

as an emergency over/within national response operations.
 EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)
 enables a coordinated assistance by
 all EU Member States
 & Participating States

In the framework of UCPM, the PROCULTHER project aims at
 defining European technical and operational
 capacities to increase the resilience of cultural
 heritage at risk of disaster



FOCUS ON PROCULTHER

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

In this 4th issue, we are proud to launch the call for contributions from all active members in the field of cultural heritage protection to feed and inform the virtual International Workshop on “Defining European Technical and Operational Capacities for the Protection of Cultural Heritage at Risk of Disaster” organised by PROCULTHER on 7 and 9 June 2021. In addition to the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) Members and Participating States, all interested Countries (including non-European), International Organisations and actors are invited to share its objectives and contribute with practices that could improve civil protection operations in this field.

Furthermore, it will be an opportunity to refresh the PROCULTHER advocacy activities in two recent international fora: the G20 Culture Webinar “Addressing the climate crisis through culture” on last April, and the Conference “Solidarity in culture: Heritage protection under conditions of crisis” organised by the National and University Library in Zagreb on 19 March 2021. Lastly, we are pleased to share some lessons learnt from two PROCULTHER partners in the field of cultural heritage protection: the first is from France and focuses on the factors that determined the successful management of the Notre-Dame de Paris fire of 15 April 2019, and the other from Spain on the operations implemented to minimise the damage and losses caused by the fire that broke out in the church of Santa Marina de Balboa in León (Spain) on last 4 May.

Next issue of FOCUS ON PROCULTHER in Autumn 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 the 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 has been running since **January 2019** and due to the pandemic crisis, its duration has been prolonged until **December 2021**.



PROCULTHER

PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISASTERS

PROJECT MILESTONES

Save the dates 7 and 9 June! PROCULTHER International Workshop “Defining European Technical and Operational Capacities for the Protection of Cultural Heritage at Risk of Disaster”



The PROCULTHER Consortium has officially launched the **call for contributions** to inform and feed the **International Workshop on “Defining European Technical and Operational Capacities for the Protection of Cultural Heritage at Risk of Disaster”** organised in virtual mode on **7 and 9 June 2021**. Being an **initiative** within the framework of the **European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)**, this two-day event is particularly **addressed** to the **UCPM Members and Participating States** but also **open** to **all interested Countries**—including **non-European**-, **International Organisations** and **actors** with relevant **practice** in the development of **methods** and **tools** in this field or simply willing to be **part** of the **event’s objectives**.

Active contributor, registered participant, or simple audience of the international workshop?

“[...] this two-day event is particularly addressed to the UCPM Members and Participating States but also open to all interested Countries – including non-European -, International Organisations and actors [...].”

If you want to find out which role suits you best, go through the event’s [concept note](#) and then access the [questionnaire](#) drawn up with the purpose of **collecting** all **proposed practices** dealing with the same topics addressed by the chapters composing the document “**Key Elements of a European Methodology to Address the Protection of Cultural Heritage during Emergencies**”, namely Institutional framework, Planning the inclusion of Cultural Heritage in all the phases of Disaster Risk Management, Coordinated structure, Teams, Tools and Data management systems, Training and Exercises.

If you prefer to read all the questions to prepare your answers before completing the online questionnaire, please [click here](#) to access the consultable version!

While compiling the questionnaire at national level, it is strongly **encouraged** that the **Civil protection/DRM authorities** and **cultural heritage stakeholders** **coordinate** each other to allow a comprehensive collection of best practices and lessons learnt. Based on specific **criteria** such as **cross-sectoral cooperation** and **interoperability**, **consolidated approach** and **ownership**, **innovation**, **context-based approaches** and **cross-cutting issues**, the **most meaningful practices** and experiences will be **presented during the first day of the international workshop**.

*There are no registration fees or other charges for participation, interested contributors and workshop attendees should [register](#) online before the **deadline** of **25 May 2021!***

In addition, **non-registered audience members** will be able to interact with the participants through the **messaging services** provided by the videoconferencing platform and **follow** the **live** broadcast by accessing the webpage dedicated to the event

[Access the event web page](#)

Save the dates of 7 and 9 June 2021 and Stay tuned also through our socials!



OUTREACH ACTIONS

PROCULTHER brings the Union Civil Protection Mechanism to the G20 Culture Ministerial *Further steps to increase the resilience of cultural heritage at risk of disaster*

On 12 April 2021, PROCULTHER was thrilled to participate in the G20 Culture Webinar “Addressing the climate crisis through culture” in the Session II dedicated to “Strategies and Actions for Increased Resilience of Cultural Heritage”.

Project Director, Mr De Siervo, presented PROCULTHER as a case study, and seized this outstanding opportunity to call for the development of a common European methodology, tools, and capacities to include the protection of cultural heritage in disaster risk management processes and to ensure a structured collaboration among Cultural heritage and Civil protection actors at local, national, and European level.



One slide presented at the G20 Culture Webinar

“[...] drew particular attention to the essential and effective role played by the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) - pooling together the capacities of Member States and six Participating States [...] in ensuring a collective European response to support countries at risk or overwhelmed by the impact of disaster.”

In the course of the conference the project Director drew particular attention to the **essential** and **effective** role played by the **Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)** - pooling together the capacities of Member States and six Participating States (Iceland, Norway, Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Turkey) - in ensuring a **collective European response** to support countries at risk or overwhelmed by the impact of disaster. [...]

[Read full article](#)

OUTREACH ACTIONS

PROCULTHER's approach and methodology in the framework of the Zagreb Conference “Solidarity in culture: Heritage protection under conditions of crisis”



The National and University Library in Zagreb organized the International Virtual Conference “Solidarity in culture: Heritage protection under conditions of crisis”, a three-day event held from 18 to 20 March 2021, in partnership with the European Commission, with the support of the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Media and the National UNESCO Commission. This event is part of a process carried out in the last years by several countries, including Croatia, aimed at reducing the vulnerabilities of the cultural sector in a holistic, inter-disciplinary and integrated manner. This process is generated by a common way of thinking among the international community of experts and practitioners with regard to the synergistic and mutual benefits of solidarity networks set up by cultural institutions, that yield the most effective and immediate results in prevention, response, and recovery efforts to safeguard cultural

heritage, in support of the existing general emergency services.

When a disaster strikes, emergency responders are the first to intervene to save lives and secure the affected areas, but in the last years, due to the extensive loss of cultural heritage during the early stages of a crisis, cultural heritage experts and emergency responders have been promoting the integration of cultural heritage protection in the disaster risk management cycle. In parallel, the use of technical terms such as resilience, prevention, preparedness, recovery, standard operating procedures, and pooling of expertise at all levels has become increasingly common by both cultural heritage and civil protection experts. This trend proves that continuous efforts are being made to facilitate both the

understanding and exchange of new interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral approaches toward an integrated conservation and risk management for the development of a comprehensive heritage protection strategy based on cooperation between different actors that provide the potential for resilience-building to disasters.

It is in this framework that, on 19 March, Veronica Piacentini, expert in CH disaster management from the Italian Civil Protection Department working on PROCULTHER, shared the floor with Sanda Milošević, from the CH Unit of the Croatian Civil Protection Directorate, and participated in the Conference session on “Networking, Coordination and Collaboration (Interoperability)”. [...]

“[...] continuous efforts are being made to facilitate both the understanding and exchange of new interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral approaches toward an integrated conservation and risk management for the development of a comprehensive heritage protection strategy”

[Read full article](#)

PARTNERS TOOLS AND ACTIONS FOR CH PROTECTION

Reflections on the Notre-Dame de Paris fire: The Cultural Heritage Protection Plan put to the test

By Romain Kimmel, Foreign Policy Officer at French Ministry of Interior – DGSCGC and PROCULTHER Focal Point
Special thanks to the Brigade des Sapeurs-Pompiers de Paris for providing the technical information and photos of this intervention

In 2017, France had more than 45,000 protected historical monuments. In the event of disaster, civil security forces are called to intervene to protect threatened property in accordance with the **law on the modernisation of civil security of 13 August 2004**. Therefore, on the night of 15 to 16 April 2019, during the fire that ravaged Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, all public players mobilised to help manage the disaster and save this emblematic monument. The **Paris Fire Brigade** (*Brigade des Sapeurs-Pompiers de Paris - BSPP*), ordinarily engaged in the rescue of people, played an essential role in this intervention that involved also the Departmental Fire and Rescue Services (**SDIS**) of the Yvelines and Seine-et-Marne as well as the Operational Centre for Inter-ministerial Crisis Management (*Centre Opérationnel de Gestion Interministérielle des Crises - COGIC*), the police forces and



Benoît Moser © BSPP

“[...] The interoperability of the State’s services concerned by cultural heritage protection, made possible by interdisciplinary training programs and shared intervention methods, was a determining factor for the management of the crisis.”

representatives of civil society (such as specialists in the safeguarding of cultural property). The **interoperability of the State’s services** concerned by cultural heritage protection, made possible by interdisciplinary training programs and shared intervention methods, was a **determining factor** for the management of the crisis. These conditions helped facilitate the arrival of emergency services, the implementation of assessments, the coordinated scaling-up of conventional and specialised resources, the anticipation of handover, the reinforcement of the command cell and the planning of the different phases of this operation.

The genesis and sequence of events

On **15 April 2019**, at around **18h45**, the emergency services were alerted for a fire that broke out beneath the roof of the Notre-Dame Cathedral spire. The **BSPP** was organised around The BSPP’s **tight operational network** enabling the deployment of a large number of human and material resources within the first half hour: finally, a total of **600 Paris firefighters** (400 in direct combat and 200 with logistical or command functions) were mobilised during this intervention. [...]

[Read full article](#)

PARTNERS TOOLS AND ACTIONS FOR CH PROTECTION

WHAT WE MIGHT HAVE LOST ...

Fire at the Santa Marina de Balboa Church, León (Spain)

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

The accident

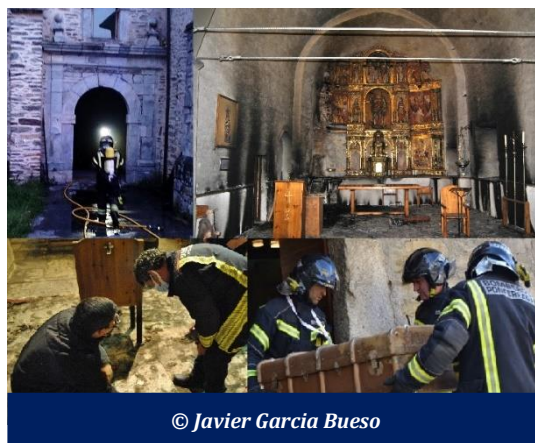
It was 3 minutes past 8 in the morning of Tuesday, last **May 4th**, when we received a call from Olivier Bao, Chief of the Ponferrada Fire Brigade, informing us of an already extinguished fire that had broken out in the early hours of the morning inside a church declared *Bien de Interés Cultural* - BIC (Site of Cultural Interest)¹ in Balboa, a small village in León (Spain), 43 km from Ponferrada (the largest town and where the municipality's central emergency service that serves other smaller towns, such as Balboa is based). All the necessary data and information were quickly gathered, that is: the movable assets involved, the extinguishing procedure implemented, the evacuated elements, etc.

The Unit for Risk Management and Emergencies in Cultural Heritage - UGRECYL was activated and deployed to the site given the impact of the accident and the fact that one of the most important cultural heritage sites of the area was affected, i.e., the main altarpiece - an important Renaissance piece².

Upon arrival at the disaster premises, with the interior covered in soot, we realized that the situation was actually better than we had expected; more than 90% of the altarpiece - only the edge of two reliefs and secondary elements forming part of the architecture were affected³ - was saved thanks to the excellent job of the firefighters.

"[...] more than 90% of the altarpiece - only the edge of two reliefs and secondary elements that form part of the architecture were affected - was saved thanks to the excellent job of the firefighters."

In order to extinguish the fire in the altarpiece and avoid affecting neighbouring areas, the firefighters focused exclusively on the source of the flames, using very little water in this process; thanks to pressure control they were able to spray it as much as possible, avoiding an uncontrolled jet of water. [...]



© Javier Garcia Bueso

[Read full article](#)

¹ The highest protection status for cultural heritage conferred by the Spanish State

² A meeting was held on site to assess the situation and take the relevant decisions. We are grateful for the collaboration and participation of Olivier Bao -Chief of the Fire Brigade-, Javier Garcia Bueso -Chief of the Museums of Ponferrada-, Beatriz Rodríguez -Patrimonio Obispado de Astorga-, Amelia Biain -Chief of the Territorial Service of Culture-, Antonio Ferrer -Parish priest of Balboa-, Juan Jose Lopez Peña -Mayor of the municipality- and the Guardia Civil

³ In Spanish, "mazoneria" is the name given to the set of architectural elements that frame and divide the altarpiece.

OUR CONSORTIUM

Project coordinator



Partner's Civil Protection/Cultural Heritage Authorities



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