



Galway, 5 January 2015

Dear members,

The E.C.C.O. committee wish all our members a peaceful, productive and happy 2015. The last year has seen much consolidation of ideas and directions in the work of E.C.C.O. and a change in how we manage our business. The committee normally meet three or four times a year, but rising travel and accommodation costs have threatened to cause budgetary over-runs in latter years. As a result the committee agreed at our GA in 2014 to reduce our meetings to twice a year and that we would experiment with online meetings to address specific topics. These online meetings now take place once a month courtesy of a host service facilitated by Sebastian Dobrusskin at Bern Academy of Fine Arts. They have taken a little bit of getting used to as we learn to speak in turn and to the point. They require discipline, patience and preparation around a topic while reception can be an issue. However they do allow us to remain active and in contact.

Our last full (physical) committee meeting took place in Dublin just before Christmas between the 12th-14th of December. Much work was achieved and the implementation schedule for our Strategic Plan was agreed and finalised. As Delegates and Presidents who have attended the last two GA's, (Lisbon 2013 and Bolzano 2014) are aware, the Strategic Plan has been the subject of much consultation, discussion and indeed promise. It has taken considerable input to arrive at what we now hope is a strong document, which clearly expresses the role and function of E.C.C.O. The Strategic Plan is divided into two sections the first of which describes a series of goals grouped around themes. The second, Implementation section describes a set of work projects, which help to realise these goals. An estimated timeframe with identifiable milestones also serves to chart and make visible the work of the committee who have found the development of the Strategic Plan to be of great use in focusing our time and energies. Finally, we hope that this document is useful to you our members not only as it may help to reflect and articulate the goals and aspirations of your own organisations but as it provides a tool for us all to better pool our resources and act cohesively.

Unfortunately, the publication of our Strategic Plan coincides with the very sad news that E.C.C.O. is to lose the membership of our colleagues in Restauratoren Nederland. Developments within Restauratoren Nederland, further catalysed by a recent judicial decision, has led to a reorganisation of this body around a new set of statutes. These statutes open the membership to all people working or interested in the care, conservation and restoration of cultural heritage, without reference to professional criteria. Rather, an alternate and completely separate Registration Board consisting of 7 persons will deal with issues of professional assessment and recognition. The new statutes were reviewed by the committee at our meeting in December. On the grounds that the E.C.C.O. Statutes clearly state that the full membership of member organisations is to be solely composed of Conservator-Restorers, it is with regret that the committee of E.C.C.O. has advised Restauratoren Nederland that it is no longer compliant with the membership criteria of E.C.C.O.

Jaap van der Burg, who is also President of RN, has been an active member of the E.C.C.O. committee for the last 7 years, serving as Vice-President, Treasurer and most recently as Secretary General since April 2013. On behalf of the committee, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Jaap for his contribution to the work of E.C.C.O. There have been many memorable meetings and achievements while Jaap has given much of his time and expertise in representing E.C.C.O. both in CEN and at Europa Nostra. We all wish him well.

Finally, the loss of Restauratoren Nederland to the professional community in Europe is acutely felt and a matter of regret. All the more so given the Netherlands' long and close ties with E.C.C.O., and the esteem in which the profession and the education of the Conservator-Restorer in the Netherlands is held internationally.

The E.C.C.O. committee is aware of the changing landscape of Conservation-Restoration, which has continued to grow and evolve since E.C.C.O. was founded. Indeed, some of these changes are directly attributed to the work and influence of E.C.C.O. itself. The committee recognises that there are member organisations working to accommodate or adapt to professional developments by opening up membership to other categories of professionals working in the field. In an effort to understand how our member organisations are working to engage with these professionals we are initiating a survey of all our members' statutes. Please see attached letter. A review of the results will be presented to the GA in 2016, at which the experience of Restauratoren Nederland over the next year and a half could find a forum for discussion. In the meantime, we encourage the newly restructured Restauratoren Nederland to join E.C.C.O. as Associate Member, not only as a signal of support for the work that E.C.C.O. does, but so that we can continue to work together for the good of Conservation-Restoration in Europe.

Susan Corr,
E.C.C.O. President