



Short News – July 2016

Dear colleagues,

E.C.C.O. just takes a short breath after a very busy period. However, we would like to summarise for you, what we have been up to in recent months.

For those of you who follow the life and objectives of our organisation, the main themes have been made explicit in our recently published Strategic Plan, which can be found online. The Committee also aims to work effectively learning to meet virtually (video-conferences on internet). This year we have already met six times in our on-line sessions all of which are minuted.

The “physical” Committee Meetings are still the most important during which we take the opportunity to meet local representatives and also spend time together outside the meeting rooms so the discussions continue till late in the nights! The last Committee Meeting was held prior to the Presidents' Meeting, which took place on 6th of June in Berlin (the report of which you can find on our freshly reconstructed (!) website and the 25th General Assembly on the 5th of June. The Committee met (not for the first time) in the totally inspiring studio of the German sculptor Marguerite Blume Cárdenas. It was a pleasure to lift our eyes from the computer screens to see her works and private surrounding of the living studio. We had to concentrate though on our agenda, comprising of the “usual administrative stuff” but this time with the themes of the forthcoming General Assembly, Presidents' Meeting and the following CDCPP steering committee meeting in Strasbourg.

On the first day of Committee Meeting the President of VDR, Jan Raue came to welcome us to Berlin and to discuss the preparations of the celebration of our anniversary and the forthcoming General Assembly and Presidents Meeting, which was generously hosted by the VDR. The Committee also had a visit from a non-EU state: Turkey. A young colleague Vildan Yarlugas asked in advance for a consultation with E.C.C.O. seeking support for the Turkish initiative to establish the definition of the profession and the accreditation of the professional in the field. Vildan Yarlugas invited E.C.C.O. representatives to participate in their conference on these issues. They would like to produce a declaration with all stakeholders to address the quality of restoration. Unfortunately there is no organisation of Conservator-Restorers in Turkey with whom we can establish formal links.

During the General Assembly our President, Susan Corr proposed that the assembly prepare a Declaration of Berlin (find the text here), which could be agreed and signed by all the professionals attending the meetings to then be presented in Strasbourg. The President also rehearsed some of the key developments within E.C.C.O. during the last 25 years of its existence in order to clarify the main objectives E.C.C.O. strives to follow. One of the main themes is the cooperation in form of Memoranda of Understanding with “other players” in the area of preservation of Cultural Heritage in Europe, specifically European bodies influential in the distribution of information and support for legislation creation at EU level. Currently, E.C.C.O. has a Memorandum of Understanding with ICCROM, and has agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with ICOMOS but it has yet to be signed. We also have a fresh contact with Ms Jelka Pirkovič from HEREIN - <http://www.herein-system.eu/>.

Moreover E.C.C.O. has the status of observer to the Council of Europe, and the attendance at CDCPP meeting offers E.C.C.O. the possibility to join working groups of the CDCPP as observer and make interventions in respect of Cultural Heritage, its values and the ways to promote, preserve and defend it.

But the activity of E.C.C.O. does not only go to the external world. We know the main potential is hidden in our members – the national organisations and that we all must strive for mutual recognition working within the framework of EU initiatives such as the Common Training Framework the implications of which have to be further explored. The work on the professional competences fits closely to the requirements of this framework and we will have to see how we can apply it to the Common Training Framework.

The issue of mutual recognition between our members – individual professionals, when moving from country to country within Europe – is influenced by the spirit of the Directive on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications EN 2005/36. The idea is that; independent of the laws which govern access to the professional market in each country and which are subject to the terms of, the directive –, individual conservator-restorers, having the possibility of moving from one country to another within Europe; being a member of their professional body which in turn is a member of E.C.C.O. should automatically be recognized as a full member in the national organisation of the country that he or she is moving into. Considering that all the E.C.C.O. members recognize the same competence requirements for access to the profession, it should be easy to make or unify in some manner this mutual recognition for individual members of an organisation belonging to E.C.C.O. Should all the professional organisations already follow principles of equivalency for their membership this may later help to unify the laws for the recognition of professionals moving inside EU. With these ideas in mind, the GA voted on the proposal to suspend the application form normally given to any new applicant for E.C.C.O. membership until all the members have examined it and reconsider their own statutes in the light of the requirements detailed in the application form and prepare suggestions for revision or otherwise. This should be done early September.

Some explanations were also given on possible work to come on the E.C.C.O. Guidelines. Updating and/or rephrasing them in the light of common values of liberal profession and to reflect the development and the language of the competences as they inform learning outcomes.

A short update was given on CEN standards due to come out soon. For example the Conservation process, and also the General terminology standard (EN 15898) will go under revision during 2016. So interested persons should be aware and preparing their brain to be able to contribute and act at national level...

We try to supply our members with information – e.g. the Committee prepared a fresh folder with recent E.C.C.O. achievements and goals to be distributed at the General Assembly and the Presidents Meeting. The graphic quality is ensured by our Vice President Sebastian Dobruskin and the contents was this time wisely picked by Anja Romanowski (Vice Secretary General), who played the major role in organising the Committee Meeting, the General Assembly and the Presidents Meeting in Berlin. The contents of the folder is to be found on our website, so that our members can print out copies or translate it for their own purposes. We would like to ask you for your cooperation on spreading the visibility of the existence and achievements of our profession at your national level and also to make sure E.C.C.O. is known among the decision makers at your national Ministries responsible for Culture. Please, do not hesitate to ask for support, if you need any material or information from the Committee.

We have to seriously prepare for the forthcoming European Cultural Heritage Year 2018 ([ECHY 2018](#))! The Committee has already established the Working Group “Funding”, which is searching for schemes to apply for financing of international projects supporting cooperation on development of best practice within care for cultural heritage.

The idea is to get our members to cooperate and come forward with projects, which will demonstrate the importance of the input the professional conservators-restorers give to the objects they work on and how conservation-restoration adds value to Cultural Heritage and enables and helps the communities to use it to the fullest. Basically, we should not be shy and should learn to “sell” our quality to the stakeholders and public!

At the CDCPP steering committee E.C.C.O., with its observer status, was represented by Susan Corr, Sebastian Dobrusskin and David Aguilera Cueco, who acted as experts to the Commission. The result is greater visibility of E.C.C.O. but at the same time much greater responsibility and extent of work, which has to be done, to fulfil the targets we established. We are sure you will support the Committee with your national activities and report to us on your achievements.

The annual elections at the General Assembly brought new members to the Committee. Two of the members though ended their service in the Committee. We thanked Silvia Borghini from ARI (Italy) and Martin Pitterschscher from ARCA-VRKS (Italy, South Tyrol) for their great input in the passed years.

The new Committee is construed as follows:

Susan Corr, President (ICRI – Ireland)
Sebastian Dobrusskin, Vice President (SKR-SCR – Switzerland)
Stefan Belishki, Vice President (ACB – Bulgaria)
Barbara Davidson, General Secretary (KR – Slovakia)
Anja Romanowski, Vice Secretary General (VDR – Germany)
Elis Marçal, Treasurer (ARP – Portugal)
Peter De Groof, Deputy Treasurer (APROA-BRK – Belgium)
David Aguilera Cueco (FFCR – France)
Jana Šubic Prislán (DRS – Slovenia)
Ana Galán Perez (ACRE – Spain)
Kristian Schneider (ARI – Italy)

Thank you for reading!

Barbara Davidson
E.C.C.O. Secretary General