

PCP Forum 37/2021: Revision of the PCP Inventory 2021

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Michaela Schärer: Editorial. Revision of the PCP Inventory

Dear reader,

At its meeting of October 13th, the Federal Council approved the Swiss Inventory of Cultural Property of National and Regional Importance (PCP Inventory). After 1988, 1995 and 2009, this is already the fourth edition of this Swiss Federal Inventory. It lists important cultural property in the areas of monument conservation and archaeology, together with collections in museums, archives and libraries for which measures to protect against risks caused by armed conflicts, disasters and emergency situations must be planned.

An “Inventory” transparently lists the assets of an enterprise at a particular point in time. That is precisely what the PCP Inventory does. The list provides impressive proof of the diversity of historical and cultural assets possessed by Switzerland. The local population is not alone in welcoming this fact; so too do our guests from abroad – great value for tourism is created by monuments and museums, as has often been pointed out. A monetary value can easily be placed on some works of art, such as collections of paintings, but the merit of most cultural property resides in ideas or emotions which cannot be expressed in mere numbers. In the first instance, cultural property shapes identity – its true value for a society is often only known when it has been destroyed and is suddenly lost for ever.

Against that particular background, the PCP Inventory lays a strong foundation in that it lists significant assets of cultural history. After all, before we can protect something, we must know what is really worth protecting! That is made easier by the inclusion of the PCP Inventory in the Swiss Federal geoportal. Here, we not only access text and images about cultural property of national importance, but can also combine their sites with other geodata, other inventories, tourist information or even with risks in order to gain a rapid overview of potential hazards.

Apart from income and assets, an inventory must also list potential debts and outstanding liabilities or commitments which, in the final analysis, enable the overall situation to be assessed and a balance sheet drawn up. This is all too often forgotten when dealing with cultural property. When Notre-Dame goes up in flames or Lucerne Chapel Bridge burns down so that an iconic (tourist) attraction is about to be lost, or when archives and museums are inundated, a public outcry generally ensues. Of course such destructive events cannot be prevented altogether, but their impacts can at least be minimised – preventive conservation measures play a major role here.

They are defined as tasks for the preservation of cultural property and are implemented by the Federation, cantons, local authorities and private persons acting together. They include, e.g. the construction of spaces to protect cultural property, the definition of emergency and evacuation plans, training of persons in the civil defence sector and of the personnel of cultural institutions or the preparation of safety documentation and microfilms. Future megatrends like *digitisation* or *climate change* will create major new challenges for cultural property and for their protection with which the Federal authorities will also have to contend.

Whenever possible, measures should be taken to protect all the objects in the PCP Inventory because an “inventory” is often drawn up for the very purpose of determining the assets and liabilities of an estate. In that sense, an inventory provides information about the heritage that we are passing on to our successors. That inheritance does not consist solely of beautiful possessions – the assets as such. It also creates obligations to hand those assets down to the next generation as intact as possible. In our department, we are aware of the importance of protecting cultural objects and propose to discharge that obligation responsibly in years to come on the basis of the new PCP Inventory.

Carine Simoes, Hans Schüpbach: Notes on the evolution of the PCP Inventory.

On the occasion of the comprehensive revision of the Swiss law on the protection of cultural property in 2015, it was decided that protection measures must be taken not just for armed conflict, but also in preparation for disasters and emergency situations. Here, one of the key tasks is the regular review and publication of an inventory. This task was entrusted to the FOCP (Federal Office for Civil Protection).

The Swiss Inventory of Cultural Property of National and Regional Importance (PCP Inventory) is based on the international principles laid down in the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its Second Protocol of 1999. Article 5 of that Protocol requires “the preparation of inventories” – a task which Switzerland has already been performing since the first edition of the PCP Inventory in 1988.

The two first editions of 1988 and 1995 were prepared under arduous conditions and enjoyed some popularity, depending on the status of drafting in the cantons. The 2009 edition placed the PCP Inventory on a new scientifically founded basis and was another milestone. That impression was further strengthened by the attractive presentation of the A-class objects in the Federal geoportal.

Distinct improvements made in the 2021 version include early planning with the specialist bodies in the cantons, the greater weight placed on archaeology and the data quality for B-class objects. Overall, the PCP Inventory gives a reliable insight into the diversity of cultural property in Switzerland.

The review also showed points which will need to be dealt with at an early date in preparation for the next revision. Firstly, the previous time limit of 1980 for buildings will have to be raised. In addition, principles must be laid down for the future inclusion of military buildings and railways (on this subject, see also p. 60–65).

The fact is that Switzerland is often cited as an example abroad when it comes to the protection of cultural property, especially for protective measures in the civilian sector. The PCP Inventory and its presentation in the geoportal are highly rated as few other signatory states have similar fundamentals.

Siegfried Möri: A deep insight into the monuments of national importance.

The PCP Inventory is updated periodically. The cantons make a first selection and propose objects to the Federal authorities which then review these cantonal proposals for listing as objects of national importance (A-class objects).

The first two inventories of 1988 and 1995 were mixed settlement and object inventories. The review carried out in 2005–2009 newly defined the PCP Inventory of buildings as an inventory of individual objects. For the first time, individual objects of national importance were now assessed by uniform criteria and an overall Swiss comparison made within the individual building categories. A database was set up to enable image and data material to be stored centrally and permit efficient comparisons. The creation of a matrix enabled an assessment to be made according to uniform scientific criteria. The processing team – augmented by further specialists for individual building categories – drew up matrices for the objects before proposing them by category to the assessment committee with which they were then discussed.

The 2017–2021 review was undertaken on the basis of the same concept. Roughly 400 new images were up for discussion, together with other changes often concerning object titles or object scope and some removals or downgrades were made from the inventory of 2009.

When it comes to buildings, the PCP Inventory is currently the only systematic national building inventory drawn up using scientific criteria. Its categories are not used solely for the protection of cultural property. Expert opinions on the history of buildings refer to them, while several institutions use them to determine their financial contributions (such as the Bern Cantonal Lottery Fund and the Pro Patria Foundation).

Nicole Pousaz: Archaeology in the PCP Inventory.

The 2021 review of the PCP Inventory proved an exciting process that raised matters of epistemology and terminology which archaeologists are happy to discuss. Questions, discussions and strategic decisions enlivened the meetings of the “Archaeology” experts’ group.

Thanks in particular to the development of preventive archaeology in Switzerland in recent decades, we have experienced, and are still experiencing, an exceptional renewal of our knowledge about epochs of which we previously had only vague information. It was therefore high time to update the chronological designations used in the inventory and to propose a new summary table which takes account of the old regional cultures.

The inclusion of *prehistoric pile dwellings* in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2011 has now also been integrated into the PCP Inventory 2021 as each of the 56 registered Swiss sites has become an A-class object. The boundary between monuments and archaeological sites has been refined following the practice adopted by certain cantons. Another important point is that the medieval cities were defined as perimeters, better reflecting the historical and archaeological circumstances.

As a general rule, greater attention was paid to the (sometimes invisible) archaeological heritage. The PCP Inventory now lists 642 A-class objects (242 more than in 2009) and 941 B-class objects (291 more). This broad overview therefore testifies to the wealth of archaeological sites in our country, to their diversity and special geographical and cultural features on the territory of the Swiss Confederation.

Laura Albisetti: Catalogues and collections in the new PCP Inventory.

The first systematic inventory and assessment of the collections took place in 2009. On the occasion of the latest update of the PCP Inventory, particular emphasis was placed on a review of the existing entries. As compared to 2009, the overall number of collections therefore remained roughly the same.

Archives

The State archives, all essentially classified as A-class objects, were non-controversial. On the other hand, for local, civic and special archives numerous new proposals were made; this led to a situation in which the group of experts refined its system in the decision-making process. In the final analysis, this led to some downgrades of A-class objects that had been listed in 2009 (especially urban archives and some special archives), together with several B-class objects. Most of the new proposals were likewise rated as C-class objects (of local importance) and were therefore not relevant to the PCP Inventory. In some exceptional cases this was not fully understood but was finally accepted.

There were also few new additions to the company archives. Firstly, the wish to include them was still often lacking or the archives themselves were not well developed, too recent or too hard to the public to access.

Libraries and museums

A few new additions and upgrades contrasted with some downgrades and deletions. For museums in particular, however, improvements were noted overall in the custody area and in that of professionalisation as compared to 2009.

Digital future

With this edition of the PCP Inventory, the worthiness of mobile cultural property for protection has been clearly established and acknowledged once again. However, regular reviews and adjustments will still be needed in future to take account of societal and economic trends.

When the next review is put in hand, greater account will have to be taken in particular of the mega trend towards digitisation. The PCP specialisation will therefore develop a matrix with a team of experts to permit the rational grading of digital cultural objects in future.

Thomas Antonietti: The Lötschental Grenadiers Of God.

With their distinctive historical costumes, the Lötschental Grenadiers of God (*Herrgottsgrenadiere*) bring a very special touch to the Feast of *Corpus Christi* procession, the Benediction Sunday procession (which is held on the Sunday after *Corpus Christi*), and various dedication services.

The uniforms are a combination of those once worn by local men while serving in foreign armies and early Swiss army uniforms. The most striking feature is the scarlet tunic with the white epaulettes and white crossed holders for swords and cartridge bags. Equally eye-catching are the plumed caps. The Grenadiers' headwear varies by rank: officers and officer cadets wear a cocked hat; the men at the front of the procession wear bearskin hats, while those bringing up the rear wear caps once worn by the Swiss army.

The participation of soldiers in historical uniform in these processions is probably a legacy from when Swiss men served in foreign armies. For centuries, the Lötschental provided a steady supply of young fighters.

Philipp Messner: Shooting Festival Posters Through the Ages.

Cantonal, regional and national shooting festivals feature on quite a few of the posters in the Basel School of Design (SfG) collection. Their design reflects the prevailing poster trends at the time they were created.

During the late 1800^s historicism was still the dominant aesthetic in Switzerland. By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, it had given way to a radically new aesthetic movement, spearheaded by young artists such as Burk-hard Mangold, Emil Cardinaux and Cuno Amiet. The 1920^s saw a shift away from painterly, illustrative posters towards a greater focus on lettering and its design. The equal treatment of the image and lettering in poster design was integral to the development of 'Graphic Design', which was emerging as a field in its own right during this period.

The roots of the SfG poster collection go back to the applied arts specimen and model collection started by the *Gewerbemuseum Basel* (museum of applied arts and design). When the museum closed in 1996, its holdings passed to the SfG.

The collection, comprising around 100,000 posters which are mostly Swiss in origin, is listed as an object of national importance in the Federal PCP Inventory.

Katja Bigger, Moira Morinini Pè: How the canton of Ticino views the PCP Inventory.

In recent years, the Swiss Inventory of Cultural Property of National and Regional Importance (PCP Inventory) has played an increasingly important role for the conservation, protection and upgrading of the Canton of Ticino's cultural heritage. The latest review of the PCP Inventory therefore led to harmonisation between protection by the inventory itself and protection by appropriate cantonal legislation (*Legge cantonale sulla protezione dei beni culturali del 13 maggio 1997, LBC*).

The inventory has several purposes in different areas. In the first instance, it is a legal basis which governs civil defence activity. It is an instrument to create awareness on the part of the owners of buildings and the artworks contained in them; it may be one of the criteria on the basis of which eligibility for protection under LBC is determined; it may also be one of several different bases for the calculation of the financial aids granted by the Federal authorities for the restoration of buildings, artefacts and archaeological sites.

Anna Kaiser: The Swiss Inventory of Cultural Property (PCP Inventory) as a model.

The Swiss Inventory of Cultural Property of National and Regional Importance (PCP Inventory) which can be consulted in the Confederation's geoportal in combination with other geodata is a pioneering model for a number of different reasons and – seen from outside Switzerland – exemplary from the military and civilian angles for the purpose of protecting cultural property.

For the purposes of a military cultural property protection officer, the online version of the inventory in the form of a geographical information system (GIS) depicted on maps and in aerial photographs combinable with other map layers is of particular interest. This holds good especially when the data can be directly integrated into military systems and into electronic position mapping.

From the angle of disaster protection, the possibility of combining cultural property at a single click with hazardous zones and maps is particularly useful. In this area, a combination of forecast data concerning future (climate) change and natural disasters is an exciting opportunity.

For an interested visitor to Switzerland, the online inventory likewise provides an opportunity to highlight cultural property as exceptionally valuable things to see in Switzerland, which inspire and attract visitors.

From each of these three (and many other) angles, the version of the Swiss Inventory of Cultural Property (PCP Inventory) that is freely accessible to everyone is a source of inspiration.

Olivier Melchior: Military and civil uses.

Database and geoportal

The PCP database in the SAP environment was set up in 2002. It was tailored to the specific needs of the PCP by enabling not just data about individual objects to be recorded, but also photos and documents to be archived. The SAP-based Federal solution had the advantage that the database was constantly maintained and later migrations could also be included.

Apart from information about the location of the PCP objects, building data, epochs or architects, the PCP database also includes images, working documents in various formats as well as links to other inventories of the Federal authorities and cantons or Internet links. A matrix is also archived for each A-class object (i.e. an object of national importance).

However, the SAP release used at present will shortly come to the end of its life cycle. This means that no further development will be possible from the end of 2025 when support will no longer be provided. Under the SUPERB23 program, initial work on the transition to the successor SAP S/4HANA has already begun.

The Swiss Federal geoportal is the geoinformation platform of the Federal administration. This profusion of geodata provides a wide range of potential presentations, maps and information. Together with the publication of the revised PCP Inventory in 2009, objects of national importance (A-class objects) were also incorporated into a separate GIS application "PCP Inventory 2009". This enabled a wide range of possible combinations and presentations. The information obtained in this way can for instance be useful for risk analysis and emergency planning for a particular PCP object.

Under the terms of The Hague Convention of 1954, the military must continue to respect cultural property even in the event of an armed conflict; geo information therefore also plays a central role in planning military exercises and missions. That is why the data for A-class objects have also been incorporated into military management and information systems.

In addition, minimum geodata models had to be drawn up with experts.

Alexandra Kull: Further development in preparation for the next revision.

The latest review showed that many questions remain unanswered and that a clear approach to some objects has not yet been defined.

For the "combat and command buildings" and the "railways/railway infrastructures" areas, first working groups have now already been set up to look into the particular issues. With the aid of experts, the foundation is to be laid in these areas for objects that are of potential interest to the whole of Switzerland to be classified and assessed using uniform criteria.

On the occasion of the review, several parties also proposed other possible subject areas – which were, however, placed on standby for the time being to be discussed later. In the final analysis, the KGS Inventory is to represent a cross-section of all Swiss cultural property; as yet not all iconic and identity-shaping objects have been taken into account for Switzerland.

New subject areas also arise with the advance of digitisation and digital objects may well have to be included in the KGS Inventory. This digital cultural property comprises not just digital archives, but also digital art, digital art reproductions and research data.

Federal Office for Culture: Davos Baukultur Quality System.

The Federal Office of Culture (FOC) published *the Davos Baukultur Quality System*, which was created in cooperation with international partners. The system is the first method of objectively and comprehensively assessing Baukultur quality and helps with the practical implementation of high-quality Baukultur.

The Davos Baukultur Quality System represents the principle that high-quality Baukultur is an objective concept and can be assessed through the criteria of Governance, Functionality, Environment, Economy, Diversity, Context, Sense of Place and Beauty. The system weights social, emotional and cultural criteria identically to technical and functional considerations. The quality system includes an assessment form with a questionnaire covering each of the eight criteria. This questionnaire can be adapted to the specific situation of a place or project and extended if necessary. The completed form provides the basis on which to determine the actual Baukultur quality of a place, including its strengths and weaknesses from a Baukultur perspective. The quality system can be used as a quality assurance tool when working on projects, judging competitions or in participatory processes.