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DIVERS CAN HAVE A ROLE TO PROTECT UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE: THE NEW CMAS PROGRAM

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An essential part of modern life with industrial and commercial activity has become increasingly entwined with the shores of oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers [1]. All of them have a strong potential to create a variety of problems that impact both natural and cultural heritage. Some of the fishing methods, illicit traffic of historical artifacts, treasure hunting, and looting are also serious risks to underwater cultural heritage. Discovering and documenting many un-derwater heritage sites and shipwrecks by specialists, providing protective legal policies which aim at preventing illicit trade, and promoting public awareness have to have priority to protect underwater cultural heritage. Significant steps have been already taken by both UNESCO and ICOMOS. The UNESCO UniTwin Network of Underwater Archaeology, which was established in 2012, is actively promoting inter-university collaboration between many universities around the world in the frame of academic standards. However, the most essential step to protect these values can be taken by 6 million active divers in the recreational diving community. CMAS (World Underwater Federation) with more than 130 member countries from 5 continents is encouraging divers to take unified steps in raising awareness, promoting the preservation, and participating in sharing information from the underwater world. The new program of CMAS will be presented in this symposium program.

[1] Öniz, H. (2020). Underwater Cultural Heritage At Risk: Problems Related to Urbanization. Editors: Hafner Albert – Öniz Hakan–Semaan Lucy –Underwood J. Christopher. *Heritage Underwater at Risk Threats – Challenges – Solution*. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)- International Committee on The Underwater Cultural Heritage (ICUCH), Edition Number: 1, Page: 218, ISBN:978-2-918086-37-6, English, (Publishing No:6821286)