of disasters within the **framework** of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (**UCPM**).

“[...] event that has been held in Spain since 1998, with the aim of bringing together and showing all the efforts and dynamics involved in the various aspects starting from information, to participation, enjoyment and conservation of Cultural Heritage (CH).”

Strategies that foster their **integration** in the Disaster risk management cycle to develop **preventive** and **mitigation** dynamics, promote **training** and preparedness programs to deal with the particularities of cultural assets, ultimately, allowing for a more effective and efficient response to emergencies and the protection of CH. **PROCULTHER** participated in the **AR&PA exhibition space with a virtual stand**, for which it generated **new information** resources **both in English and in Spanish** to

bring the project closer to professionals from Spanish-speaking countries (*available for downloading through the project website*).

In addition, and within the **framework of AR&PA Forum** - a meeting and debate point for professionals was set up for the **presentation of the objectives, methodology and scope of PROCULTHER**. [...]

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CH PROTECTION ACTIONS BY THE PARTNERS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES

Izmir Earthquake: a Meaningful Test Bench for the Cooperation among AFAD, Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Non-Governmental Organizations

By Mehmet Akif Alkan, Geophysical Engineer at the Risk Mitigation Group of AFAD and PROCULTHER Focal Point, Erkan Doğanay, Disaster and Emergency Management Expert at the National Disaster and Emergency Management Center of AFAD and Dr. Deniz GÜNDOĞDU (ATASAGUN), Restorer Architect (MSc.) and Disaster Management (PhD) at Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism

On 30th October 2020, at 14:51 local time, an earthquake of 6.6 magnitude on the Richter Scale hit the Seferihisar coast of the Aegean Sea; in the aftermath, out of the 1148 aftershocks, 43 were above 4 on the Richter Scale. The event was felt across the whole area West of Turkey causing a remarkably high death toll; 117 people died and 1032 people were injured, besides the many collapsed buildings and structures that were severely damaged in Izmir. More than 10.000 civil protection operators and over 1350 vehicles participated in search and rescue operations in the region on the days that followed the event. Humanitarian aid services, damage assessments, debris removal and emergency shelter activities are still ongoing. During the need assessments and emergency management activities carried out, public/private bodies, civil society and volunteer participation including an effective coordination among all the actors involved were ensured. Furthermore it should be mentioned that emergency response and recovery activities were implemented simultaneously, according to the planning scheduled by the Turkey Disaster Response Plan (TAMP).



Search and Rescue operations on 11 November 2020

Immediately after the earthquake, the Izmir Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization, which is the competent institution responsible for building evaluation under the TAMP, officially appointed the Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism for the assessment of possible damages to cultural heritage (CH) assets and historical buildings caused by the disaster. In addition, the coordination among the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) and AFAD allowed comprehensive post-earthquake damage assessments. To this purpose, MoCT, AFAD, ICOMOS-ICORP and GEA SAR have jointly set up a voluntary team of experts. [...]

"[...] assessment of possible damages to cultural heritage (CH) assets and historical buildings caused by the disaster. [...] To this purpose, MoCT, AFAD, ICOMOS-ICORP and GEA SAR have jointly set up a voluntary team of experts."

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CH PROTECTION ACTIONS BY THE PARTNERS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES

Innovative Procedures for Interventions on Cultural Heritage in Emergencies: a Practical Case

By Cristina Escudero Unit for Risk Management and Emergencies in Cultural Heritage (UGRECYL)
PROCULTHER Focal Point (Spain)

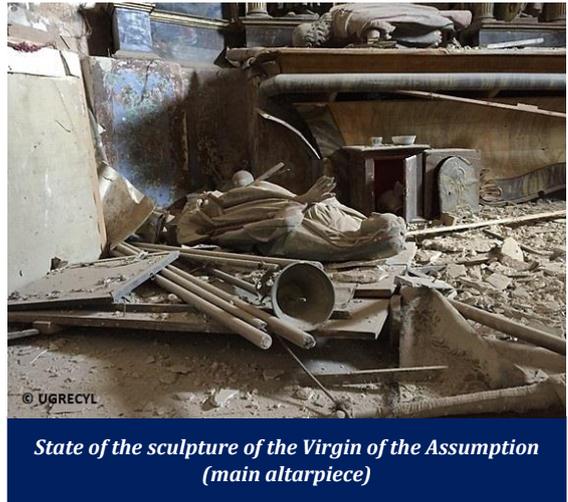
Cultural heritage (CH) is the result of a society and it is framed in time and space; in it, are inscribed all the knowledge, beliefs, ways of acting and understanding accumulated and developed in each era, in short, people's ways of living are a reflection of their past cultural heritage; that is why cultural heritage **is a non-renewable resource** that needs to be **preserved and protected** from the **consequences of disasters**.

Given this premise, we can say that, regarding CH, there is no such thing as a small disaster, by virtue of its legacy from the past that strengthens us in the present, since the damage and destruction that disasters generate will always be too relevant in terms of loss, only varying in scope of intervention based on established priorities. **CH emergency response** refers to those actions carried out following adverse events in which sites, buildings, collections or single assets have been affected – i.e. any cultural typology- and their objective is to **stabilize and secure** structures, objects, and to rescue property; these operations are **aimed at preventing losses, reducing damage and recovering** the uses and functions that support the conservation and preservation of intangible heritage.

"[...] these operations are aimed at preventing losses, reducing damage and recovering the uses and functions that support the conservation and preservation of intangible heritage."

An example of a response is the **intervention** carried out by the Unit for Risk Management and Emergencies in Cultural Heritage – UGRECYL in collaboration with the **Emergency Military Unit (BIEM V)** in **Almenara de Adaja, Valladolid (Spain)**, after the impact – last July, of lightning on the bell tower of the town Church. This event had dire consequences, causing damage to the building's structure that was quickly restored by the owner (Bishopric of Valladolid) to prevent further deterioration.

More spectacular were the effects inside the building, where the shock wave affected the main altarpiece, completely dislodging its structure and causing the fall of numerous elements that were ejected at a great distance destroying a small side altarpiece, which was in turn severely damaged, breaking into hundreds of fragments after its impact on the ground. Following the **assessment** of these assets, a two-day operation was carried out in three phases, relying for its realization on **UGRECYL (1)** for technical direction of the works and the necessary **protocols and procedures** to follow, counting on the **support** of a **USAR team (2)** for its execution. [...]



State of the sculpture of the Virgin of the Assumption (main altarpiece)

[Read full article](#)

(1) The technical unit of the UGRECYL was reinforced with two conservators-restorers belonging to the same institution, specialized in altarpieces
(2) UME's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams have developed capacities in the field of CH

CH PROTECTION ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED WORLDWIDE BY THE PARTNERS: BEIRUT DOSSIER

Protecting Beirut's Cultural Heritage: Mobilisation of the PROCULTHER Partners



Following the **explosions around 6 p.m. on 4 August 2020** in the port of **Beirut** area, the Lebanese government declared a **state of emergency**. The main explosion, detected as a 3.3 magnitude seismic event by the United States Geological Survey, was caused by 2750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate confiscated in 2014 by the Lebanese government and stored in the port without security measures. In addition to the **humanitarian disaster** – more than 200 dead, 7000 injured and 300,000 people left homeless – the Cedar Country will have to deal with the negative repercussions on the country's economy, already severely weakened by a crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 health emergency.

Soon after the tragedy, the **international community** was mobilised to provide Lebanon with the adequate support and humanitarian aid to face the immediate aftermath of the emergency. In addition, upon request by the **Ministry of Culture of Lebanon**, on **10 August UNESCO** convened its **main partners** active in the region to jointly assess the situation and **coordinate** the international **support** to **protect** the **invaluable cultural heritage** of Beirut involved in the massive explosion.

"[...] Soon after the tragedy, the international community was mobilised to provide Lebanon with the adequate support and humanitarian aid to face the immediate aftermath of the emergency."

On 27 August, the **UNESCO Director-General** Audrey Azoulay launched the initiative **Rebuilding heritage, culture and education #ForBeirut** to support the rehabilitation of schools, heritage buildings, museums, galleries, and the revival of cultural life and creative economy of Beirut. This initiative is funded through the [UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund](#).

In parallel, to estimate the impact on the population, physical assets, infrastructure and service delivery in Beirut, the **World Bank Group**, in cooperation with the **European Union** and the **United Nations** has launched the [Beirut Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment](#) that also includes the damage to tangible cultural heritage.

By issuing this **special dossier**, we wish to **express** our **solidarity** with **Lebanon** and inform on the **initiatives undertaken by the PROCULTHER** Project Partners in cooperation with the Lebanese authorities for the protection and recovery of the precious Beirut cultural heritage. [...]

Read full dossier

CH PROTECTION ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED WORLDWIDE BY THE PARTNERS: BEIRUT DOSSIER

France's Contribution to the Protection and Recovery of the Beirut Cultural Heritage



Sursock-Cochrane Palace after the explosion, Rmeil area, Beirut ©J. Kallas (2020)

France, among the funders of the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Zones (ALIPH), has allocated a first amount of **5 million dollars** for financing emergency measures to **stabilize, protect,**

or rehabilitate Beirut's cultural heritage. For the implementation of this first envelope, ALIPH will carefully apply the principles of urgency, efficiency and coordination mentioned during the [International Conference on Assistance and Support to Beirut and the Lebanese People](#) (Paris, 9 August 2020), and closely evaluate the concrete nature of the projects that will be submitted via its [online grant platform](#).

ALIPH intervention is based on the priorities and, in general, on the results that have emerged by the **studies** carried out by the **Directorate General of Antiquities of Lebanon (DGA)** with UNESCO, in association with several international institutions active in the region. As a response to the damage caused by the blast, experts and representatives from ICCROM, ICOM, ICOMOS Lebanon, IFLA, APSAD, Blue Shield Lebanon, provided their expertise in several assessment missions in the field. ICOMOS Lebanon and the Alumni of the Centre for Restoration and Conservation of the Lebanese University, in coordination with Blue Shield Lebanon, assisted the DGA in order to establish an inventory of all the historic districts and monuments. Consequently an emergency programme, the **BEIRUT BUILT HERITAGE RESCUE 2020**, was set up, bringing together more than 40 volunteer architects-conservators and experts. According to their assessment studies, nearly 650 houses or buildings listed as cultural heritage property suffered severe damages, particularly in the Gemmayzeh district. In addition, the explosion damaged several museums, including the National Museum, which houses archaeological collections, and the Sursock Museum, a jewel of XIX century devoted to modern and contemporary art, as well as libraries, monuments, and religious buildings. [...]

Read full article

"We must preserve this heritage at all costs"

Valéry Freland, Executive Director of the ALIPH Foundation

CH PROTECTION ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED WORLDWIDE BY THE PARTNERS: BEIRUT DOSSIER

MiBACT – U4H Task Force Assessment Mission for the Beirut Cultural Heritage

By Eng. Paolo Iannelli, Contact Point of the MiBACT Task Force (Italy)



© MiBACT - Task Force Unite4Heritage

A moment of the inspection of the Unite4Heritage Task Force in Beirut

Following the disastrous explosion that hit the city of Beirut on 4 August 2020, causing more than 200 deaths and immense destruction in the urban, social and cultural fabric of the city, the Institutes in charge of cultural heritage – CH safeguarding have activated a prompt response, also at international level. In this context of international mobilization, **the Italian Minister for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism**, Dario Franceschini, proposed to the Lebanese Minister of Culture, Abbas Mortada, the **intervention of the Unite4Heritage Task Force**, to support the Lebanese authorities in the activities required for safeguarding the cultural heritage affected by the event. [...] On 29th September, MiBACT's General Secretary, upon proposal by the Contact Point, has activated a first mission with the task of carrying out a **survey** on both **movable and immovable cultural heritage** affected by the explosion, the **state of damage** and the

activities necessary for its **safety and subsequent restoration**. Therefore, in line with the provisions of the **MiBACT-U4H Task Force Operating Regulation**, the **"Damage Survey" Operating Unit** was activated.

The Mission Planning

Since the formalization of Minister Franceschini's willingness to send the Unite4Heritage Task Force, the Contact Point of the MiBACT-U4H (1), following a first assessment (2) on the cultural heritage potentially affected by the event, namely on the typologies and conservation characteristics established by a preliminary report, has **defined the composition of the Task Force for the MiBACT part**. This Unit was composed by MiBACT experts, in this case by: an **architect** specialized in monument restoration, a **diagnostician** officer, a **restorer** specialized in stone artifacts and decorated surfaces, a **technology** officer, a **restorer specialized in wooden artifacts and structural wood conservation** and an **expert in movable property management** in emergency, by a restorer specialized in archival material and a photographer (unfortunately the latter two professionals were unable to leave for serious personal reasons). As per the Task Force CC-U4H component (*Carabinieri* Command- Cultural Heritage Protection Unit) a lieutenant colonel and a marshal were involved. [...]

"[...] with the task of carrying out a survey on both movable and immovable cultural heritage affected by the explosion, the state of damage and the activities necessary for its safety and subsequent restoration. [...] the "Damage Survey" Operating Unit was activated"

[Read full article](#)

(1) The Contact Point of the MiBACT Task Force – is the reference figure for MiBACT in the organization and management of the MiBACT component of the Task Force; the author of the article currently holds the office, Eng. Paolo Iannelli, Special Superintendent for the areas affected by the earthquake of 24 August 2016, Interim Director of the Emergency and Reconstruction Service II of the DG Safety of Cultural Heritage

(2) Document: EXPLOSION OF 4 AUGUST 2020 IN BEIRUT, LEBANON: DAMAGES OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE – Preliminary Report

PARTNERS' CAPACITIES & TOOLS FOR PROTECTING CH

ICCROM 60 Years in Italy: Tools and Expertise to Protect Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis

By Aparna Tandon, Senior Programme Leader, First Aid and Resilience for Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis | Digital Heritage



Documentation exercise during ICCROM's 2019 FAR Course in Norcia (Italy)

The 27th of **November 2020** marked the **60th anniversary of Italy's accession to ICCROM**, formally established through the ratification of the Headquarters Agreement by [Law 11 June 1960 No. 723](#).

The creation of an international centre like ICCROM, designated to **promote the preservation and restoration of cultural property**, was done in response to the urgent need expressed by UNESCO and the international community, to have a central body that could provide countries with the guidance, expertise and support they needed to recover from the destruction of World War II.

The choice of Rome as the location for ICCROM was the result of the **Italian Government's successful commitment** to enhance its leading institutions in the sector of **cultural heritage conservation** (such as the [Istituto Centrale del Restauro](#)), and to present them as ideal and qualified interlocutors. After UNESCO appointed Italy as the host country and the Headquarters Agreement was signed in 1957 in Paris, its ratification by the Italian Parliament was the last missing piece. It was not until November 1958 that the debate resumed. At that time, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Amintore Fanfani delivered a crucial [speech to the Lower Chamber of the Parliament](#), strongly encouraging the ratification of the Headquarters Agreement to fully adhere to ICCROM and recognize its legal status. A year and a half later, his recommendation was fulfilled.

"[...] the choice of Rome as the location for ICCROM, was the result of the Italian Government's successful commitment to enhance its leading institutions in the sector of cultural heritage conservation."

Sixty years have now passed since the Official Gazette announced Italy's accession to ICCROM, and a multitude of initiatives have benefited from the **close collaboration between Italian institutions and the international Centre**: from the earliest **Architectural and Mural Painting Conservation courses** (ARC and MPC) to the more recent partnership within the ambit of **ICCROM's flagship capacity development programme** on First Aid and Resilience for Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis (FAR). [...]

Read full article

OUR CONSORTIUM

Project coordinator



Partner's Civil Protection/Cultural Heritage Authorities



Technical Partners



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