



A project Co-funded by
the European Union

The content of this communication is the
sole responsibility of the Contractor and
can in no way be taken to reflect the views
of the European Union



PRESS RELEASE

Mtskheta and Tbilisi, 24-25.03.2011

The Municipality of Mtskheta (Georgia), in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia will host a Focus Group on March the 25th within the framework of War Free World Heritage Listed Cities, a project co-financed by the European Commission EuropeAid as a part of the ENPI programme CIUDAD.

A thirty months initiative designed within a partnership between the Municipality of Mtskheta (Georgia), the Council of the United Municipalities of Jbail (Lebanon) and the World Association for the Protection of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage WATCH (Italy), in association with the Friends of Cultural Heritage Society FOCUH (Turkey) & the Network per il Restauro Avanzato NEREA (Italy) the project focuses on urban and regional planning for cities that are registered in the World Heritage List and located in critical areas being exposed to the threats of conflict. Risk Preparedness Plans and Risk Mitigation measures will be defined for the cities of Byblos in Lebanon and Mtskheta in Georgia to abide with the Guidelines issued in 2009 by UNESCO for the implementation of the Second Protocol of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Properties in times of armed conflicts.

The Focus group is part of a number of initiatives promoted to identify and involve in the project the most relevant stakeholders and target groups in Georgia from which a core multidisciplinary national experts' group will be selected to participate to the initiative and to cooperate within a team to be created to maintain and upgrade the necessary security measures under the umbrella of the Convention. In fact, during its thirty months of duration, the project will develop a strategy to create the required conditions for both Byblos and Mtskheta to candidate for an enhanced protection status at UNESCO. A new approach to urban planning and good governance that takes into consideration the worse case scenarios for Heritage sites when local authorities, urban planners and the concerned institutions design the city of the future.

The project is coordinated by WATCH and it gained institutional support and backstopping by several international organizations including UNESCO, ICCROM and the International Institute for Humanitarian Law (IIHL) among others. An high level international Advisory Board was created that incorporates internationally accredited Civil and Military experts and will concretely support the project implementation in the two countries through Civil Military Cooperation (CMC) schemes.

In addition to the Focus group, meetings and consultations with representatives from relevant local, national and international authorities and organisations from both civil and military sectors will also take place on the occasion of this event to promote awareness, coordination and the most appropriate involvement of and support by the major stakeholders present in the country.

These especially in preparation of concept studies ground operations' and public awareness promotion initiatives that are due to be carried out both in Mtskheta and Byblos within the project framework to secure a widespread public awareness on the very challenging aspects connected to the protection of World Heritage sites.





A project Co-funded by
the European Union

The content of this communication is the
sole responsibility of the Contractor and
can in no way be taken to reflect the views
of the European Union



The first of its kind, War Free World Heritage Listed Cities represents a challenge and a concrete contribution within the international arena by proposing an international participatory approach for the protection of the cultural patrimony of humanity. The successful conclusion of the project will inspire and encourage other concerned authorities worldwide to undertake similar initiatives for the protection of the unique human cultural heritage that they host.

The Focus group will be held on 25th of March in Mtskheta. Representatives of the State agencies including the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation). The Georgian Orthodox Church and international organizations', agencies and missions will participate to this activity including also ICOMOS (Georgia), ICOM (Georgia).

Venue: Mtskheta Palace, 10.00 -13.00

