



**08.04.2009**

## **STATEMENT BY THE ICBS ON THE EARTHQUAKE IN THE ABRUZZO**

The International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) expresses its sorrow and solidarity with the Italian people for the loss of lives and the destruction caused by the earthquake, and its continuing aftershocks, which took place on Monday 6 April in the Abruzzo region in Italy.

L'Aquila, the regional capital of the Abruzzo region and epicenter of the quake, was founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and constitutes one of the most important urban ensembles dating from the Middle-Ages in Italy. Its devastated historic center contains many Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque, and Renaissance buildings, as well as important museums, archives and libraries. Its surrounding villages also contain many architectural treasures.

Whilst the highest priorities must be accorded to minimising the loss of life and to the humanitarian activities intended to re-establish decent living conditions for the thousands of people whose homes and means of subsistence have been wrecked by this natural disaster, the International Committee of the Blue Shield, founded in 1996 'to work to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by wars and natural disasters', places the expertise and networks of its member organisations at the disposal of their Italian colleagues and the Italian authorities to support their work in assessing the damage to the cultural heritage of Aquila and the surrounding region, including libraries, archives, museums and monuments and sites, and subsequent recovery, restoration and repair measures.

ICBS also calls on the international community to give the fullest possible support to the efforts, official and voluntary, underway to rescue this rich and unique heritage.

Fully aware of the great internal resources of Italy when it comes to heritage and heritage recovery, the member organisations of the ICBS are currently liaising with Italian colleagues and members, to obtain further information on both the situation of professional colleagues in the area and on the possible needs and type of help required, so as to mobilize our networks accordingly. A more complete report on damages, needs and actions will be published subsequently, so as to facilitate coordination.

On behalf of the Blue Shield Organization,

Julien Anfruns,

President  
International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS)

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**For more information please contact the Blue Shield Office**

The Blue Shield is the protective emblem of the *1954 Hague Convention* which is the basic international treaty formulating rules to protect cultural heritage during armed conflicts. The Blue Shield network consists of organizations dealing with museums, archives, audiovisual supports, libraries, as well as monuments and sites.

The International Committee of the Blue Shield, founded in 1996, comprises representatives of the five Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in this field:

- the International Council on Archives ([www.ica.org](http://www.ica.org)),
- the International Council of Museums ([www.icom.museum](http://www.icom.museum)),
- the International Council on Monuments and Sites ([www.icomos.org](http://www.icomos.org)), and
- the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions ([www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org))
- the Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations ([www.ccaaa.org](http://www.ccaaa.org))

National Blue Shield Committees have been founded in a number of countries. *The Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS)*, recently founded in December 2008, will coordinate and strengthen international efforts to protect cultural property at risk of destruction in armed conflicts or natural disasters. The ANCBS has its headquarters in The Hague.

Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS)

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