



Module 4

The Heritage - Human Security Nexus in the European Union

SCHER2

European Institutions, Financial Instruments, and Cultural Heritage

...to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. ...[human security] means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.

The United Nations Commission on Human Security



Security vs. Human Security:

Why the Distinction Matters

TRADITIONAL SECURITY

- National interest,
- Territorial integrity of the homeland,
- Border fixity & maintenance
- Regime preservation,
- Monopoly of force/power/violence
(armies, police, intelligence),
- Terrorism containment

HUMAN SECURITY (UNDP 1994)

UNDP's Seven Dimensions:

- economic security,
- food security,
- health security,
- environmental security,
- personal security (habeas corpus),
- **community security,**
- political security.

THE AXIOM

- Freedom from **fear**
- Freedom from **want**

WHY COMMUNITY SECURITY MATTERS

Explicitly encompasses threats to cultural identity, traditional practices, and community cohesion



Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1994

"Human Security" in Heritage Terms

STATE-CENTRIC SECURITY FRAME

Tends to foreground heritage as:

- **Target** — terror attacks, deliberate destruction, symbolic violence
- **Contraband** — illicit trade, money laundering, links to armed groups
- **Critical infrastructure** — museums, archives, sites that can be protected, hardened, monitored

Neither frame is "better" in the abstract.

*They have different "**logics**" and answer different questions.*

In practice the EU uses both—sometimes harmoniously, sometimes with tension.

HUMAN SECURITY FRAME

Tends to foreground heritage as:

- **Lived continuity** — belonging, identity, stability of everyday cultural life
- **Social cohesion** — trust, intergroup relations, shared civic space
- **Livelihood** — tourism economies, crafts, local employment
- **Psychosocial recovery** — mourning, memory work, rebuilding after crisis



Three Consequences of the Shift to a Human Security Focus

1. The referent object changes:

The unit of concern is not the state, but people and communities.

2. The threat model expands:

Human security is not limited to stopping violence. It includes structural and “slow-burn” systemic threats (to health, security, home stability).

3. The test of success changes:

State-security frame: territorial control, reduced attacks, border integrity. *Human security frame*: whether people can live without fear and want.

Next week (Part 2): Practicum on how "human security" becomes policy. Bring your term project example for applied analysis.



The EU's Legal and Normative Baseline

EU TREATY ANCHORS

- **Article 3 TEU + Charter Art. 22:** Respect cultural diversity; safeguard Europe's cultural heritage; respect cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity
- **Article 167 TFEU:** Explicit (limited) cultural competence—conservation and safeguarding of heritage of European significance, largely through supporting Member State action
- **Article 21 TEU (External Action):** Preserving peace, preventing conflicts, strengthening international security—heritage enters EU conflict-cycle thinking

TFEU = Treaty on the Functioning of the EU

FARO CONVENTION (2005)

Council of Europe—not EU law, but conceptually foundational (Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS 199))

- **Shifts focus from objects to people:** places are important because of the meanings and uses people attach to them
- **"Heritage communities":** groups who value specific aspects of heritage and wish to transmit them
- **Heritage rights grounded in human rights:** right to participate in cultural life (UDHR Article 27)

CAUTION: Council of Europe ≠ European Council ≠ Council of the EU



The Heritage–Security Nexus: Three Pathways

PATHWAY A

Heritage is harmed by insecurity

- **Direct:** destruction, looting, cyberattacks on collections data
- **Indirect:** community displacement, loss of custodianship, collapse of maintenance

"Heritage can be a trigger and a target in conflicts and crises" (Council 2021)

PATHWAY B

Heritage is instrumentalized within insecurity

- Polarize communities
- Legitimize territorial claims
- Stigmatize minorities
- Sacralize violence

Key reading: Christensen (2022)

PATHWAY C

Heritage supports human security

- Social cohesion
- Dialogue and recovery
- Bridge-building
- Conflict-sensitive engagement

Requires inclusive, locally anchored, conflict-sensitive governance

These pathways recur across the module. Keep them in mind.



EU Policy Architecture in Practice

*The EU operates through several policy clusters
(no single "heritage security" policy):*

1. Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods

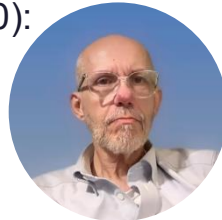
EU Action Plan (2022–2025): prevention, detection, law enforcement cooperation | Regulation 2019/880: import controls, due diligence | Directive 2014/60/EU: return of unlawfully removed objects

2. Heritage in Conflicts and Crises

Council Conclusions + Concept (2021): heritage relevant throughout conflict cycle, incl. prevention, safeguarding, recovery | Conflict-sensitive approach; warns against instrumentalization | Positions heritage as "component for peace and security" (Art. 21 TEU)

3. Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection

Union Civil Protection Mechanism: includes cultural heritage | Council Conclusions (2020): risk management as EU-level concern



The EU's Response to Ukraine: The Nexus in Practice

IMPACT

As of late 2024, UNESCO verified damage to **over 400 cultural sites**: religious sites, historic buildings, museums, monuments, libraries.

EU RESPONSE MEASURES

- May 2022: €20 million crisis response measure including heritage protection
- EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026 prioritizes safeguarding Ukrainian cultural heritage
- Expert Group on Safeguarding Cultural Heritage in Ukraine
- *Creative Europe*: €5 million for Ukrainian artists and cultural organizations

CAUTION

The conceptual distinction between human security and traditional security, while analytically useful, it's artificial and must yield to integrated practice in contemporary conflict contexts.

BOTH FRAMES WORKING IN TANDEM

Human security dimension:

- Destruction targets cultural foundations of community identity
- Museum looting reported
- "Russification" of schools in occupied territories
- Heritage destruction as tool of identity erasure

Traditional security dimension:

- Civil protection mechanisms engaged
- Law enforcement coordination
- Diplomatic instruments deployed



The Securitization of Heritage: Benefits and Risks

BENEFITS

- Elevated heritage protection on political agendas
- Mobilized resources
- Enabled integration into military and peacekeeping mandates
- Facilitated international cooperation

"Protection of cultural heritage has found its way into rhetoric relating to security politics, placing it on political agendas in unprecedented ways." — Christensen (2022)

RISKS

- Community voices marginalized in favor of security professionals
- Heritage protection instrumentalized for purposes unrelated to community wellbeing
- Cultural and social dimensions subordinated to military or law enforcement priorities
- Emergency politics, exceptional measures, symbolic battles over identity

Once heritage becomes a security issue, it can invite emergency politics, exceptional measures, and symbolic battles over identity.

Important clarification: In EU contexts, “securitization” often means bureaucratic risk-reduction governance (standards, due diligence, data infrastructures) rather than “militarization.” A human security approach serves as a corrective by insisting that the ultimate purpose of heritage protection is the flourishing of human beings and their communities.



The Readings

Christensen (2022) — "The cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security"

Explains how heritage gradually became treated as a security issue (a securitization process, not just more attention). Actors reframe heritage as urgent and exceptional, which can mobilize resources but also justify hard-edged measures, like policing and militarization. Key question: who is securitizing, for what purposes, and with what consequences?

University of Trento Project Report

Russo and Piras — "Security challenges and ethical dilemmas"

Heritage protection has moved into security and foreign-policy arenas—diplomacy, military operations, post-conflict governance. Protection is never neutral: outside involvement can be perceived as appropriation, and deciding what counts as heritage worth protecting reflects contested identity and territorial claims. Highlights tension between protecting heritage and protecting people.

Foradori — "Defending Heritage: EU efforts in protecting cultural heritage"

Assesses EU capability as a heritage-protection actor (its "actorness") through CSDP. Finds progress in policy coherence (2021 Concept frames heritage as peace catalyst across conflict cycle), but EU actorness remains limited: only EUAM Iraq has explicit heritage mandate, and even there it is narrow. Enduring expectations-capabilities gap.

Russo, Piras, and Peirola — Case studies: Bosnia, Ukraine, Nagorno-Karabakh

Bosnia: fragmented governance and local hostility undermine reconciliation promise (Aladža Mosque required police protection). Ukraine: unprecedented mobilization but narrative contestation. Nagorno-Karabakh: UNESCO mission never deployed—uneven leverage shapes ability to resist cultural erasure.



What This Means for You as SCHER Students

Build **bilingual competence**: the ability to translate and navigate the analytical space between **heritage logics** (value, meaning, authenticity, custodianship) and **security logics** (risk, threat actors, prevention, resilience, governance capacity). **A human security lens is the bridge!**

THREE ANALYTICAL HABITS TO PRACTICE

- 1. Always specify the referent object.** Are we protecting a site, a collection, a community, a livelihood system, a plural memory ecology?
- 2. Always specify the systemic risk mechanism.** Security framings can empower protection, but also legitimize exceptional measures.
- 3. Always specify the test of success.** If you say "cultural heritage promotes peace," how?





The damaged interior of the Transfiguration Cathedral in Odesa
Courtesy of Odesa Diocese

CLOSING THOUGHT

A Usable Tension: Security v. Human Security

Heritage can be both a **human security asset** and a **security flashpoint**.

The EU acknowledge both realities: heritage can promote dialogue and cohesion, and it can be instrumentalized as a trigger or target in conflicts and crises.

Our task in this module is to learn how to **analyze this usable tension**: identify the actors, the threat environment, the affected communities, the policy instruments, and the ethical constraints.



The “heritage-(human) security nexus” in play in Greenland

“...In 2014-2017, Realdania By & Byg restored and refurbished two listed historic houses built in the 18th century in **the settlement of Ilimanaq in northwestern Greenland**, to serve as a visitor center, restaurant, and shop.

The two listed buildings—the missionary and merchant Poul Egede’s house and a nearby warehouse—are, together with the construction of 15 new tourist cabins and improved infrastructure in the settlement, intended to stimulate development in the community.

The project was carried out **in cooperation with the Government of Greenland (Self-Government), the National Museum of Greenland, the then Qaasuitsup Municipality (now Avannaata Municipality), and the tourism organization World of Greenland.**

The aim is to **foster development in the area through the preservation of the unique historic houses.** The area is also on UNESCO’s World Heritage List because of its outstanding natural and cultural heritage. Realdania also supports the construction of the Icefjord Centre in Ilulissat to showcase the area’s qualities.

Realdania By & Byg’s restoration of Poul Egede’s House and the shop in Ilimanaq was awarded the **Europa Nostra Prize for Cultural Heritage 2018...**”

https://youtu.be/LZmGDJ8teX0?si=iHM4G_TJHUgSUsv

