



## DISASTERS EXERCISE SEQUENCE TRITOLIA 18 - REPORT

26-28 May 2018, Austria

On May 26th 2018, **14 participants** met for the exercise sequence TRITOLIA18 in eastern Austria to train how to **salvage cultural property after an earthquake and to establish skills in working together with emergency units**, in this case an Urban Search and Rescue Platoon from the Austrian Armed Forces. The participants came from Austria, Croatia, Great Britain, Italy, Romania, Switzerland and the USA. Most of them are connected to cultural property protection, and all of them brought in specialised and different knowledge on how to recover and treat cultural goods.

The exercise was organised as joint event by the Danube University Krems and the 2nd CBRN-Defence Company of the Austrian Armed Forces within the framework of ProteCHt2save, as part of work package T3, which will focus on Cultural Heritage Rescue Teams and training possibilities.

The Austrian Armed Forces' training area Tritolwerk is an old ammunition factory from World War I which was only recently refunctioned as an emergency training area for rescue missions worldwide. It offers the advantage of training in a real scenario, but in a completely safe environment. For this exercise the Tritolwerk area was made into a fictitious imperial summer residence. The importance of this fictitious summer residence of Castle Tritol is to be seen in analogy to the Austrian UNESCO World Heritage Castle Schönbrunn in Vienna.

A virtual earthquake with the magnitude of **5.8 on the Richter scale** shook the eastern parts of Austria in the morning of **May 26th** - this was how the exercise started. After initial briefings on how the Austrian Armed Forces deal with such situations and how their decision making process works, **the participants were split into teams** to develop possible deployments for the Urban Search and Rescue Teams alarmed and deployed with the specific task of recovering cultural property. Meanwhile, in the fictitious scenario, **people were rescued and evacuated out of the earthquake regions**. The three teams repeatedly had to brief the commander of the CBRN-Defence command on possible deployments of the Urban Search and Rescue Platoons and finally came to the decision to **deploy the Platoon from Mautern to Castle Tritol**. This was how Day 1 and the Table Top Exercise ended.

Day 2 saw the teams deployed as Cultural Property Protection recce teams to Castle Tritol where they developed plans and strategies on how to best deal with the situation and how to deploy their Urban Search and Rescue Platoon which was due to arrive on Day 3 in the early morning hours. Of all the **different kinds of cultural property in Castle Tritol** a statue on the roof of the castle, an old bust in an underground lapidarium, a portrait and chest that were both completely buried under collapsed concrete structures, and a heavy wayside shrine with an old and very rare fresco could not be recovered by the teams themselves, but needed the heavy equipment of the Urban Search and Rescue Platoon. Valuable pieces of furniture, the astronomical and the papyrus collection, as well as other paintings from the portrait gallery, could be recovered by the Cultural Property Protection Teams themselves.



Day 2 ended with a **plan for the evacuation** on Day 3 and a lecture on how to organise the inventory on stage and how to treat recovered materials. Mrs. Cristina Colletini from the Italian Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo, part of the Lazio Crisis Response Unit, shared her experience and knowledge on how to work in an earthquake scenario, as did Major Luigi Mancuso from the Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale. Both graciously provided the exercise's link to real life scenarios like the recent earthquakes in Italy.

At 0600 hrs on Day 3 the Urban Search and Rescue Platoon tasked with the recovery of cultural property at Castle Tritol arrived and started to go through their usual procedures when arriving in an emergency area and preparing to work. This included inter alia an **assembly area for possible aftershocks**. The platoon commander was briefed by the Cultural Property Protection experts, which no longer were split into three teams, but were merged into **one competent set of experts**, prepared to take care of the sites they were allocated by their Cultural Property Protection commander Mrs. Kimberly Himmer, game designer and former US Navy Officer. **Working on multiple sites in parallel to assure a quick recovery of the cultural goods on site**, the Cultural Property Protection site managers and the military personnel delegated to the different sites managed to salvage the most important pieces of the castle collections and memorabilia of the imperial family. Amongst the objects to be recovered was the archive of the former imperial family, which was damaged by a fire that broke out during the recovery itself. The fire was soon extinguished by the firefighting squad, but the now wet archival material had to be treated - another surprise task for the participants which was handled expertly.

**The recovered goods were packed on site and transferred to the inventorying station**, professionally run by Mrs. Colletini, who made sure that all the objects could be linked to the place they were found while stored or transported to a safe place.

The Urban Search and Rescue Platoons of the Austrian Armed Forces have as their first priority the rescue of people, trapped in collapsed structures, the recovery of dead persons, animals and real values. Real values can be cultural goods for example. The objectives for the military personnel were the development of additional values for CBRN-Defence, Logistics, and Engineer Elements by generating engrossed knowledge on Cultural Property Protection and the treatment of cultural goods after a disaster, as well as learning how to integrate civilian Cultural Property Protection experts into their military structures.

For the participants of the exercise **the challenges** lay in working together with an army platoon by contributing to the decision making process, assessing the risks for mobile and immobile cultural property, working in crisis response staffs and guiding the recovery of the cultural goods in close coordination with the soldiers from the Urban Search and Rescue Platoon.

ProteCHt2save started thematic work package 3, which deals with Cultural Heritage Rescue Teams and training, ahead of schedule with the exercise sequence TRITOLIA18 and will continue developing a one-week training programme for civilian experts and emergency units for the recovery of cultural goods after natural catastrophes.