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DOI: lack

Vol no: 7

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As envisioned by the Hague Convention of May 14, 1954, the Blue Shield mark was intended to serve a recognition function - to indicate objects and means of transport to be protected in the event of armed conflict. It has become an international symbol, protecting historic buildings from devastation and oblivion, used much more widely than provided for in the Convention. Many global heritage organizations and initiatives have adopted the mark as their own logo.

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