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**PROCULTHER-NET** is **co-funded** by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - **DG-ECHO** under the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism - **UCPM**, and implemented by a **Consortium** led by the Italian Civil Protection Department (**Italy**) in collaboration with the International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property - **ICCROM**, the Ministry of Interior-Disaster and Emergency Management Authority - **AFAD (Türkiye)**, the German Archaeological Institute - **DAI (Germany)**, the Ministère de l'Intérieur - Direction Générale de la Sécurité Civile et de la Gestion des Crises (**France**), the Fondazione Hallgarten - Franchetti Centro Studi **Villa Montesca**, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Region Government of Castilla y León (**Spain**), the Federal Agency for Technical Relief - **THW (Germany)**, the Suor Orsola Benincasa University - **UNISOB (Italy)** and the University of Porto - **UPORTO (Portugal)**.



**PROCULTHER-NET**

PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE  
FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISASTERS - NETWORK

Building on **PROCULTHER** project, whose it is a natural continuation, **PROCULTHER-NET** is running from **January 2022** to **December 2023** and aims at consolidating a **thematic community** focused on the **protection of cultural heritage** at risk of disaster within the **Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network - KN** and increasing **UCPM interoperability standards** by reinforcing **know-how transfer** and learning processes on the **inclusion of cultural heritage protection in disaster risk management** processes within the **KN**.

[Click here](#) to join the KN and find out more on **PROCULTHER-NET!**

# PROJECT AT STAKE

## European training for the protection of cultural heritage at risk

The Implementation of the PROCULTHER-NET Protecting Cultural Heritage course: an interdisciplinary advanced training module within the Knowledge Network.



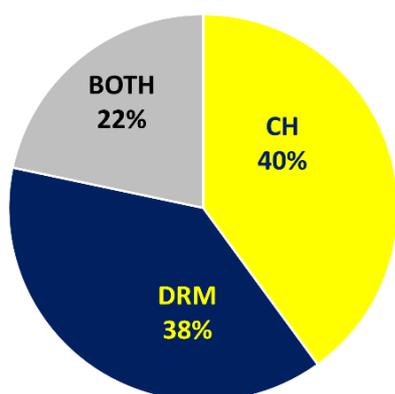
*PCH participants during outdoor practical activities © DPC*

During March 2023, 60 disaster risk managers and cultural heritage experts coming from 70% of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism-UCPM Participating States attended the PROCULTHER-NET training module implemented for providing them with specialized knowledge on how to deal with cultural heritage protection in emergencies in line with the European standards.

The [PROCULTHER-NET](#) project has organised the “Protecting Cultural Heritage Course – PCH”, as part of the [capacity-building programme](#) designed to strengthen the capacities of UCPM Participating States to protect cultural heritage at risk of disasters. The course is inspired by a virtual training module launched in November 2021 by its predecessor [PROCULTHER](#), based on the UCPM training Programme and built on the document [Key elements of a European methodology to address the protection of cultural heritage during emergencies](#), developed thanks to the experiences pooled by the project Partners and stakeholders active in the field of cultural heritage protection at risk who participated in the activities organised by this pioneer project.

The PCH was intended to enhance knowledge, skills, and procedures for the creation of UCPM-driven modules or teams dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage at European level, as well as to reinforce resilience capacities at national level. Building on the main assumption of PROCULTHER-NET, that it is imperative for the two different communities to work in synergy, the course was addressed to disaster risk managers and cultural heritage experts. At the same time, in order to encourage the widest possible participation by the 35 States of the UCPM and meet the training quality standards, it was proposed in two editions, the first one held from 6 to 10 March, the second one from 20 to 24 March. Thanks to this approach, 70% of the Countries participating in the Mechanism<sup>1</sup> signed up for the initiative: sixty selected professionals made up the interdisciplinary group of trainees that allowed for a proactive debate on the inclusion of cultural heritage in risk management processes, an issue that is bound to feed and strengthen the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network- UCPKN.

<sup>1</sup> Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden (some Countries participated in both editions).



CH Participants by sector

A few numbers may help to frame the skills represented in the two editions: 40% were cultural heritage experts, 38% disaster risk managers and the remaining 22% had a background covering both sectors. Indeed, the excellent cooperation by the UCPM States National Training Coordinators during the selection of candidates, ensured an excellent balance of represented expertise: experts in civil protection and disaster risk management, members of the armed forces, archaeologists, professional firefighters, structural engineers, architects, restorers, archivists and researchers from the world of disaster risk management and cultural heritage.

As a result, the Knowledge Network could now count on a further expanded community of experts, coming from the Ministries and institutions joined together in this activity: National Institute for Cultural Heritage (**Albania**); Armed Forces and Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research, Regional fire brigade association of Salzburg (**Austria**); Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage - IRPA (**Belgium**); Commission to preserve national monuments (**Bosnia - Herzegovina**); DG Fire Safety and Civil Protection- Ministry of Interior and National Association of Voluntary Units for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief (**Bulgaria**); Ministry of Interior- Civil Protection Directorate and Ministry of Culture (**Croatia**); Ministry of Transport, Department of Antiquities (**Cyprus**); Civil Security Application School-ESACS, *Direction Générale de la Sécurité Civile et de la Gestion de Crises* - Ministry of Interior and Paris Firefighters Brigade- Ministry of Interior (**France**); German Archaeological Institute-DAI and Federal Agency for Technical Relief-THW (**Germany**); Ministry of Culture and Sports and General Secretariat for Civil Protection (**Greece**); National Directorate for Disaster Management (**Hungary**); Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (**Ireland**); Carabinieri-Command for the protection of cultural heritage, Ministry of Culture, Toscana Region Civil Protection, Red Cross-Siena Committee, Department of Fire Fighters, Public Rescue and Civil Defence-Ministry of Interior, University of Florence (**Italy**); Ministry of Culture and State Fire and Rescue Service (**Latvia**); Civil Protection Department (**Malta**); Cultural Emergency Response-CER, Ministry of Defence and Cultural Heritage Agency - Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences (**Netherlands**); National Headquarters of the State Fire Service and Art Education Centre (**Poland**); National Authority for Emergencies and Civil Protection, Lisbon Professional Fire Department and General Directorate for Cultural Heritage (**Portugal**); Department for emergency Situations and National Institute of Heritage (Romania); National Museum (**Serbia**); Department of Monument Protection (**Slovakia**); Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Restoration Centre of Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage - Kranj Regional Office and Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief (**Slovenia**); Regional Government of Andalusia, Regional Government of Castilla y León, Valencian Institute of Conservation, Restoration and Research (**Spain**); Swedish Contingencies Agency - MSB, National Heritage Board, ICOM Sweden/Västra Götaland Region and National Library (**Sweden**). In addition, among the trainees was also a participant from the Resident Coordinator's Office of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund in Chad, representing the humanitarian world.

In addition to the dedicated sessions, all lectures were presented taking into consideration the Mechanism's concept, approach and framework with a focus on cultural heritage protection at risk of disaster. This is indeed the most relevant added-value of this training initiative, since it clarified the UCPM role and opportunities in this field, for the participants to familiarise with this structure in which different expertise can merge so as to strengthen the resilience capacities of our community.

The training programme dealt with the following thematic issues:

- CIVIL PROTECTION AND CULTURAL HERITAGE: INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK
- INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS: PHASES OF THE ACTIVATION PRACTICAL ISSUES
- OPERATIONAL ISSUES ON THE FIELD
- SECURING CULTURAL HERITAGE (IMMOVABLE, MOVABLE AND INTANGIBLE)
- EXERCISE AND EVALUATION

A team of thirty lecturers and trainers have made up the core group engaged in sharing new key information to increase the dialogue among experts working in the field of disaster risk management, and to improve the technical and operational capacities needed to reinforce UCPM capacities to support, upon request, countries overwhelmed by disasters specifically in the field of cultural heritage protection.

On 3 March, experts from the project Consortium and stakeholder institutions opened the intensive programme with the online session aimed to introduce participants to disaster risk management concepts related to the protection of cultural heritage, to provide them with the main international and European legal and institutional frameworks, as well as key actors and structures of international coordination with a special focus on the UCPM, i.e., the framework within which they will be called upon to work together in the event of a crisis.

After this introductory phase, the International School of Higher Education - SIAF located in Volterra (Pisa, Italy) hosted the in-presence days that dealt with more "operational" themes: from the preparation of the experts forming the mixed teams during interventions carried out in the field, from recovery and safety techniques to measures for safeguarding immovable, movable and intangible cultural heritage. In addition, the technical workshops organised back-to-back to the theoretical sessions provided an opportunity to share and test the damage assessment forms proposed by the PROCULTHER Methodology.

Both training editions started with team building and cultural awareness raising sessions needed to establish an environment conducive to the development of the spirit necessary for the training weeks to run effectually. Indeed, from day the participants were divided in four teams whose members began to interact and think as an interdisciplinary group combining the skills and expertise of both the disaster risk management and cultural sectors needed to protect heritage at risk.

The floor was then given to experts from the project's Consortium Partners, International organisations and trainers that guided the participants in the path towards the effective inclusion of cultural heritage protection in disaster risk management processes while on mission. The lectures covered themes such as international deployment inside and outside

Europe, the personal and team preparation aspects, including safety and security, logistics and information management, and how to deal with the media in course of action. In addition, the different typologies of missions that might potentially require UCPM deployments were presented: response missions, advisory mission and Post Disaster Needs Assessment.

After the presentations dedicated to the UCPM and the different deployment typologies, the training concentrated on the part dedicated to cultural heritage protection. These sessions dealt with the identification and management of temporary storage and warehouses where movable cultural heritage can be secured in the event of disaster, as well as the techniques for the triage of cultural heritage debris. A specific session focused on the concept of “Cultural Heritage Module”, including the composition and mandate of the specialised team that project partner countries proposed within the European Civil Protection Pool currently under approval for its embedding in the capacities available at the UCPM.

The following days addressed issues related to the techniques and measures for securing cultural heritage and delved into the 7 damage assessment forms (baseline data and site identification, building profile, damage assessment of immovable cultural heritage, of movable cultural heritage, securing movable cultural heritage, transfer of movable cultural heritage and damage assessment of intangible cultural heritage) issued by PROCULTHER, the PROCULTHER-NET digital application created to automate and facilitate the data collection and sharing process, as well as the international new trends and available providers of geospatial data and services focusing on cultural heritage.



*Technical workshops for assessing damage on movable cultural heritage © DPC*

The lectures delivered in the first days were propaedeutic to the practical activities proposed to prepare participants to the final field exercise that concluded each training edition. Course participants played the role of the cultural heritage protection module in the field exercise simulating the activation of the Mechanism by Italy after an earthquake with impacts on the cultural heritage. They learnt how to set up the teamwork according to the needs of international assistance requested by the country to overcome the crisis and how to deal with other national

and international actors that intervene during an emergency, such as the Local Emergency Management Authority - LEMA and the European Civil Protection Team. Furthermore, with the precious support of expert trainers, they measured themselves with the seven damage assessment forms during technical workshops and outdoor activities which helped them to practice collecting the necessary data, enter it properly in the system and establish the first actions needed for securing the immovable heritage and rescuing and recovering the movable heritage affected.

Each training week ended with a final exercise with a cultural heritage scenario organised to test the effectiveness of the activity and gather the participants' insights and contributions, in terms of best practices and lessons learnt, aimed at further improvement of the Methodology, the living document providing a set of elements to advance preparedness and response activities to include cultural heritage protection in all disaster risk management processes.



*Briefing before the outdoor practical activities © DPC*

Thanks to the availability and excellent collaboration of the local authorities and the Superintendency of Volterra, this beautiful town hosted the exercise scenario planned by the group of architects, engineers and risk management experts from the Civil Protection Department, in collaboration with the Project Management Consortium.

In the first edition, Ms Pia Sopta, observer from the European Commission's Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture - DG EAC, intervened to underline the high level of attention with which the EU government is following the issue and shared the role and contribution of this DG in the initiatives and actions that the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 foresees in the risk management field for safeguarding cultural heritage in crises. In addition, she confirmed that the European Commission acknowledges the great opportunity offered by this training that gathered experts usually working on the opposite sites and declared: *"risk management and cultural heritage are complex fields that require cooperation and support of expertise from a wide range of domains [...]. What came up from the discussions during this past week is that the resilience and the well-being of our communities [...] is not just safeguarding our cultural heritage and European identity but also to provide hope to people in the event of disaster"*.

It is worth mentioning that in both training editions, the Turkish partner Disaster and Emergency Management Authority - AFAD was available to connect virtually with the classroom to share facts and figures from the devastating earthquake that affected Türkiye and Syria on last 6 February, including the actions undertaken by the UCPM to support their huge efforts in managing this emergency.

The reaction to the evaluation questionnaires proposed to record the impressions of the trainees on each training day, indicates that, overall, the course objectives were achieved. Despite the fact that the overwhelming majority expressed satisfaction for the contents and the implementation modality of the training, their sector of origin and professional background influenced their judgement on the topic addressed by each lecture; in any case, it is worth noting that experts from both sectors appreciated also the quality of the sessions more related to their field of expertise and, in some cases, acknowledged the added value of exchanging thoughts and insights with the experts from different backgrounds.

The proactive participation and commitment of the participants in this initiative, including the final exercise and the overall rating given to the training module, will reflect on a strong motivation to be ambassadors, both at national and international level, of the importance of including cultural heritage protection in disaster risk management processes.



*Teams securing cultural heritage during the field exercise © DPC*

In addition to the strong points of this activity, the feedback collected pointed out also the possibilities for improvement, e.g., the massive use of acronyms at European and international level and the difficulty to memorize them for those who are not yet confident with the topic addressed by the lessons; and suggested many areas for enhancement, for instance the organisation of more practical activities (i.e., technical workshops, interactive sessions and field exercises). Finally, the participants' comments provided inputs for improving the damage assessment forms that will be useful to achieve the definition of European minimum standards on tools to record and assess in a systematic way both damages and risks that can partially or irreversibly affect tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets.

In general, enthusiastic participation and strong appreciation on the final exercise (an average of over 80% rated the activity positively in both editions) were expressed by cultural heritage

experts for whom this was often their first experience as well as by disaster risk managers that for the first time were involved in an exercise with a focus on cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the training succeeded in laying the foundation for an effective exchange between all experts involved for the definition of synergies aimed at strengthening the thematic community focused on the protection of disaster-prone cultural heritage within the Knowledge Network.

In conclusion, the course will enable further discussions on the issue, thus fostering greater resilience of our communities and possibly provide the replicable basis for the sustainability of participatory know-how transfer activities strongly advocated by the Knowledge Network, just like the UCPM training programme, the civil protection expert exchange programme and civil protection exercises.

The PROCULTHER-NET Consortium wishes to extend its deep gratitude to the European Commission's Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations- DG ECHO, UNESCO and the Project stakeholder institutions for the indispensable cooperation in the design and enhancement of this capacity building initiative, and overall, for having made available their experts that shared their competences during its implementation.

The PROCULTHER-NET thematic community is open to new members that are eager to contribute with their knowledge and skills to the efforts of the UCPM to include cultural heritage protection in the disaster risk management process in order to sustainably increase the resilience of our society.

Would you like to learn more about this initiative? Check out the links below to access the course reference material and follow us on socials, the video footage of the training including insightful interviews with participants and project stakeholders will be shared soon!

[Training Programme Concept Note](#)

[Book of trainers both editions](#)

[Trained experts both editions](#)

[Photo Gallery of the PCH](#)

# PROJECT AT STAKE

## PROCULTHER-NET's Pilot Training of Trainers for Heritage Protection

Offering know-how and knowledge to European trainers specialised in the protection of cultural heritage at risk.

On May 2023 PROCULTHER-NET and Training In Aid organised a pilot training of trainers gathering both disaster risk managers and cultural heritage experts from the Project Partner Countries aimed at enhancing their training capacities and promoting knowledge transfer practices among the Union Civil Protection Mechanism States within the Knowledge Network.



*Trainers group*

Being aware of the importance of the training pillar for the consolidation of knowledge transfer processes, the PROCULTHER-NET Consortium Partners and stakeholder institutions decided to invest in a capacity building programme aimed at building a workforce of trainers and facilitators able to design, customize, deliver and evaluate a series of learning programmes for local, national and international target audiences.

The ratio behind this initiative is the [Protecting Cultural Heritage Course- PCH](#) organised by the project in March 2023. This advanced training module brought together, for the first time, experts from both the disaster management and cultural heritage protection sectors with the objective of exchanging knowledge-building on key topics of concern, as well as to reinforce the adoption of standards to guide disaster risk management operations in a coordinated and sustainable way. Evaluations of this course indicate that it was successful in providing a training delivery model for further dissemination of important knowledge, skills and strategies for both sectors through interdisciplinary training programmes.

This PROCULTHER-NET pilot online Training of Trainers that took place over two half day blocks on 9 and 10 May 2023 was the necessary reaction of this emerging need, to support and complement the efforts made to strengthen the Union Civil Protection Mechanism capacities in the cultural heritage protection field encouraged by the Knowledge Network. Indeed, this virtual workshop was conceived for those subject matter experts already experienced in trainings or likely to be involved in the future and willing to enhance their knowledge thanks to the improvement of their training skills.

The 22 participants represented a well-versed range of roles and topical interests from the national and local disaster risk management authorities and cultural heritage protection institutions of the project Consortium Partners and stakeholder institutions: 41% of participants belonged to the disaster risk management field, 45% came from the cultural heritage world while 11% had interdisciplinary expertise.

As a preparatory activity, the workshop organisers asked the participants to share elements to identify their most common training needs and expectation, allowing the team to shape an agenda that was customized for the group as a whole. With the breakout sessions that allowed for group work, facilitated discussions and peer-to-peer exchanges, this Training of Trainers provided an opportunity for fellow training personnel to become familiar with each other, thereby forming an important bridge to working effectively as a team on future training initiatives.

Overall, this was considered a highly useful opportunity to join together members of the nascent PROCULTHER-NET trainer pool and provide a networking opportunity to further consolidate it.

Finally, the proactive cooperation of workshop participants allowed to gather some suggestions for their further development as members of the PROCULTHER-NET trainer pool and indicate a priority pathway for future training actions in this field.

# FOCUS ON TÜRKIYE

## Further progress for heritage protection in Türkiye after the seism of 2023

**Lessons learnt from the interinstitutional and interdisciplinary cooperation implemented following the devastating events that hit the Country.**

*Authors: Erkan Doğanay, Disaster and Emergency Management Expert, Mehmet Akif Alkan, Geophysical Engineer – Turkish Ministry of Interior, Disaster and Emergency Management Authority - AFAD, and Nermin Uzunali, Manager at Department of Restoration, General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums - Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism.*

The interventions undertaken by Türkiye in response to the earthquakes that hit the Country on February 2023 and the measures and initiatives implemented during the recovery phase have revealed the importance of intensifying the exchange and cooperation among all stakeholders involved in disaster management and cultural heritage protection.



*Mahremiye Mosque © MoCT 2023*

Türkiye is located in a highly seismically active region where major earthquakes have occurred throughout history. According to the Global Risk Index drawn by the United Nations to measure and rank the humanitarian crises and disaster risks of countries, Türkiye is 45<sup>th</sup> out of 191 countries in the list, being also in the “high risk” group with an index score of 5.0. Between 1900 and 2023, there were 269 earthquakes that caused loss of life or severe damage in Türkiye.

On February 6, 2023, at 04:17 and 13:24 Turkish time, two earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.7 and 7.6, respectively, occurred in Pazarcık and Elbistan districts of Kahramanmaraş. Until June, a total of 36,692 aftershocks were recorded following the main earthquake. The 62 most affected places are concentrated in 11 provinces (Hatay, Adana, Osmaniye, Malatya, Elazığ, Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep, Kilis and Şanlıurfa) where about 9 million people, about 65% of the total population, were directly hit by the earthquake: more than 48,000 people lost their lives, more than half a million buildings were damaged and communication, transport and energy infrastructures were seriously affected. As a result of the evaluation, an estimated financial loss of approximately 104 billion USD was recorded.

### Resilience and conservation of cultural heritage

These earthquakes have also had a devastating impact on the heritage of these cities, which are rich in cultural sites, streets and avenues featuring a rich cultural fabric, as they have been home to many civilisations in the past and must therefore be protected. In particular, these 11 severely affected provinces have registered cultural assets such as monumental structures, examples of civil architecture, archaeological remains and mausoleums of martyrs: there are 8,444 buildings within the immovable cultural heritage category, including 28 museums, 22 ruins, 153 libraries and 219 movie theatres affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism- MoCT.<sup>2</sup>

Damage assessment studies were carried out with a technical team of 150 people consisting of civil engineers and architects from the MoCT's General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums and General Directorate of Foundations, in cooperation with the national Disaster and Emergency Management Authority - AFAD, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, non-governmental organizations and universities. As a result of these studies, a total of 5.998 registered immovable cultural assets were classified as destroyed, heavily damaged, moderately damaged, slightly damaged or undamaged, and placed for future reference in a database that allows for recording, in addition to the level of damage, other characteristics of the areas, places and buildings assessed useful during the reconstruction phase.

In the post-earthquake phase involving the recovery of registered cultural assets, the priority was to operate together in a participatory environment with a cooperative approach. In order to coordinate the operations in the field, cooperation meetings were held under the chairmanship of the MoCT Deputy Minister that brought together experts and professionals (architects, civil engineers, art historians, archaeologists, geological engineers) coming from universities, non-governmental organizations and professional networks such as the UNESCO Türkiye National Commission, the International Council of monuments and sites - ICOMOS Türkiye, the International Council of Museums - ICOM Türkiye, International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness - ICORP Türkiye, KORDER Experts Association<sup>3</sup>, Cultural Heritage Preservation Association, Chambers of Engineers and Architects Union, Chamber of Civil Engineers, etc.

Following the meetings aimed at sharing the results of damage assessments carried out in the earthquake-affected areas, holistic recovery programs and an action plan for revitalizing all settlements with their old spirit and preserving the memory of the city were implemented.

Fortunately, the assessments carried out didn't report significant damage in the museums where large and important art-works are located, such as Hatay Archeology, Şanlıurfa Edessa Archaeology and Haleplibahçe Mosaic Museum and Gaziantep Zeugma Museum, which have been in service for the last 10 years. On the contrary, partial damage occurred in the museums in the cities of Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Adıyaman and Malatya, among those mostly affected by the seism. It is worth noting that the Adıyaman Museum, although a rather old building, was only slightly damaged.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Türkiye Earthquakes Recovery and Reconstruction Assessment <https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Turkiye-Recovery-and-Reconstruction-Assessment.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> KORDER Experts Association <http://korder.org/index.php/english/>



*Disaster Excavation Departments works © MoCT 2023*

The first damage assessment carried out in the region's museum directorates, reported severe damage to a total of 90 cultural heritage assets. However, there is no item in the "unique" category among the damaged artifacts. Damage assessment studies continue for the artifacts exhibited and preserved in the Hatay Museum Directorate's collection. Although no significant damage to the ruins was reported, two sites listed in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage were affected: heavy damage was registered in the conservation and landscape heritage area of Malatya Arslantepe Mound, and some falling stones partly damaged parts of the 5,000-year-old Diyarbakır Walls.

In the aftermath of the earthquakes, urgent measures were undertaken in all the affected sites, as foreseen by the Emergency Action Plan drafted immediately after the earthquake in cooperation with AFAD and the MoCT, in accordance with and in support of the Province Risk Reduction Plans of 2020<sup>4</sup> that identifies the actions to be undertaken to reduce losses, and helps to identify the stakeholders that shall be involved in.

Security and rescue personnel were assigned to the affected areas and museums, and protection and rescue efforts were initiated rapidly. In addition, damage assessments and excavations in archaeological sites were carried out with AFAD, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, non-governmental organizations and universities under the coordination of the MoCT: a total of 210 experts from 11 provinces participated in these operations.

In order to react to the emergency and adequately intervene for the protection of the cultural heritage in the provinces damaged by the earthquake, first of all, it was necessary to identify and mark each structure to distinguish the registered ones from the non-registered ones, then necessary safety measures were adopted, and finally, response and protection operations were carried out.

For the smooth implementation of rescue interventions, Disaster Excavation Departments were established. During such interventions the original architectural pieces were separated from the debris of the registered immovable cultural assets and transferred from the museums and from the excavation sites to the warehouses, after the completion of inventory records. In addition,

<sup>4</sup> Available in Turkish only <https://kahramanmaras.afad.gov.tr/kurumlar/kahramanmaras.afad/e-kutuphane/IL-PLANLARI/KAHRAMANMARAS%CC%A7-IL-AFET-RISK-AZALTMA-PLANI2022.pdf>

during the operations of separating, sorting, documenting and cleaning of the movable cultural assets and the original architectural parts that have become rubble, scientific methods have been applied to ensure that these works of art can be relocated later on to their sites of origin after their reconstruction and/or restoration.



*Panels indicating registered cultural heritage that cannot be removed without permission © MoCT 2023*

In parallel, the works for the establishment of the Directorate of Surveying and Monuments and the Restoration and Conservation Regional Laboratory in Hatay started and are still ongoing in order to carry out restoration and conservation interventions of the artefacts damaged by the earthquake.

A “Cultural Heritage Scientific Advisory Board” was also established, composed by professionals and expert academicians, whose mandate is to define the criteria for reconstruction and restoration in urban archaeological areas where monumental and civil architecture examples are intertwined.

Finally, in order to support the recovery phase, it was necessary to improve the legislative framework establishing the provisions for the protection, securing and restoration of buildings damaged by the earthquakes, most of which privately owned. To this end, the 2015 Regulation on Providing Assistance to Immovable Cultural Properties<sup>5</sup> by MoCT has been updated to broaden the scope of projects for the restoration and protection of registered immovable cultural properties and the implementation of aids in disaster-stricken regions. Indeed, this Regulation allows non-refundable cash assistance for the preparation of projects and applications for such initiatives implemented on immovable cultural heritage privately owned since 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Available in Turkish only <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2015/05/20150527-4.htm>

### Conclusion

Earthquakes are among the most important natural risks faced by cultural heritage, since the loss and damage they cause threaten their integrity, value and originality. Especially in recent years, the intensification of disasters whose impact is exacerbated by the effects of climate change, the protection of cultural heritage has become an increasingly important area of cooperation.

In conclusion, the works carried out in Türkiye following the earthquakes will contribute to the literature for the inclusion of cultural heritage protection in all disaster risk management processes and planning. The measures and initiative undertaken by the Country have shown the importance of intensifying the exchange and cooperation among all stakeholders involved in disaster management and cultural heritage protection, in order to make a comprehensive resource planning and to create detailed cooperation plans for cultural heritage areas before, during and after the disaster. In addition, social inclusion, awareness raising and proactive participation of the local communities are of key importance for an adequate and sustainable implementation of the actions within the recovery phase.

# ACTING FOR THE PROTECTION OF CH

## The new challenges of heritage protection: the Chantilly symposium

In April 2023, all stakeholders met to take stock of the added value of interdisciplinary collaboration for cultural heritage protection in France.

*Authors: Col. Philippe Moineaux, Head of the FNSPF/Renault Funds Committee for Cultural Heritage, and Marie Courselaud, in charge of preventive conservation, Research and Restoration Centre of the Museums of France - C2RMF and President of the French Blue Shield - BbF*



Chantilly Symposium - Main entrance © SDIS60 - A.DHELLY

Four years after the Notre-Dame fire, the Château de Chantilly hosted an international symposium that shared lessons learnt and progress made so far in the protection of cultural heritage buildings in France through coherent approaches and the inter-institutional and coordinated response of all actors involved.

On 15 April 2019, a spectacular fire ravaged the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris for the world to see, taking with it a part of French history and a jewel of humanity's cultural heritage. Although a large part of the building and the main liturgical objects were preserved, two questions remain: "Could the fire have been avoided?" and "Were the cultural assets properly protected and safeguarded?"

In order to answer these two questions, the *Fédération Nationale des Sapeurs-Pompiers de France* (FNSPF) and the Renault Foundation, joined shortly afterwards by the World Monuments Fund (WMF), initiated, at the beginning of 2020, a global approach aimed at improving fire safety and the protection of cultural property in French heritage buildings. The international symposium organised on 13 and 14 April 2023 at the Château de Chantilly and at the Fire Department 60 in France was, in fact, the culmination of the work carried out by all those involved in heritage protection.

This symposium was devoted to presenting an international overview of disasters, in particular through statistics (identifying the main causes and the operational difficulties encountered in the course of more than 500 fires), as well as addressing the legislative aspects of heritage protection, looking in depth at prevention and forecasting applied to buildings in the event of a disaster, and reflecting on new protection and intervention techniques, in particular thanks to the feedback generated by the two cathedral fires.

As far as law is concerned, the following two questions initiated the reflection: what legal reference framework should be used? What is the relevance of applying regulations drawn up in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to a building constructed five centuries earlier? On these two questions, the speakers suggested favouring a "case by case" approach based on a performance-based approach founded on a risk analysis, by imagining scenarios and well-defined safety objectives

(such as reducing the risk of damage to valuable liturgical objects kept in the sacristy). The question that emerged was: Should a safety programme be drawn up before the design and implementation phases?

In terms of prevention and forecasting, a half-day session devoted to the protection of cultural and heritage assets was an opportunity to recall the interest and need of widely deploying cultural asset protection plans (PSBCs) to all cultural institutions. The round table devoted to this issue proved the dual function of the PSBCs: a tool for the emergency services (which will only intervene during large-scale disasters) but also a decision-making and organisational support for the disaster-stricken establishments (water damage for example). The improvement of PSBCs also involves their dematerialisation, thus facilitating the operational response of emergency services.

The leitmotiv of this half-day event was that the drafting of PSBCs implies the collaborative participation of the emergency services and cultural players, particularly during exercises prepared and organised on a cross-cutting basis. These exercises allow establishments to familiarise themselves with crisis management, the fire brigade to carry out manoeuvres in heritage buildings and Blue Shield France to ensure links with all the players (associations, institutions, emergency services, etc.). This coordinated activity has enabled the taking into account of PSBCs to progress steadily in less than five years for the museums of France (35% in 2023 compared to 17% in 2018) while emphasising the need for continued support by the State services.

Finally, the presentations of the fire at the cathedrals of Notre-Dame in Paris and Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul in Nantes by, respectively, the chief architect in charge of its reconstruction and the curator of historic monuments, as well as a fire brigade officer and the curator of heritage, showed the interest in pursuing studies and research on new analysis and protection tools: tarpaulins and automatic water extinguishing devices.

This Chantilly conference, which also integrated projects with a European dimension such as [PROCULTHER](#) or Cultural HERitagE Risks and Securing activities- [CHEERS](#), brought together 580 people in situ per day and was followed by over 10,000 people on social networks. It represents, without a doubt, a landmark event in the history of cultural heritage protection in France. More than a conclusion of the work initiated in 2020, it marks the beginning of a new dynamic partnership joining all cultural heritage protection actors in order to avoid new fires in the future and to safeguard the cultural assets as effectively as possible.



*R. Kimmel presents PROCULTHER-NET @SDIS60-  
A.DHELLY*

[Symposium webpage with access to video recordings of the Symposium](#)

# ACTING FOR THE PROTECTION OF CH

## Protecting cultural heritage from forest fires risk in Castilla y León

**Advances in regional regulations for the prevention and extinction of forest fires in Castilla y León: the inclusion of cultural heritage protection.**

*Author: Cristina Escudero, Coordinator of the Unit for Risk Management and Emergencies in Cultural Heritage (UGRECYL) in the Junta Castilla y León and PROCULTHER-NET Focal Point*

Forest fires have disastrous consequences for the cultural heritage of the affected area, yet its protection is not usually contemplated in the planning of these emergencies, as reflected in Spanish Forest Fire legislation. In Castilla y León, the increase in their incidence and impact has led to the revision and updating of these plans, which now include the adoption of measures to safeguard them.

### Introduction

In Spanish forest fire regulations, a forest fire is defined as a fire that spreads uncontrolled through forest land, affecting vegetation that was not intended to burn; but beyond affecting the environment, it is clear that it can also affect people and property, among which, of course, also cultural heritage.

Every forest fire is a critical event that can destroy or irreversibly damage our heritage, since natural environments have evolved thanks to human action.



*Forest fire in the Sierra de la Culebra in Zamora 2022, 29.670 hectares burnt. Numerous cultural heritage was affected, such as this example of ethnographic heritage: destruction of a traditional building used to keep livestock in winter © UGRECYL*

This evolution can still be seen and understood through the numerous material and immaterial testimonies present in the forest conservation area and which make up the local memory, history and culture.

Recent examples such as the Moais of Rapa Nui in Chile<sup>6</sup>, the Joseon temple in Korea<sup>7</sup> or the rock art in Bolivia<sup>8</sup>. They show that while a fire in a forest environment destroys our cultural assets, as does an earthquake, flood or other unforeseen disasters; their protection is not usually included in the planning and regulations against this type of emergency.

<sup>6</sup><https://www.dw.com/en/easter-island-wildfire-chars-famous-moai-statues/a-63368187>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20230411000731>

<sup>8</sup><https://news.artnet.com/art-world/wildfires-bolivian-rock-art-1642012>

Important European reference documents, developed as proposals for dealing with risks and disasters, do not include cultural heritage in addressing the risk of forest fires, as can be found in the *Recommendations for National Risk Assessment for Disaster Risk Management in the EU*.<sup>9</sup>

In this document, cultural heritage is cited as a value to be protected against the risk of floods (pages 72-80) or earthquakes (pages 122-136) and is present in both risk assessments and management plans. However, in the chapter on forest fires there is not a single reference to heritage. We assume it will be included in the section on “assets exposed to forest fires”.

Encouragingly, the authors point out that some aspects need to be improved, “*such as the proper estimation of the socio-economic value of assets that may be exposed to wildfires (...) and the recovery period after fires. This information is often not available and has to be estimated through indirect data sets*”.

Why should cultural heritage be present and explicitly mentioned on the same level as natural heritage? Because we can hardly protect what is not mentioned, because what is not mentioned does not exist.

### Forest fire and cultural heritage regulations in Spain: an overview



The “Peña Valdemera” fort (8<sup>th</sup> Century BC) affected by the 2022 fire in the Sierra de la Culebra (Zamora) © Román Rodríguez Calleja

In Spain, the coordination of state and regional strategies against forest fires is carried out through regulatory and management instruments. Of particular note is the Basic Guideline on the risk of forest fires - which establishes the criteria and content of planning for this type of emergency at state and autonomous community level (*Royal Decree 893/2013, 21 November*<sup>10</sup>). The special civil protection plans of the Autonomous Communities for response to emergencies arising from this risk are also basic. The Autonomous Communities have all the competences regarding forest fire extinction in their territory.

The basic guideline only mentions historical-artistic heritage as a vulnerable element; and as such, it has been included in the different plans, both the state and autonomous community

<sup>9</sup><https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC114650>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2013-12823>

ones. It can be seen that the oldest plans only mention it, while the most recent ones, as the importance and transcendence of cultural heritage has been recognised, develop the concept or the actions to be improved and further carried out, such as the *Civil Protection Plan for Forest Fire Emergencies of the Principality of Asturias (INFOPA)*.<sup>11</sup>

### The case of Castilla y León

*The Emergency Civil Protection Plan for Forest Fires in Castilla y León (INFOCAL)*<sup>12</sup> drawn up in 1999 describes, verbatim, the provisions of the basic regulations, limiting itself to the mention of historical-artistic heritage.



UGRECYL Coordinator during on-site inspections © UGRECYL

The situation experienced in 2022<sup>13</sup> (disastrous for Spain in terms of forest fires) had catastrophic consequences in Castilla y León. Regretting, above all, the loss of human lives to which must be added the loss of homes, crop fields, traditional operation based on the exploitation of the natural environment (beekeeping, mushroom picking, hunting and fishing) and, of course, damage to cultural heritage.

This exceptional situation led to the approval by the Spanish Government of *Royal Decree-Law 15/2022 of 1 August*<sup>14</sup>, adopting urgent measures on forest fires, which brought with it a chain of regulations and decree-laws to bring operations up to date with the problems detected. Such as *DECREE-LAW 2/2023, of 13 April, on Urgent Measures for the Prevention and Extinction of Forest Fires in Castilla y León*.<sup>15</sup>

This decree, a step prior to the updating of the Plan (*INFOCAL*), among other novelties, incorporates an extensive chapter on heritage: 4.7. VULNERABILITY OF ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE (pages 87-89), developed in collaboration with the Directorate General for Cultural Heritage and the Cultural Heritage Risk and Emergency Management Unit (UGRECYL).

Section 4.7 establishes the importance of the community's cultural heritage and the categories of protection: World Heritage; Assets of Cultural Interest and Inventoried Heritage.

<sup>11</sup>[http://www.112asturias.es/v\\_portal/apartados/apartado.asp?te=65](http://www.112asturias.es/v_portal/apartados/apartado.asp?te=65)

<sup>12</sup><https://medioambiente.jcyl.es/web/es/medio-natural/infocal.html>

<sup>13</sup><https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC133215>

[https://www.wwf.es/nuestro\\_trabajo/bosques/incendios\\_forestales\\_/los\\_peores\\_incendios\\_forestales\\_en\\_espana](https://www.wwf.es/nuestro_trabajo/bosques/incendios_forestales_/los_peores_incendios_forestales_en_espana)

<https://www.proteccioncivil.es/documents/20121/0/Informe%20de%20Seguimiento%20de%20IIFF%202021009.pdf/b1434972-fe01-dd63-2e91-b920e31dde05>

<sup>14</sup><https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2013-12823>

<sup>15</sup><https://bocyl.jcyl.es/boletines/2023/04/17/pdf/BOCYL-D-17042023-1.pdf>

Among the aforementioned assets, those classified as "highly vulnerable" are those which, in the event of a forest fire, would significantly lose the values that motivated their classification/protection. Adopting some measures to safeguard them, such as:

- Addressing the creation and integration in the emergency management systems of geodatabases of high priority Assets of Cultural Interest.
- Addressing the definition of specific preventive measures, analysing the existence and characteristics of self-protection plans and advising the competent body on risks and ways to reduce them.
- Establish an operational protocol to deal with emergencies that may affect these assets.

This decree is undoubtedly an important step, as it gives visibility to cultural heritage and begins to define some of the requirements to be taken into account in prevention and extinction operations.

### **Conclusions**

The development of a pan-European approach to the risk and problems of forest fires must consider cultural heritage and promote its protection among the Member States, encouraging its inclusion in the sector's regulations.

These are fundamental aspects if we want to guarantee the survival of our cultural wealth; acknowledging that it can be an economic resource for the recovery of areas affected by forest fires and that it reinforces social cohesion and the feeling of belonging; contributing to heal the consequences on people and communities affected by this type of events.

Addressing natural and cultural heritage together in the face of wildfire risks contributes to the development of more resilient communities in harmony with their physical environment.

# BUILDING THE PROCULTHER-NET COMMUNITY

## PROCULTHER-NET reaching beyond EU borders: a visit to Switzerland

The French PROCULTHER-NET partners met with Swiss experts involved in cultural protection to improve mutual knowledge and cooperation in this field.

*Author: Romain Kimmel, Foreign Policy Officer at French Ministry of Interior – DGSCGC and PROCULTHER-NET Focal Point*

On March 22, 2023, a joint delegation from the French Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of the Armed Forces visited Geneva to learn from the experience of the Department of Culture and Digital Transition and the Fire and Rescue Service in Switzerland, share their respective approaches and find common methodologies for the protection of cultural heritage at risk.



*Participants in the bilateral meeting © Ville de Genève*

### ***How does Switzerland protect its cultural heritage?***

The purpose of the mission was for France and Switzerland to share good practices, actions, tools and measures undertaken to protect cultural heritage in the event of an emergency, as well as to verify possible synergies with the initiatives promoted by the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, such as the PROCULTHER-NET project.

French experts were introduced to the Swiss legal corpus, namely the federal laws on the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict, disaster or emergency of 1966<sup>16</sup> and 2015<sup>17</sup>, and the cultural heritage protection strategy (2009), designed to promote synergies between the administrations involved. In addition, they were introduced to the main actors belonging to the related institutional framework set up for this purpose in Switzerland, such as the Federal Commission for the Protection of Cultural Property (FCPCP), and the Protection of Cultural Assets Committee (PBC), a well-structured body responsible for risk mapping, rescue plan, prioritization of works, training, exercises, acquisition of equipment that contributes to the strengthening of the prevention, preparedness and response capacities of this Country.

Moreover, French delegates learnt more on the missions of the Confederation and the Federal Office for Civil Protection (FSVO), i.e., advising authorities, compiling inventories, managing

<sup>16</sup> *Loi fédérale du 6 octobre 1966 sur la protection des biens culturels en cas de conflit armé*  
[https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/1968/1025\\_1065\\_981/fr](https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/1968/1025_1065_981/fr)

<sup>17</sup> *Loi fédérale du 20 juin 2014 sur la protection des biens culturels en cas de conflit armé, de catastrophe ou de situation d'urgence (LPBC)* <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2014/615/fr>

geographical information, coordinating protection requests, training personnel, and discovered the tasks carried out by cantons and municipalities, mainly drafting art-work inventory lists, preparation of security documents, training of personnel, evacuation of movable cultural heritage and provision of shelters for securing it.



R. Kimmel presenting the project @Ville de Genève

Furthermore, the hosts shared lessons learnt and feedback from previous disasters that hit the Country, such as the Grand Théâtre fire (1951), Palais Electoral fire (1964), Victoria Hall fire (1984), Palais Wilson fire (1987), former *Ecole de Chimie* library fire (2008). With regard to the tools in support of the response actions, Swiss experts presented the integrated device for recording and tracking objects in extraordinary situations (*Dispositif Intégré d'Enregistrement et de Suivi des Objets Sinistrés - DIOSOS*) - developed by the Haute École Arc in Neuchâtel - which aims to define a frame of reference for object rescue processes and the development of an application to facilitate the related operations in the field.

The information exchanged during the visit was supplemented by an update on the actions carried out by the Foundation “International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas” (ALIPH)<sup>18</sup> created in 2017 with a financial contribution of 100 million dollars from an initiative by France and the United Arab States whose headquarters are hosted by the City of Geneva.

Finally, all parties have agreed to keep in touch in order to foster the synergies created by this exchange and, more broadly, to enhance the fruitful cooperation that exists between both countries. More recently, the collaboration and exchange have intensified further, so much so that on 22 June 2023 Mr. Romain Kimmel, Foreign Policy Officer at French Ministry of Interior - DGSCGC and PROCULTHER-NET Focal Point, was invited to present the project and to contribute to the debate on how to protect cultural property in crisis situations and across political borders at the annual meeting of the Swiss Society for the Protection of Cultural Heritage - SSPBC (*Société Suisse pour la Protection des Biens Culturels*).

[Federal Office for Civil Protection – Cultural Heritage Protection](#)  
[Swiss Society for the Protection of Cultural Heritage](#)

<sup>18</sup> ALIPH Foundation is an international cooperation initiative designed to meet the challenge of protecting cultural heritage in conflict and post-conflict areas. As a result of the widespread destruction of monuments, museums and heritage sites in conflict areas, the President-Director of the Louvre Museum Jean-Luc Martinez published in November 2015, at the request of the President of the French Republic, *Fifty proposals to protect the cultural heritage of humanity*. These included the creation of an international fund to protect heritage in situations of armed conflict. On the initiative of France and the United Arab Emirates, this idea became a reality after the international conference on heritage in danger held in Abu Dhabi in December 2016, with the creation of ALIPH in March 2017. Since then, the initiative has taken a number of other countries and private partners on board. More <https://www.aliph-foundation.org/en>

# BUILDING THE PROCULTHER-NET COMMUNITY

## SHELTER Project: the Scientific Community for sustainable heritage protection

Feedback from the participation of PROCULTHER-NET to the SHELTER Project Final Conference hosted by the UNESCO Regional Bureau in Europe on April 2023.

The UNESCO Regional Bureau in Europe, with the consortium partners TECNALIA and ALPHA, convened the final conference of SHELTER, a Horizon 2020 EU-funded project bringing closer scientific community and heritage managers for increasing resilience, reducing vulnerability and promoting safer reconstruction in historic areas. PROCULTHER-NET was invited to discuss the next steps and future collaboration in this field.



*Shelter Group Photo © UNESCO Venice Office*

The Sustainable Historic Environments holistic reconstruction through Technological Enhancement and community-based Resilience -SHELTER Final Conference hosted by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Venice) on 27 April 2023, brought together 130 professionals across sectors and from more than 20 countries: consortium partners, international organisations, authorities, local and national governments, practitioners, experts and stakeholders in the sectors of disaster risk and water management, civil protection, natural and cultural heritage protection.

The event showcased the outcomes, results and key learnings of 4 years of activities and was structured around lectures and roundtable discussions allowing reflections on the future of the tools produced, and on possible partnerships and collaborations. Afterwards, the event delved into the lessons learnt and replicability of the experience developed within the open laboratories realised by the project in the World Heritage sites of the Area of Santa Croce in Ravenna (Italy); the coastal district of Seferihisar (Türkiye); the old town of Dordrecht and its island (Netherlands); the Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés Natural Park in Galicia (Spain) and the transboundary Sava River Basin (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia).

Ms Veronica Piacentini, PROCULTHER-NET project expert from the Italian Civil Protection Department, presented the project's approach and objectives and took part in the open laboratories, a valuable opportunity to test the tools set up in the framework of SHELTER. This participation allowed the sharing of many innovative ideas to be explored thanks to the synergies created with PROCULTHER-NET and helped to consolidate the partnership with UNESCO, one of the project main stakeholders, including the initiatives supported in its framework. Indeed, these prototype tools developed by the SHELTER scientific community can contribute to strengthening the capacities of the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism and can be further enhanced if pooled with the thematic community focused on cultural heritage protection, strongly supported by the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network.

[SHELTER Project website](#)

# BUILDING THE PROCULTHER-NET COMMUNITY

## Digital damage assessment of cultural heritage

The PROCULTHER application for the survey of digital data for the assessment of damage to cultural heritage introduced at ESRI Italia Conference 2023.

Author: Pierluigi Cara, GIS Senior Analyst, Italian Civil Protection Department- DPC



Pierluigi Cara sharing the Methodology

From 10 to 11 May, Rome hosted the Esri Italia Conference, an event that gathered more than 2000 specialists on Geographic Information System-GIS technologies. This year, the conference dedicated a session to “New tools for the valorisation of cultural heritage”, during which the GIS expert from PROCULTHER-NET team introduced its app for collecting cultural heritage data from the field.

The Esri Italia Conference is an unmissable event in Italy for experts and professionals, as well as users and providers who wish to share the state-of-the-art technologies and best practices in the industry, discover new geospatial solutions and learn about the most innovative trends in GIS field.

The thematic session on “New Tools for the Enhancement of Cultural Heritage”, proposed among the “User Case & Best Practice”, allowed to share PROCULTHER-NET’s digital instruments for the collection of digital data on the field for the assessment of damage to cultural heritage. In this framework, Pierluigi Cara, GIS Senior Analyst and member of the DPC group of experts supporting PROCULTHER-NET implementation, presented the automated version of the templates for the assessment of damage on cultural heritage in case of disaster based on ArcGIS Survey 123 app. The templates used were those shared by PROCULTHER in the [Key elements of a European methodology to address the protection of cultural heritage during emergencies](#), copies of which were also distributed in the room, as well as other information material on the ongoing project PROCULTHER-NET.

All session participants highly appreciated the main features of this application: the ease in performing the task of field data collection, the speed and safety in storing and sharing collected data, the automatic production of customized reports and the availability of the form’s interfaces, accessible in addition to English, in all languages of the project partners, i.e., French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turkish. Finally, all the geo-referenced data can be viewed in a dashboard available on the Web which summarizes the main data insights. The app was also successfully tested during the [Protecting Cultural Heritage Course- PCH](#), the first European interdisciplinary training course entirely dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage at risk that PROCULTHER-NET organized in two sessions with around 60 participants from 24 countries in March 2023.

[ESRI Conference - Session material \(in Italian\)](#)

[PROCULTHER App Presentation from 1'25" to 12'35" \(in Italian\)](#)

## Climate change threats to cultural heritage under the magnifying glass

**PROCULTHER-NET contribution to a multiplier event on climate change and its impacts on cultural heritage and security organised on May in Brussels.**



*Event banner. Source: event webpage*

On 12 May, the event “CLIMATE CHANGE: Threats to Cultural Heritage and Security” organised by the University for Continuing Education Krems together with the Italian Institute of Atmospheric Sciences and Climate (CNR-ISAC), allowed PROCULTHER-NET to share the project proposal for a specialised capacity on cultural heritage at risk within the Mechanism.

This conference, hosted by the European Association of Development Agencies, presented the outcomes of the Cultural Heritage Protection in Climate Change online project (CHePiCC online), an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership that focuses on many aspects related to the protection of cultural heritage, such as education and training. In addition, it provided a space for raising awareness on the importance of enhancing European cultural heritage and landscape protection in climate change, tools for vulnerability and impact assessment, preparedness measures, risk mitigation and management. Roundtables on topics such as training and capacity building, the opportunities offered by the European Cooperation, namely by the Union Civil Protection Mechanism - UCPM, as well as impact and vulnerability assessments prompted the reflection on possible progress to be made in these areas.

A last panel of discussion dealt with risk mitigation and management and allowed Ms Veronica Piacentini, PROCULTHER-NET expert from the Italian Civil Protection Department, to introduce the audience to the UCPM main features and to the composition, mandate and main requirements of the specialised capacity focused on cultural heritage protection that project partner countries have proposed for its embedding in the Mechanism.

Participation in a valuable exchange of thoughts on these topics confirmed that the growing impact of climate-related hazards is requiring greater attention and engagement of the PROCULTHER-NET Partners and stakeholders to contribute to the efforts to identify and exchange innovative practices and measures for the protection of cultural heritage facing these threats, also with the involvement of the scientific and academic sector, also through the strengthening of knowledge transfer and interdisciplinary exchange of expertise between disaster risk managers and cultural heritage experts in this field.

[Event website](#)

# BUILDING THE PROCULTHER-NET COMMUNITY

## B+CARE: the regional hub for cultural emergency response in the Balkans

The German Archaeological Institute introduces KulturGutRetter and PROCULTHER-NET at the regional conference B+CARE: Balkan Cultural Aid Response for Emergencies.

Author: Constance Domenech de Cellès, Research Associate, German Archaeological Institute - DAI



Conference launch: E. Mamani, Head of CHwB Albania; P. Burcher, Head of Development Cooperation of the Embassy of Sweden in Albania; S. Letschert, Director of CER © C. Domenech de Cellès

On 20 June 2023 a regional conference held in Tirana brought together experts from the Western Balkans, Europe, Lebanon, Central America and the Caribbean to highlight the importance of interdisciplinary and transborder cooperation for enhancing cultural heritage protection at risk.

The event “B+CARE: Balkan Cultural Aid Response for Emergencies”, a first of its kind, has been co-organised by Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) [Albania](#), [Bosnia & Herzegovina](#) and [Kosovo](#), and by [Cultural Emergency Response \(CER\)](#).

The [German Archaeological Institute](#) - DAI had the honour of being invited to the conference to present the project [KulturGutRetter](#) (KGR), which is being developed with the [Federal Agency for Technical Relief](#) - THW and the [Leibniz Center for Archaeology](#) - LEIZA. Several aspects of this “Cultural Heritage Response Unit”, including the integrated team structure between cultural heritage and civil protection professionals, the mobile emergency lab<sup>19</sup> and the ID-Cards for movable heritage<sup>20</sup>, were very well received by the audience as important steps towards better preparedness and response for the protection of cultural heritage. The DAI also participated in a panel discussion on “the importance of collaboration and coordination of cultural heritage and emergency response experts”, alongside with experts from [International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property](#) - ICCROM, International Council of Monuments and Sites - ICOMOS, Museum Kosovo, the Museum Centre in Hordaland - MUHO and the Civil Emergency Response Agency in Albania.

Moreover, the conference provided the opportunity to present best practices coming from the [PROCULTHER-NET](#) project, reaching out to a wider European and national audience and thus strengthening the thematic community. During the panel discussion, the close collaboration between the civil protection and the cultural heritage sectors – that is being promoted by the

<sup>19</sup> See the article “KulturGutRetter (KGR): technical characteristics of a cultural heritage response unit” in the [Technical Bulletin #1](#), March 2023.

<sup>20</sup> See the article “Data acquisition and data management for the emergency rescue of cultural heritage” in the [Technical Bulletin #2](#), June 2023.

PROCULTHER-NET Consortium in all its activities – was highlighted as a model to follow: starting at the prevention and preparedness phases, both at the national and European levels.



*C. Domenech de Cellès, Research Associate, DAI, at the B+CARE Conference*

The valuable resources published by PROCULTHER-NET were also brought to the attention of the audience, especially the Technical Bulletins, which [2<sup>nd</sup> issue](#) just recently released (June 2023). The two Consortium partners that were present at the conference, the DAI and ICCROM, had the pleasure to see that the “[Key elements for a European methodology to address the protection of cultural heritage during emergencies](#)”, published by the previous project [PROCULTHER](#), was referred to by several participants, showing that this important document is being widely adopted by the heritage community throughout Europe and beyond.

The B+CARE conference saw the launch of four new translations of the [ICCROM “First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis” Handbook](#) and [Toolkit](#) in the languages of the Balkans, realised with the support of CER and CHwB. Making these important resources available to a larger range of experts by breaking down language barriers and by agreeing on new common national terminologies is a major step toward the establishment of cultural heritage protection in crisis management.

Through their diversity and complementarity, the speakers of this content-rich conference converged towards a common take-away message: the importance of local and regional collaboration, between the cultural heritage and the civil protection sector, but also across borders and between countries that share challenges and objectives. Building common tools, processes and network is the only way to enhance the proficiency and the efficiency of the cross-sectoral experts that will be called upon to intervene for the protection of cultural heritage.

# PROCULTHER-NET CONSORTIUM



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## PROCULTHER-NET

Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Civil Protection Department  
via Ulpiano, 11  
00193 Rome (Italy)

[proculther-net@protezionecivile.it](mailto:proculther-net@protezionecivile.it)

<https://civil-protection-knowledge-network.europa.eu/projects/proculther-net>

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