

**THIRTEENTH DOUZELAGE
CONFERENCE**

GRANVILLE

10 - 12th October 1997

WELCOMING SPEECHES

In welcoming the Delegates, and especially Mme Riitta Huovinen and Mme Kristiina Kairamo, the two representatives from Karkkila, and Mme Nicole Fontaine, First Vice-President of the European Parliament, M. Marc Verdier, Mayor of Granville, noted that the origins of the Douzelage lay with the twinning of Sherborne and Granville. Through projects such as the Kötzing Annual Week of the Young and the Sesimbra Fishing Conference, together with the numerous schools and sports exchanges, the Douzelage now conveys the idea of Europe and adds greatly to the European dimension in the region of Granville.

Jeremy Barker, President of the Douzelage, thanked Granville for their welcome and organisation of the Conference. The special close relationship between Granville and Sherborne was now reflected within the twelve towns, soon, he hoped, to be thirteen with the inclusion of Karkkila. The previous meeting in Bundoran had completed the full circle and this now was the time to reflect, consolidate and innovate.

He was sad to have to present the apologies of Olaf Sielemann from Holstebro, who was prevented by ill health from attending, and that Charles and Hanna Majoor were similarly unable to travel, both being confined to bed with flu. The President said that gifts had been bought and it was agreed that these should be paid for out of the Douzelage Fund.

ADDRESS BY MADAME NICOLE FONTAINE

Jean-Marc Julienne introduced Mme Fontaine as being a long serving Member of the European Parliament and its much respected First Vice-President.

In her address she expressed full awareness of the existence and the role of the Douzelage, and referred admiringly to the Art Exhibition organised by members in the Parliament building in Strasbourg. She also commended the Fishing Project involving Altea, Sesimbra and Granville as an outstanding indication of how the Douzelage is promoting understanding and friendship between towns in a matter fraught with difficulty.

She went on to say that the debate on the Maastricht Treaty had wrong-footed the European Union, revealing to people in Brussels how far apart they had drifted from the man-in-the-street. The Douzelage was therefore especially welcome as a bottom-up rather than top-down organisation (like the Union itself). It involved people at the lowest level of government, was as near to the people as could be, and was therefore the kind of organisation that Brussels supported to the full and which they would do all they could to help and multiply.

When queried on the matter of funding she confirmed that money was available for educational projects and there was a need now for towns to match their projects with the appropriate programmes. On travel she referred to the President, who confirmed

that money was available to Delegates travelling to Douzelage Conferences but that the level was too low. She answered that money was short in Brussels - but if we could make a case for altering the criteria and the amounts available, she would do all she could to further our case. The fact that the Douzelage comprised twelve countries (with more in the offing) strengthened our case substantially.

In answer to further questions, Mme Fontaine affirmed the awareness of the European Union concerning the problems associated with peripherality, the importance of promoting African twinning and of being ever mindful of the position of women. She ended by stressing the importance too of encouraging Eastern European countries to become part of the European Union, and of ensuring that countries not yet invited to join did not feel discriminated against.

In sum, members of the Douzelage were very aware of the honour done to the Douzelage by the visit to Granville of someone of such distinction in the European Parliament, and equally of the importance that people in Strasbourg attached to the existence of our organisation.

Action: A Dossier to be prepared by the Presidency stating the case for better funding of multi-national twinings like the Douzelage. This Dossier, once prepared, to be circulated to all towns for comments, and the final document then to be sent to Mme Fontaine and all the respective Members of the European Parliament.

Comic Strip Competition

Paul Georges (Houffalize) announced the winners :-
Kötzing and Niederaanven
He was thanked for his long and patient work.

A. Survey of Recent Events - special reports

1. Fishing

Sesimbra reported on the meeting attended by some 500 people, including fishermen and MEPs, when the problems of protection, employment and commercial relationships between Altea, Granville and Sesimbra were raised. The importance of fishing to the town of Sesimbra, as well as to Europe, was stressed and it was thought that Greece and Italy might also wish to participate. Preveza confirmed their interest in attending meetings but the cost would be a problem. Granville, having initiated the meetings, hoped that 1998 could be a breakthrough year and would make the arrangements for the next event.

Action: Granville

2. European Week of the Young

Kötzing reported on the successful event held in August when, amongst other activities, a magazine was produced. Although it was unfortunate that some

Douzelage towns had been unable to participate, it was hoped to stage the event again in 1998.

Action: Kötzing

3. Honeymoon Exchanges

Preveza and Niederanven reported on proposed exchanges with Niederanven noting that visits to Luxembourg should preferably be made during the warmer months.

**Action: Preveza
Niederanven**

Exchanges between Bellagio, Houffalize and Sesimbra continue to flourish and Granville also reported on the successful visit by a couple from Altea. With all expressing the hope of continuing the scheme Granville proposed that couples celebrating 25 or even 50 years of marriage might now be included, a suggestion which was warmly received by all Delegates.

Action: ALL

4. Water Polo

Preveza informed the Delegates that their water polo teams, with ages from teenagers to adults, were interested in making exchanges with other towns. Granville confirmed that they had a team who would be interested.

**Action: Preveza
Granville
ALL**

B. Projects not yet finished, or in preparation

1. San Felipé

Sesimbra produced an excellent detailed report on the island of Fogo, and in particular the town of San Felipé, outlining the problems facing the local population. A visit by a delegation from Sesimbra was made in July and it was felt that it would be possible to propose a concrete project to be undertaken by the Douzelage.

Sherborne felt this project to be an opportunity, rather than a problem, and suggested a scheme to raise funds through the schools could be considered. With general support coming from all the towns Sesimbra was asked to produce a concrete proposal.

Action: Sesimbra

2. Choir Festival in Preveza

The next International Festival will be held from the 2nd - 5th July, 1998, with further details to be produced in October, and it was hoped all choirs would participate. It was noted that the Kaleidoscope Programme could help with funding.

Action: Preveza

3. Symposium in Bellagio 14th - 17th May 1998

Bellagio confirmed that the Symposium would be held together with the Education Conference and a Trade Fair (which would start a day earlier on the 13th May). More information would be coming shortly but a list of exhibits for the Fair was requested as soon as possible and that not too much food should be brought. EU Funding for travel to Bellagio was available but applications have to be made three months in advance and it was stressed that Bellagio, as the host town making the application, would need names FOUR months before the date - MONDAY 12TH JANUARY 1998. It was noted that the names could be changed, it was the numbers that counted.

Action: Bellagio
ALL

Sesimbra commented on how much they appreciated the Mini-Parliament and expressed the hope that it would be held again.

4. Symposium in Meerssen, Autumn 1998

The dates were still to be arranged.

Action: Meerssen

5. Extension of the Douzelage

Jeremy Barker, as President of the Douzelage, reported on the wonderful welcome extended to him on his visit to Karkkila at the invitation of the Mayor. Their teachers are especially eager to make contact with elsewhere in the Union and their Iron Foundry Building has rooms available for cultural events - possibly the proposed Douzelage Community Play. The two representatives from Karkkila, Mme Riitta Huovinen and Mme Kristiina Kairamo, expressed thanks for the invitation to Granville.

Action: Sherborne
Holstebro
Karkkila

Jeremy Barker also stated that although nothing had been heard from the Swedish town, Oxelösund, Olaf Sieleman was confident that they would wish to follow Karkkila. Sesimbra offered to assist if necessary as they also had contacts with Sweden.

Action: Sherborne
Holstebro
Sesimbra

The Austrian town approached by Altea felt they were unable to join the Douzelage but had suggested Oberwald, which was being followed up.

Action: Altea

Niederanven wondered if an Austrian town nearer to the West would be more suitable, a suggestion which was well supported. Three criteria were agreed :-

- a. it must have a secondary school
- b. it must be in the West of the county
- c. it must have Winter Sports

Kötzting offered to approach a town with which they already had contacts.

Action: Kötzting

6. Future Programme of Meetings

Sherborne - Spring 1999 - date not fixed: Karkkila - Autumn 1999 - Mayor Kari Korhikoski interested. Both dates to be decided by the time of the Bellagio Conference.

**Action: Sherborne
Karkkila**

(Karkkila have subsequently intimated they would be happier to host a Conference in the Spring of the year 2000)

7. Passport Scheme

Sherborne reported that they were shortly awaiting news from Bundoran and Altea.

**Action: Sherborne
Altea
Bundoran**

8. Quinteto de Metales & Media Conference

The Group have visited Bellagio, Kötzting and Meerssen, which was a great experience, and they are very appreciative of the welcome they received. Sherborne would like them to visit as well.

**Action: Altea
Sherborne**

Altea propose holding a Media Conference on the 16th to 19th April 1998 to debate the influence of the Media on local life - representatives from all the regional Media will be invited together with a person from the Town Hall. The concept of a media conference was well received by the Delegates as it was noted how difficult it was to get publicity for the Douzelage across to the local citizens. Not all the towns have TV and radio as well as newspapers but all hoped to have representatives attending. Altea are to FAX final details and costs by 30th November with a deadline for replies by December 30th in order to obtain funding.

**Action: Altea
ALL**

9. Holstebro Music Festival

Details will be sent by November 20th.

Action: Holstebro

10. Progress on the Internet

Norman Rawles from Sherborne explained how the Internet is becoming ever more influential as it helps improve communication, will aid tourism and provides educational programmes affording practical results. Following the talk given at the Bundoran Conference, which demonstrated the potential of the IT, the Gryphon School was now preparing the Sherborne pages which they would help to maintain for a year.

With many of the schools now on the Internet it was noted that its use encompasses a broad spectrum of educational subjects and information, and that the Comenius programme was started with IT communication. The value of the Internet in promoting tourism, as well as the work of the Douzelage, was also appreciated by the Delegates.

Towns interested in having IT pages would inform Sherborne by the **1st January 1998** of their willingness to co-operate together with the name and e-mail address of their contact. Blank sheets for entries were distributed to all the towns.

**Action: Sherborne
ALL**

11. Millenium of the Benedictine Order

The celebrations are to be held in Sherborne but it is not yet known if the Douzelage will be involved. Further information will be forthcoming by the beginning of November and if we are to be included all towns will be asked to circulate details to their clergy.

Action: Sherborne

12. Douzelage Community Play

It is hoped to stage this major project in the year 2000, details will be presented at the Bellagio Conference. It was noted that Karkkila have the ideal site at their Iron Foundry and that some funding would be available from Brussels; the play would be in English for Secondary school students and at least three towns would need to participate.

Action: Sherborne

13. Expansion of Sherborne/Preveza Youth Exchanges

Preveza firstly reported on the tremendous success of the Youth Exchanges with Sherborne and stated that they were eager to expand the scheme, possibly with Bellagio, Kötzing, Granville and Houffalize. Sherborne emphasised the fact that it represented a singular Douzelage achievement that was far cheaper than any commercial enterprise and made possible by using host families and available Grants. Although some concern was expressed over language difficulties it was pointed out that the young people do not appear to encounter any problems.

**Action: Preveza
Sherborne**

14. EXPO 98 - LISBOA

The Delegates were presented with informative leaflets and brochures on this Event, to be opened on the 22nd May, and which is of worldwide significance. As Sesimbra was only some 30km distant from Lisbon their local tourist office was able to offer particularly attractive packages to the Douzelage towns. The end of July, 23rd/28th, was recommended as the best time and full price details and deadline dates would be forwarded to all the towns by November 30th. **Action: Sesimbra**

ADDRESS BY MME ELIZABETH BOYER

Mme Boyer, Member of the European Parliament, congratulated the Douzelage on their achievement in bringing the local population into the European dimension and commented on the similarity of the Meeting to the European Parliament. She commented on the difficulties of communication and that the importance of the IT and Media has been debated in the European Parliament: here again the Douzelage has demonstrated how forward thinking it is. She further emphasised the fact that the future lies with the young people.

Mme Boyer continued by stating that, following the Maastricht Treaty, difficult obstacles remain to be overcome, but the Douzelage remains the perfect tool to encourage integration and to involve participation at local level by showing how both social and economic factors relate.

The further expansion of Europe will encourage it to come to terms with the past, to live in peace, and Mme Boyer concluded by stating that the intention was not to coalesce states but to unite the people.

Granville agreed that the Douzelage was instrumental in helping to promote Europe and stressed the significance of its many exchange schemes for the young people. Local companies from each town must be urged to take them on for work experience.

ADDRESS BY PATRICK COLIGNEAUX : TÉLÉTHON 5th/6th December

Patrick Coligneaux informed the Delegates that this year's Téléthon, a major fundraising event for research into muscular diseases of genetic origin, would be held in Granville; it was hoped each town could have three representatives to create the first Eurotéléthon. Further information would be available by November 30th.

Action: Granville

Gonzague Lebrun from AFM, the organisation for the families and sufferers of neuromuscular illnesses of genetic origin, spoke of the progress already made from research funded by previous Téléthons. Although significant worldwide, the

emphasis was on Europe and it was intended to demonstrate through the TV show, with the European angle, that Europe was not just for talking but also for DOING.

Sherborne told the Delegates that the Lions and Rotary Clubs already operated not only at local level but also internationally and thought that other towns may consider giving their support to the Téléthon through these organisations.

**Action: ALL - to contact
local Lions and Rotary Clubs where appropriate**

C. Education Report

Jeremy Barker confirmed that, following the Bundoran Education Meeting, all by four of the eighteen items from the Agenda had been completed - and in particular the production of the Directory of Schools.

With reference to the next Education Meeting, to take place in Bellagio, Kötztig suggested that it would be an opportunity to discuss the different Socrates programmes and made the following observations :-

- a. personal ties between the schools are very important: each town should shortly select a teacher from secondary level for their Delegation
- b. Comenius I and III.2 are the most interesting programmes
- c. an experienced speaker on the Comenius funding programmes should be invited

Action: ALL

All schools to be given a copy of the Schools Directory. **Action: Sherborne**

D. Reflection Committee

This part of the Minutes should be read in conjunction with the report given to all delegations at the Symposium.

1. Expansion of Douzelage Economic Activities & EU Funding

A comprehensive report was presented to the meeting concerning possible European Funding for the activities of the Douzelage. After due analysis, possible choices were suggested as follows :-

- promotion of tourism both by ensuring a special welcome for private visits and the piecing together of Package Tours for group visits between the towns. The Passport Scheme is vital for such initiatives.
- promotion of street fairs, as with the annual French Street Market in Poole in Dorset, and Douzelage stalls at events organised by others, e.g. the annual Dorset Steam Fair.

- participation in Europartenariat. **ACTION** Meerssen agreed to visit the next one in the Netherlands as observers and report back.
- Interprise. **ACTION** to be discussed again in Bellagio. It was thought that involvement with local Chambers of Commerce was vital in order to take this and Europartenariat forward.
- a list of other relevant programmes was added along with contact names, numbers and addresses for these and the numerous funds for Youth Exchanges.

2. Douzelage Reflection Document

This was prefaced by the document produced by Sherborne to make its Douzelage Committee a more efficient and responsive body. It was included in the hope that Sherborne's conclusions might be of use to others.

The main document produced much interesting discussion, though few firm conclusions.

- the numbers of items on the Agenda should be reduced. This has been done.
- new Agenda items should be submitted well beforehand, and in full, in order that delegates could discuss matters with their respective committees before the meeting. This was agreed.
- breaking up into smaller discussion groups evoked very different responses. But it was generally agreed that there could be occasions when it might be appropriate. *It was subsequently suggested that there could be parallel smaller discussion groups using the fact that delegations had additional delegates who did not necessarily have to be in the main meetings all the time.*
- where simultaneous translation was not possible, it is vital that each delegation should have a fluent English speaker.
- Conferences did not have to be on a lavish scale, and if delegates were lodged with families, then the cost would be less and contact with the people of the town greater.
- it was agreed that the first item on the Agenda henceforth should be approval of the Minutes of the last meeting. In addition, a summary of the accounts of the Douzelage should be submitted.
- there was much discussion on the need to involve people in the towns of the Douzelage in our activities. Sherborne outlined how it intended now to

tackle this problem through a Community Liaison Officer and it was agreed that it was a matter that should be returned to in the Agenda for Bellagio.

- Houffalize gave a summary of the document produced by the Benelux Countries. They confirmed the difficulties of involving local people and suggested that each town should have one main project, such as the Mini-Parliament in Bellagio and the European Youth week in Kötzing. Moreover it is important to regard the Douzelage as an entity and not as twelve separate towns. Optimism was expressed regarding the future.
- the suggestion was made that each town make a short presentation of five minutes or so on its particular organisation and achievements. General topics for discussion could be football violence, the Euro and racial differences.

CONCLUSION

The President, Jeremy Barker, announced with great pleasure that Karkkila had made the decision to join the Douzelage. Bundoran requested a video of their town.

Action: Karkkila

He requested the three towns with Austrian contacts to keep in touch by FAX and confirmed the criteria of winter sports, a secondary school and near location.

**Action: Altea
Kötzing
Sesimbra**

Sherborne would undertake to find out about the cost of a set of Simultaneous Translation equipment for use at the Douzelage Symposia and would have this information ready for the Bellagio Conference.

Action: Sherborne

Jeremy Barker concluded by thanking the Delegates, and the amateur interpreters in particular for their valiant and professional services.

Paul Georges then expressed his thanks and the appreciation of everyone for such wonderful organisation and hospitality.

Jean-Marc Julienne thanked Jeremy Barker and remarked that, although the Delegates did not always agree on everything, this was Europe!