

International Council on Archives

ICA and its Participation In the Blue Shield network



ICA

David Leitch
Secretary General, ICA

Sevilla, 3 November 2009



ICA

What is ICA?

ICA is the international body that represents archives and archivists on the world stage. It is the global voice of archive institutions and professionals.

What is ICA's Message?

Effective archives management underpins:-

- Transparency, good governance and democratic accountability
- Preservation of the memory of societies and nations
- Access to information for research and protection of rights





ICA

ICA-Key Facts

- Founded as an international NGO at UNESCO on 9 June 1948
- Today it has over 1,400 members, institutions and individuals
- Its members are based in 195 countries and territories
- A worldwide network of volunteers
- Funded largely by membership dues
- Run from a secretariat in Paris comprising six staff

ICA-Achievements

- Provides a forum for professional discussion across political divides
- Develops standards, tools and training materials
- Runs a publications programme
- Has a powerful brand, based on its global network
- Organizes major Congresses every four years – next one is Brisbane 2012



ICA

Strategic Objectives - 1

1. To persuade decision-makers and the public that archives management really matters
2. To influence the development and use of new technologies
3. To increase capacity in the archives profession through training



Strategic Objectives-2

4. To strengthen the ICA network and to increase membership through improved services
5. To improve ICA's performance, accountability and effectiveness
6. To build on existing partnerships and create new ones, so that ICA has more influence and access to greater resources



What is the Blue Shield?

The symbol specified in 1954 Hague Convention for marking cultural property and to give them protection for attack during armed conflict



International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS)

- International Council on Archives (ICA)
- International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)
- International Council on Museums (ICOM)
- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
- Coordinating Council on Audiovisual Archive Associations (CCAAA) – 2005



Vision for Blue Shield

- The Blue Shield symbol should become for cultural property protection what the Red Cross is for humanitarian protection
- *In short, the Blue Shield should become the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross*



ICBS Objectives

- To facilitate responses to threats or emergencies relating to cultural property
- To encourage safeguarding and respect for cultural property
- To train experts to prevent, control and recover from disasters
- To co-operate with UNESCO, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)



What ICBS Does

- Collects and shares information about threats to cultural property worldwide
- Raises the awareness of decision-makers about these threats
- Promotes the development of measures for disaster prevention, preparedness and recovery
- Encourages and approves the creation of Blue Shield national committees
- Lobbies at UNESCO so that the Hague Convention is effectively implemented



The Hague Convention (1954)

- Major post-war international treaty protecting cultural property
- 'Cultural property' covers both movable and immovable items
- Also includes premises for the housing of movable cultural property, such as museums, libraries and archives
- Centres containing monuments, historic sites or archaeological zones are covered too



Hague Convention – 2nd Protocol (1999)

- ‘Enhanced Protection’ for cultural property of especially great importance
- Clearer restrictions on when ‘imperative military necessity’ can justify attacks on cultural property
- Extension of ability to prosecute those who breach the Convention
- Inter-governmental Committees of States set up to monitor implementation of the Convention
- ICBS, together with ICRC and ICCROM, has been given a specific advisory role to the Committee



Creation of National Blue Shield Committees -1

- National representatives of all the partner organisations agree to respect the following principles:-
- Should carry out *joint actions* to increase effectiveness and to avoid duplication of effort
- Should respect *independence* of other members



Creation of National Blue Shield Committees – 2

- Should remain *neutral*, avoiding political controversy
- Should uphold the *highest professional standards*
- Must *respect* the diversity of cultural identity
- Must always work on a *not-for-profit* basis



The Blue Shield Network Today

- About 35 national committees either in operation or under construction
- Recent creations in Israel, Senegal United States, Indonesia and Australia
- Now under umbrella of the new Association of National Blue Shield Committees (ANCBS) – The Hague (December 2008)
- ANCBS has an office in The Hague, which co-ordinates missions and gives practical advice to national committees



Advantages of National Blue Shield Committees

- Organise co-operation when there are threats to cultural property in general
- Pool resources and share expertise
- Develop communications with civilian administrators and military officers
- Lobby national governments to adopt The Hague Convention
- Part of a growing international network based on solidarity which can provide support across national boundaries



ICA's commitment

- Will continue to collaborate with partners in ICBS
- Has funded ANCBS to train archivists in how to handle paper materials in emergencies
- Will develop a comprehensive Emergency Response Management Programme, covering prevention, preparedness and recovery
- Will promote the storage of copies of vital records in other secure locations



Threats of Globalisation

- **Increase in population** – 9.5 billion on the planet by 2050, an increase of 3 billion
- **Global warming and climate change** – the planet's average temperature will increase by two degrees by 2050
- **Shortage of natural resources** – it will be necessary to double agricultural production by 2050 to feed the increased population ; every year the African desert increases by an area the size of Belgium



Results of Globalisation and Climate Change

- Increasing fluctuations of temperature and more natural disasters
- Widespread conflicts over food, water and resources

Conclusion

There is a greater need than ever before for a Blue Shield network, based on professional solidarity, because the threats to cultural property may well increase in the first half of the 21st century.



ICA's Position

ICA strongly advocates the establishment of Blue Shield national committees as the most effective of increasing protection for archives and other cultural property threatened by natural catastrophes, man-made disasters and armed conflicts. Flourishing national committees are the foundation of the Blue Shield network.



Contact Details

leitch@ica.org

Tel: + 33 (0)1 40 27 63 49

International Council on Archives
60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois
75003 PARIS
France

<http://www.ica.org>

