

The Heritage Conservation & Protection Training Centre, LCF Byblos- HCPTC

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Pursuant to the signed MOU (November 14, 2018) between LAU- Louis Cardahi Foundation and the World Association for the Protection of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage in times of armed conflicts – WATCH. LAU Louis Cardahi Foundation (LCF), has established a Heritage Conservation and Protection Training Centre within the premises of LCF in Byblos. The center seeks to affiliate with the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA), and the Delegation of the European Union in Lebanon, and other international bodies and individual experts that may contribute on relevant subjects to be included within the centre's curricula and syllabus for setting of good practice in the application of the UNESCO Guidelines for the implementation of the 1999 Second Protocol to the Hague Convention. The Second Protocol contains provisions for the development of measures for Risk Preparedness Planning (RPP) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) aimed to protect natural and cultural heritage both in times of peace and conflict with several issues that would need to be addressed in any training initiative focusing on cultural heritage conservation and Protection.

Training curricula activities would cover but would not be limited to the following areas:

1. Urban Geography and Natural / Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) based Master plans, Zoning, Land use Plans and Regional planning
2. Documentation of Archaeological sites, Historical Monuments, and all other declinations of tangible and intangible heritage that are hosted in Museums, Archives, Galleries
3. Identification of risk factors and evaluation assessment of various types of threats to people (operators/visitors) and heritage sites
4. Development of interdisciplinary monitoring and rapid assessment systems for the evaluation of damage produced to natural and cultural heritage by all types of catastrophic events(e.g. weathering and other natural and anthropogenic factors)
5. GIS as one of the tools for documentation
6. Use of 3D imaging in Heritage at Risk assessment as well as Monitoring and Evaluation of state of conservation
7. Study and formulation of a conservation and/or effective operational natural and cultural heritage management plans
8. Development of Early Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) & Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)
9. Economics and estimates of cost effectiveness of RPP and DRR policies implementation for the protection of Cultural Heritage at risk
10. International cooperation and, National Inter-agency Coordination Platform for the sustainable development and efficient implementation of progressive RPP and DRR measures for the heritage protection under extreme conditions.

The creation of the new centre in Byblos represents a unique opportunity to develop a program where the protection of natural and cultural heritage is properly addressed. This will contribute to enabling the concerned parties in Lebanon to set proper measures that would permit abiding with the country's commitment toward the concrete implementation of all the UNESCO Heritage related Conventions, Protocols and Guidelines, especially the policies initiated in 2015.

Background

In 2009, the CIUDAD Program for Cooperation in Urban Development and Dialogue, (EuropeAid/127778/C/ACT/MULTI) launched a call for proposals within the framework of the ENPI East and ENPI South instrument of the European Union.

In reaction, the 'War Free World Heritage Listed Cities' project proposal was formulated and submitted in a partnership led by the Council of the United Municipalities of Byblos (Lebanon), joined by the Head of the Board of the City of Mtskheta (Georgia), and the World Association for the protection of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage in times of armed conflicts (WATCH) as Partners, and with the 'Friends of Cultural Heritage' (FOCUH, Turkey) and the 'Network for Advanced Conservation' (NEREA, Italy) as Associate partners. The project was one of those selected to receive a grant for a 30 months duration that was later extended to last 46 months and to end with the successful achievement of all the set objectives.

The project was coordinated by WATCH together with its partners and have contributed to develop a strategy to meet the required conditions for both, Byblos and Mtskheta World Heritage sites' in order to obtain the status of Enhanced Protection by abiding with the criteria set within the Guidelines for the Implementation of the 1999 Second Protocol to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Properties in times of armed conflicts (first draft circulated in 2008) <http://www.warfreeheritage.net/>.

Lebanon was one of the first countries, who signed in 1954 Hague Convention and its First Additional Protocol, which entered into force, on August 07, 1956. However, though the Second Protocol was published in 1999 and entered into force on March 09, 2004, Lebanon did not join it as Signing State Party.

In addition to the Enhanced Protection which the ratification (or adhesion) of the 1999 Protocol provides enables, the project focused on urban planning and on the development of the cities listed as International patrimony. The concerned cities benefits, in addition to that, of Urban plans, which facilitate and consolidates civil military cooperation (CMC) at both the local and the international level.

The project is the first practical one in the World, to carry out the clauses of the Second protocol of 1954 convention, rendering Lebanon the first amongst its peers, as it used to always be, whereas to implementing international conventions, and a model to be followed in such field, which nowadays is acquiring a great deal of importance, to incite belligerent countries, to spare the sites figuring on the World Heritage list, preventing them from undergoing the wars scourge and the impacts of terrorism, and riots striking the Whole humanity and making it bow under the yoke of outrageous losses.

Adhering to the 1999 Second Protocol of the Convention, constitutes a tangible contribution to protection of the cultural patrimony and safeguard it for humanity. The successful conclusion of such contribution or partnership shall constitute a familiarity and encouragement, for the competent authorities within the States, subject to litigations and terrorist acts, to proceed with similar initiatives, aiming to protect man unique Cultural International patrimony.

Outcome of the WFWHLC project

As a result, The War Free World Heritage Listed Cities project started its operations in March 2010 with a grant from the European Union within the framework of the CIUDAD program.

Beneficiaries of the project were local authorities, including civil society organizations, NGOs, professional associations, Economic actors and enterprises, etc. in Italy, Lebanon and Georgia.

The partnership between the Council of the United Municipalities of Byblos, Lebanon, the Municipality of Mtskheta (Georgia) and WATCH, along with their associates, FOCUH (Friends of Cultural Heritage - Turkey), and NEREA (Network Restauro Avanzato - Italy) was created to implement the project for Byblos and Mtskheta World Heritage Listed sites which are considered to be a priority for their intrinsic cultural values and for their important contribution to the improvement of the socio-economic conditions - especially for the local populations.

Thanks to the support received from local, national and international civil and military institutions, agencies, professional associations, civil society organizations and individual experts, from UNESCO, ICCROM, International Institute for Humanitarian Law IIHL, Austrian Army , ICOMOS ICORP, a wealth of information and documentation has been collected and or produced about Byblos and Mtskheta world heritage sites and the urban contexts where they are located.

A matrix of reference was developed according to the Guidelines for the implementation of the 1999 Second Protocol to the Hague Convention in order to ascertain that any additional evidence or inputs needed to satisfy the requirements for Enhanced Protection have been included. These incorporated mainly:

- Risk preparedness plans for two WHL cities.
- Draft dossier for the Enhanced Protection of two WHL cities.
- Widespread promotion of awareness about the risks pending on the two WHL cities.
- Promotion of Risk mitigation policies.
- Set a good practice for the application of the Guidelines.



Thanks also to WATCH follow-up during two additional years in support to the concerned Georgian institutions, a Dossier for the nomination of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta to the status of Enhanced Protection has been officially submitted by the Georgian Government to the approval by the UNESCO Committee for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in times of armed conflicts. The Dossier has been approved in December 2016 and the World Heritage Sites of Mtskheta were registered within the List of Heritage under Enhanced Protection which is the highest level of protection granted by international law for natural and cultural heritage.

It is now our hope that Byblos will be granted the same status as soon as Lebanon ratifies the 1999 Additional Protocol to the Hague Convention protocol, at the hands of the Ministry of Culture. In the hope that Lebanon would ratify the UNESCO 1999 Second Protocol to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

Within this framework, by becoming a full State Party in the Second Protocol, Lebanon will undertake a commitment to build up proper juridical and administrative measures to develop a national policy aimed to secure natural and cultural heritage from any type of hazards to prevent the effects produced by the most extreme events starting from but not limited to earthquake, fire, floods, social unrest and conflicts. A policy that requires building-up progressive CMC models with the involvement of civil society organisations to permit the development of a roadmap for the implementation of proper Risk Preparedness Plans and Disaster Risk Reduction and Response measures for the protection of cultural and natural heritage. The ratification of the Second Protocol would lead to further measures that Lebanon would benefit from, when necessary both in times of peace or conflict.

The path to create the necessary conditions for a realistic and concrete framework for the implementation of the Second Protocol, requires the development of an institutional capacity to harmonise procedures and interact with different stakeholders by creating a shared platform that would gradually and methodically enable the concerned state agencies, local authorities, professional(ised) non governmental and civil society organisations, universities and research centres, etc. to pro-actively cooperate based on agreed upon protocols of intervention that satisfy the requirements stipulated within the Hague Convention, its two additional Protocols and international humanitarian law at large.

WATCH

Since several years, the Department of Antiquities of Lebanon has established contacts with the World Association for the Protection of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage in times of armed conflict (WATCH), an international no-profit organisation based in Rome (Italy) which is the only specialised international Civil Society Organization CSO fully committed to the implementation of the Hague Convention with a bottom-up approach gathering well reputed international experts from several disciplines and sectors who are an expression of the responsible civil society engaged in the protection of natural and cultural heritage from all types of threats.

During the last fifteen years WATCH developed an effective methodology for the development of comprehensive inter-agency cooperation strategies for the protection of cultural heritage based on the UNESCO 'Guidelines for the implementation of the Second Protocol of the 1954 Hague Convention for the protection of Cultural Properties during times of armed conflicts' through a multidisciplinary and inter-sectoral approach. A methodology that is each time tailored on the specific situation found on the interested territory that is based on a urban and regional planning approach which focuses on cultural heritage risk management as a key factor of Good Governance at the territorial scale, taking into account a wide range of sources of threat.

WATCH has tested the approach in several countries threatened by natural and/or anthropogenic hazards, including conflict, gaining a unique experience and a track record of positive achievements which the Association can replicate in support to any other State Party of the Hague Convention in other regions coherently with its statutes. This especially based on art. 20 of UN Resolution 2347 (2017) Adopted by the Security Council at its 7907th meeting, on 24 March 2017 calling 'upon UNESCO, UNODC, INTERPOL, WCO and other relevant international organizations, as appropriate and within their existing mandates, to assist Member States in their efforts to prevent and counter destruction and looting of and trafficking in cultural property in all forms.



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RPP: Risk Preparedness Planning

UNESCO : The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

WATCH: World Association for the Protection of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

WCO: The World Customs Organization

WFWHLC and or WHL: War Free World Heritage Listed Cities