On 2 November 2021, the international community celebrates the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, the important legal instrument that has brought the importance of humanity’s submerged legacy to international attention, taking a considerable step further the principles sketched out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Italy played a significant role in the birth of this Convention, not only by its active role in its drafting, but also by its contribution to the development of modern underwater archaeology in the second half of the twentieth century.

The 20th anniversary of the Convention provides thus an opportunity to make an initial assessment of the effectiveness of its application, also looking at the example of Italy and taking into consideration the limits and challenges States face at the moment of the launch of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). The Conference will thus in particular debate the role of underwater cultural heritage for the sustainable development of the ocean and the important place culture and heritage should play in the Decade.

The year 2021 also marks the start of the next phase in the life of the 2001 Convention thanks to the start of the first multi-lateral cooperation process for the protection of an underwater cultural heritage area in international waters, the Skerki Bank in the Strait of Sicily, through the initiative of Italy. This bank is emblematic for its rich heritage, which has preserved a place of memory of the Mediterranean history for centuries, from Roman times to the present day.

The Conference will focus on the 2001 Convention and will allow participants to debate challenges and perspectives for the future of safeguarding and presenting submerged heritage. Speakers will be internationally recognized scientific experts from organizations and institutions involved in significant initiatives with regards to underwater cultural heritage.

The Conference is addressed both to the technical staff of the Bodies involved, as well as to a wider audience of experts and stakeholders (Universities, Museums, Local Administrations, Maritime Authorities).

The Conference is organized by the Ministry of Culture and it is supported by the UNESCO Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.
Programme

Institutional greetings

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM

DARIO FRANCESCHINI, Minister of Culture of the Italian Republic

ERNESTO OTTONE RAMIREZ, Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO

CECILIA PICCIONI, Deputy Director General/Principal Director for Promotion of Italian Language and Culture

CARLO ZAGHI, Director General for the Sea and the Coasts, Ministry of Ecological Transition

FRANCESCO IAVAZZO, Navy General Staff, Chief 7º Off. Inter-ministerial relations

ELIA DEL CARMEN GUERRA JURADO, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Panama to UNESCO

MASSIMO RICCARDO, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Italy to UNESCO – MAECI

Introduction

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Presentation of the documentary

The underwater heritage. A legacy to the world

MiC - Rai Cultura

Morning Programme

10 AM – 1 PM

Moderator

DONATELLA BIANCHI, RAI journalist, host of Linea Blu, President of the Cinque Terre National Park

Speakers

MARIASSUNTA PECI, Director of Service II - UNESCO Office of the Ministry of Culture

Introduction to the Conference

LAZARE ELOUNDOU ASSOMO, UNESCO, Secretary of the 2001 Convention

20 years of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage
Sunken memories
The protection of the underwater cultural heritage

BARBARA DAVIDDE, Chairperson of the STAB 2001 Convention, National Superintendent for Underwater Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture, Italy
The future of underwater archaeological research in Italy

ARNAUD SCHAUMASSE, Director of DRASSM, Ministry of Culture, France
Submerged cultural heritage and current challenges for its protection

MARTIJN MANDERS, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, Head, Maritime Programme
Current and future projects in the Netherlands

MLADEN Pešić, Director, International Center for Underwater Archaeology, Zadar, Croatia
Research, protection, and presentation of underwater cultural heritage in the eastern Adriatic

BILL JEFFERY, University of Guam
The Yapese aech: an Underwater Cultural Heritage combining Living Heritage and Traditional Ecological Knowledge

ANDREW VIDUKA, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment Australian Government
Australia’s regional engagement in underwater cultural heritage

DAMIN WANG, National Cultural Heritage Administration, NCHA, China
Current and future projects of Chinese underwater archaeology

Q & A

Evening session

2:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Moderator
TULLIO SCOVAZZI, University of Milano Bicocca

Speakers
MOUSSA WELE, University of Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal
Sea Routes of Africa and the Island of Goree

CELIO TIANE, Director of Heritage, Ministry of Culture, Mozambique
Building a regional underwater heritage centre in Mozambique Island

EMAD KHALIL, UNESCO Chair, University of Alexandria, Egypt
Underwater Cultural Heritage in the Arab Region: development and scope

PEDRO MORALES, Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit, Dominican Republic
The promises of underwater cultural heritage protection for the Dominican Republic

MARIA HELENA BARBA MEINECKE, National Institute of Anthropology and History, Mexico
The Tren Maya research and underwater cultural heritage route projects in Mexico

KATARINA DELLAPORTA, Ministry of Culture, Greece
Greece and the access to submerged heritage

ALESSANDRO ASTA, Ministry of Culture, Italy
The Skerki Banks – The birth of the UNESCO international cooperation process

ATHENA TRAKADAS, ODHN, Denmark
The UN Ocean Decade and Underwater Cultural Heritage

VALERIA LI VIGNI, Superintendent of the Sea, Sicily Region, Italy
The Superintendence of the Sea and the submerged archaeological parks of Sicily

Q & A
**Closing speech**

**LAZARE ELOUNDOU ASSOMO**, UNESCO, Secretary of the 2001 Convention

**Final institutional greetings**

**LUCIA BORGONZONI**, Ministry of Culture, Under-Secretary of State

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**Technical information**

The Conference is organised by the Ministry of Culture

(General Secretariat – II Service, UNESCO Office and DG-ABAP - National Superintendency for Underwater Cultural Heritage), in cooperation with the UNESCO Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage

The event will be held online.

Simultaneous translation is provided in Italian, English and French

The Conference will be broadcast on

YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter through the Ministry of Culture’s channel:

http://www.youtube.com/MiC_Italia

https://www.facebook.com/ministerodellacultura

CLAN Communication SRL provides technical organization and event communication support to II Service – UNESCO Office.

For info and contacts: 20anni_convenzione2001@clan-group.com