



## E.C.C.O. short news June 1014

This short news documents the topics and issues arising from the General Assembly held in April in Bolzano and the two Committee meetings held since.

### GA 2014 in Bolzano

Warm thanks must go to the hosting organisation VKRS-ARCA and their President Verena Mürmelter who extended wonderful hospitality to E.C.C.O. over the course of the committee meetings and successful GA in Bolzano this April. Indeed Bolzano may not be the most easily accessible of venues but all agreed that it was absolutely worth the journey and the meeting was both productive and a fitting tribute to Brigitte Esser.

In her opening address, President Susan Corr has considered the last 12 months as a transition period since the continuity of E.C.C.O., safeguarded in the participation of both Monica Martelli Castaldi as President and Michael van Gompén as Treasurer over many years, came to an end at the GA in Lisbon 2013. There have been new faces in new positions getting used to new tasks. Especially noteworthy is the work of the two new treasurers Elis Marçal and Peter de Groof. The bigger world around us also has had its effect on our organisation. The economic crises has had its impact on both our member organisations and E.C.C.O. itself.

### Administration

Some of the products we have been working on are in their final state. The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication is nearly finished requiring some final lay-out. It was originally expected to be a small booklet but now given additional papers marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of E.C.C.O. it is a sizeable publication containing a lot of background information about the history of E.C.C.O. It will be available on line and E.C.C.O. will be seeking sponsorship for printing hard copies.

A small number of digitally printed competence leaflets were distributed at the GA and thanks were extended to Sebastian Dobrusskin for the lay-out and design. The leaflets were warmly welcomed. The digital version of the leaflet is completed and is available on line. To reduce costs, the printing of the leaflet is being left to each member organization. However if enough members indicate an interest in having a printed edition in English only, the committee can coordinate this and obtain a better price for a larger print run and costs can be shared.

The E.C.C.O. website remains an unsolved issue. Even though a lot of energy has gone into trying to make the running of the site easier, the results have not been satisfactory. The committee has asked for some quotes for hosting and developing a new site and will make it one of the priorities for 2014-2015 year.

Thanks go to Elis Marçal E.C.C.O. who has now developed a 'new delegates pack'. The pack will be sent to new delegates and introduce them to E.C.C.O. and the way it works. We expect that this information pack will make life easier for the new delegates.

Our new Office Administrator, Tânia Teixeira, has already been instrumental in promoting better communications between ourselves at committee level and our member organizations. Unfortunately the email address she has to use as a result of ongoing problems with the website means her mail is not always recognized and ends up in spam.

Please do take the time to read her mails and react to them. Whenever you have an issue please contact Tânia, she is, after all, the eyes and ears of the committee.

E.C.C.O. is often asked to participate in international projects and recently we submitted as a consultant body to a cultural consortium for an advisory project in Algeria. More recently we had a proposal from ACRE to apply to Creative Europe to fund legal work. However, all European initiatives ask for finances as well as personal input. We do need legal advice on the consequences (and possible penalties) of these European projects. As participation also involves labor, the committee itself already has work commitments enough with E.C.C.O. but perhaps member organizations might consider getting involved.

#### Finance:

The results for 2013 show a projected loss of nearly € 17.000. Although this is less than initially anticipated and is largely due to 'one off' expenses such as the competences publication, the committee is aware that we are seeing an increase in yearly expenses. The committee has grown and prices for flights, hotel etc. has risen, plus the committee has been more active in participating in projects and meetings of other organizations.

E.C.C.O. will not be able to cover these rising costs without either raising the membership fee or making difficult choices in setting priorities. The first option is not considered as realistic. Therefore it was decided that E.C.C.O. will cut down on representation expenses as well as on meeting expenses. Where the committee used to meet at least four times a year we will now meet 6 times a year. Of these meetings only two will be 'physical'. The other meetings will be 'virtual' by use of the internet.

After the explanation and the reading of the auditor's report the budget for 2014 was unanimously agreed on.

#### Strategic Plan:

Work was also done on the strategic plan subsequent to the Lisbon GA and a meeting in Dublin last November, of the working group coordinated by Jeremy Hutchings, proved to be very fruitful. The core document was presented in Bolzano and will be available for download shortly. The plan is presented in two sections; the first section identifies goals under a series of themes and states why



these themes are relevant to the work of E.C.C.O., the second section identifies key actions that will address these goals. The second half of the strategic plan is subject to time frames and milestones and will date, whereas the themes and goals identified in the first section are likely to remain relevant for E.C.C.O. and its membership over a longer period of time.

#### Legislation:

Legislation around cultural heritage and its conservation in many instances defines the context for both the education and practice of the profession. Even though Europe is becoming increasingly centralized, issues concerning cultural heritage remain in the hands of our national governments. National regulations vary hugely in and of themselves. Because of this principle of subsidiarity which recognizes national sovereignty in the area of culture and heritage it is very difficult to achieve legal recognition for conservation-restoration and the profession at EU level.

Vincent Negri, cultural heritage lawyer and consultant to E.C.C.O. has produced a questionnaire in order to evaluate these regulations and the interaction between national regulations and European directives. He proposes to provide a tool which can be used to influence and provide leverage in a positive direction, for the transposition of EU directives emphasizing the public interest nature of our work to help obtain legal recognition for conservation-restoration. Based on the existing laws in our countries it is hoped to create a law for conservation-restoration at EU level. This questionnaire, together with an explanatory letter will be distributed to our members this summer.

#### International contacts:

E.C.C.O. representatives have been quite active in CEN, in particular working group 4 which will publish several drafts for standards later this year. The drafts will be posted on the E.C.C.O. website, as well as drafts where no E.C.C.O. representatives have been involved. With the approaching publication of standards it becomes ever more important for our profession to be involved in the creation of the drafts. As E.C.C.O. will no longer be able to cover expenses for delegates to meetings on European level it is up to our member organizations to decide how and where they want to be involved on a national level.

CEPLIS works towards a code of ethics for all liberal professions. Through our delegate Michael van Gompel E.C.C.O. remains in close contact with this development.

As an official member of Europa Nostra E.C.C.O. has supported Jaap van der Burg's nomination for a council position and congratulate Jaap on his successful candidacy at the Europa Nostra GA in May.

The memorandum of understanding between E.C.C.O. and ICCROM is still under development. With this MoU it will be easier to strategize and work towards progressing the Recommendation on conservation-restoration.

After a meeting with members from the ICOMOS board it was agreed that we shared many ideas and interests. Work on an MoU was proposed and has been undertaken but input from the national organizations will be needed. It will take a year before the final MoU will be drafted due to the organizational structure of ICOMOS.

The UK organization ICON left E.C.C.O. in 2007. The issue centered on voting rights within ICON. All members are entitled to full voting rights within ICON, they are not limited to conservation-restoration professionals. Contact has been re-established and ICON and E.C.C.O. will discuss future co-operation and/or membership.

#### National issues:

The various national reports are being assembled and this is not easy work as member organizations can be very slow to respond. However, work on the anniversary publication, as well as some articles about the conservation-restoration profession and professional developments, has proven how invaluable these national reports are. Please take your time to write this yearly report on issues in your country and share them with our other members. Also please make time to read the reports from these other members as they contain valuable lessons, experiences and ideas.

Dr. Thomas Mathà, Director of *Agentur für die Verfahren und die Aufsicht im Bereich öffentliche Bau-, Dienstleistungs- und Lieferaufträge*, was invited to discuss EU Directives at the GA. He gave an introduction to the present situation regarding laws and regulations in Europe. This short presentation turned into a discussion in which Dr Mathà focused on the political necessity of focusing on mobility of services and goods within the EU.

He referred to Law for cultural goods 2005 /2006 Directive and said that it is important for citizens to know what kind of Europe we want. We like to buy across border, but do not like the mobility of services across border. However a successful common market includes an exchange of both people as well as services.



Dr Mathà pointed out that the Codex of cultural goods is the basis for the legal protection in Italy (1909) followed by the law of 1939 then 1999 and final in 2012. He agreed that there is no European common ground for the regulation of conservation-restoration although the need for this is felt. One of the initiatives in regulating professions on a European level is the European Professional Card. The conservator-restorer profession is not in the proposal of the EC at the moment but could be added in a later moment.

The Internal Market Information system (IMI) is another initiative. The system enables national, regional and local authorities to communicate quickly with their counterparts abroad. If you are entitled to work in one country the IMI has to provide all this information to the other country, providing a possibility for work. Judgment is on case by case bases.

The European Parliament has a new role, it stands for the citizens of Europe. The European Commission represents other interests whereas the European Parliament is for civilians. Even in the case of cultural heritage, the regulation of the profession can be done at European level. This goes through the single market competence. If the parliament wants it should be possible to work on this. If they want they will find a way through the 'single market competence'.

Dr Mathà stresses that the only way that professional regulation can work is through European regulation. The best way is to get in touch with the MEPs after the European elections. Find elected members and get them interested. Another big partner is the European Commission, as they are the most important promoter of European mobility. It is very important to emphasize the public interest of working on public goods.

The right of private properties is the biggest restriction on enforcing regulations on cultural heritage. Without the single market the difficult economic situation that the EU is currently experiencing would be far more critical. Therefore the economic value of a single European market has been proven. Research for national regulations would be interesting. Initiative must come from E.C.C.O., by developing a draft for a law to the parliamentarians.

The Presidency of the Council offers more ways for proposing initiatives, the European Parliament does not have the prerogative on proposing directives and regulations. European Parliament and European Commission have to vote both but the initiative is from European Council as opposed to the parliament. For defining the profession the Italian law uses education, the same precedent should be used on a European level. Certification of skill might be a first step in this procedure. In Slovakia Heritage as public property overrides private ownership.

Jaap van der Burg  
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