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European Town Twinning

ALTEA : BAD KÖTZTING : BELLAGIO : BUNDORAN : CHOJNA : GRANVILLE
HOLSTEBRO : HOUFFALIZE : JUDENBURG : KARKKILA : KÖSZEG
MEERSSEN : NIEDERANVEN : OXELÖSUND : PREVEZA
PRIENAI : SESIMBRA : SHERBORNE : SIGULDA

SUŠICE : TÛRI : ZVOLEN

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HOLSTEBRO (DK)
HOUFFALIZE (B)
JUDENBURG (A)
KARKKILA (FIN)
KÖSZEG (H)
MEERSSEN (NL)
NIEDERANVEN (L)
OXELÖSUND (S)
PRIENAI (LT)
PREVEZA (GR)
SESIMBRA (P)
SHERBORNE (GB)
SIGULDA (LV)
SUSICE (CZ)
TÛRI (EST)
ZVOLEN (SK)

Niederanven, 28 January 2009

33rd Douzelage Conference

CHOJNA

11-14 September 2008

Final Minutes



PARTICIPANTS

1 = GENERAL MEETING, 2 = SOCIAL EXCLUSION WORKSHOP, 3 = YOUTH WORKSHOP, 4 = VISITOR, 5 = INTERPRETER,

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PRESIDENCY

MR ED WEBER¹

MRS PATRICIA SALVATORE-MOES¹



1. Introduction

Before starting the 33rd meeting of the Douzelage, the president transferred the very sad news from Irene Raedts from Meerssen informing that Mr Joep Mertens had died on 7 September 2008. Joep Mertens was a teacher of the Stella Maris College and a member of the Education committee in Meerssen. Many delegates remember him as a very lovely and colourful person with a lot of humour and an exemplary commitment. A moment of silence was held for him as well as for Mr Jean Prost from Granville, who was, together with Claude Boudet and others, one of the promoters of the town twinning between Granville and Sherborne. He had died last October aged 87.

At the beginning of the meeting the president underlined the special agenda of the Chojna meeting: for the first day, a discussion about the new program Europe for Citizens 2007-2013 and all its facilities was planned and the second day, a presentation of the last months' activities by a tour of the table.

He further thanked the translators Faye and Jean-Claude Guerry from Granville for the excellent work they do on every meeting and also for accepting to assure the translation during this meeting.

He thanked the delegation from Köszeg for the handling and transport of the translation equipment and especially Zoltán, "the It-man", who took over the responsibility of this equipment and the recording of the conferences.

The preparation of this meeting had been quite hard because there had only been a few months time left after the last meeting in Türi. Vice-president Alphonse Henrard and the president had recently been in Brussels to discuss, together with the new Head of Unit Mr Risto Raivio, the new program and the modifications that have to be included in the Douzelage structure. The president informed the delegates that Mr Raivio had recently been nominated Head of unit, responsible for town twinning. As the Douzelage has a very close contact to Mr Raivio, the president has sent him a mail to congratulate him for his promotion on behalf of the Douzelage towns. Mr Raivio did a call back to thank the Douzelage for this kind attention and reassured his support for the Douzelage also for future times. Dr Jim Dratwa, who had been the guest of honour at the Douzelage meeting in Türi, will take over the former job of Mr. Raivio.

The president further thanked Türi for having hosted the spring meeting. The minutes of this meeting had already been sent out. Comments to these draft minutes should be sent to the secretary office. The minutes will be approved at the next spring meeting in Altea.

He further informed that he had been contacted by Mrs Antonella Valmorbida, the director of the association of local democracy and agencies (ALDA) in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. She had been asking if the Douzelage would be interested in a co-operation with the ALDA Agency. A meeting will be arranged with Mrs Valmorbida, the vice-president and the president in the next weeks, in order to discuss an eventual cooperation. This contact could be helpful as this agency is dealing with all kinds of questions about European citizenship. As they are project assistants, they could probably be very helpful in giving technical assistance in the developing of our multi annual projects. They also organize conferences and seminars for people active in the European citizenship. The information about this institute and its website will be included in the Douzelage links on the website.

The necessary improvements to be brought to the Douzelage website discussed in Türi have been made. It had been asked to have a summary, showing the last changes and updates of the website. This can now be found in the member area. Its definite form will be fixed very soon. A very important change has also been to divide the website into 4 main topic sections (horizontal bar): Home, Youth, Education, Members. It will now be much easier to identify the menus people need. Everything will be put in the right setting during the next weeks. The president thanked Michael Morrel, who had encouraged the member towns to update their town information page. Towns, who need help to do these updates, should not hesitate to contact the president.

BAD KÖTZTING asked why non-members are not allowed to see the calendar of activities and suggested to make the calendar accessible for everyone. As an example they informed that they had a person interested in participating as an expert to the Youth Study Visit in Sherborne and that he could not see the newsletter as a non-member.

THE PRESIDENT informed that in the calendar, in the form it is working now, there is some confidential information, which should not be available for everyone (i.e. the PowerPoint presentations of our guest speakers etc.). There is a certain discipline that should be respected. For those who want to reach the restricted information, they only have to log in



(register) as a member and then they can see every document they like. Another argument is that the law about private information does theoretically not allow the publishing of any private contact address, without having the formal agreement of the person. That is why all contact addresses (Douzelage and town contacts) have been put in this member area part, accessible for everybody who would like to know more but at the same time agrees to register. The Webmaster has the possibility to check which member town has already logged in. As soon as every town contact has logged in as a member, this part of unofficial information on our public web part can be closed and all important member information put in the member part area. At that moment the calendar can be published on the public part again. The public web part should only give information about the Douzelage towns, its contacts, inform about what the Douzelage is and what its aims and activities are. No working documents should be visible to non members. As for the activity lists and details about projects, they can also be found by non members on the “what we do” part (updated on a regular basis).

BUNDORAN informed the assembly that a Douzelage group has been set up in Facebook and they suggested that maybe a more technical person of the Douzelage could have a look at the page, in order to build up a network with the Douzelage secondary schools. Facebook is a very well working network and could be an interesting and easy promotion tool.

HOLSTEBRO noted that a Facebook page of the Douzelage might be much more funny and adapted to the youngsters as the official Douzelage website. It could be a young people’s platform, just used to spread the news.

THE PRESIDENT reminded that people should keep in mind that the official Douzelage website should be the only tool to present what we do and who we are. Every additional way to promote the Douzelage is of course welcome.

To close his introduction, the president thanked all the delegations for having done all their payments. The account balance will be put in the member area, so that towns can check their situation. (The Douzelage receives the bank confirmations every 2 weeks only, so there might be a short delay).

2. Survey of recent events

The President asked the delegates to make the tour of the table so that they can express their ideas and inform about their plans for the future.

ALTEA confirmed that the next General Meeting will be from 14 to 17 May 2009. The president had already asked Altea if it would be possible to organize a parallel IT-Workshop, with reference to the websites’ presentation of Michael Morrell in Türi. Because several towns have changed the webmasters, it would be a perfect opportunity, now that the improved Website is launched and new features have been added. John Pettersson, the Douzelage webmaster would be invited to present this new site in an IT Workshop. The participants will get there the last instructions on how to modify their local part. Altea promised to provide a class room with computers in one of their schools for that purpose. Because of the preparations of their General Meeting in 2009, Altea did not have other activities or plans to present.

BAD KÖTZTING: Most of the Douzelage activities in Bad Kötzting come from the cooperation between the gymnasium in Sušice and the Realschule in Bad Kötzting. The different school staffs meet quite often for social events and for sports activities. Sometimes it is only a staff meeting; sometimes there also are pupils included. The cooperation of these 2 towns, which are not too far away from each other in distance, is quite good and fruitful. Bad Kötzting had a visit of a group of cyclists from Granville in May, on their way along the Danube River to Zvolen. They had made a stop in Bad Kötzting and it had been a nice social event on a sunny afternoon. Then the idea that came up to see whether eventually one could develop this cycling tour also for young people, leading for example from one Douzelage town to the other or including other member towns. Bad Kötzting also had 7 pupils involved in the Global Warming project, who formerly went to Oxelösund for the preparatory visit and 5 participated in the project week itself. Then Günther Pecher expressed his thanks for all those who had sent him the coat of arms of their town. For those who did not yet give or send in their coat of arms, he asked to do this as soon as possible. Once the repainting of the [Douzelage house](#) will be completed every town will get a photo. **Action All**

BELLAGIO will participate to the GM in Altea. The Club 50+ from Niederranven will visit Bellagio from 3-9 May 2009. Bellagio is still in contact with their schools, in order to organize the Miniparliament in October 2009. But they still have some problems to fix a date, as the direction of the school changes quite often. One month ago the school had once more changed its director and therefore all the discussions had to be restarted up from the beginning. Bellagio is also busy organizing a theatre representation called “The little prince” by Antoine de Saint Exupéry, performed by children of their



school. There is still a lot of preparation work and as soon as they have the dates, they will keep everybody informed. In May 2009 there will be new elections at the Town Hall and until then they do not yet know how strongly the new Town officials are willing to support the local Bellagio Douzelage committee and its activities.

The President noted that it is important that the Miniparliament, which had so much success over all these years, will be continued and especially in 2009 as it will be the 10th anniversary of that enriching children's activity.

Mrs Donatella Gandola from Bellagio said that in fact she has already met the new director and that he seems to be very interested in keeping this traditional event on the school activity list. But as the Douzelage is still something new for "newcomers" it all needs its due time to evolve before any definite decisions can be taken. The President promised all his support and help to convince their officials and that it would always be a pleasure for him to come to their beautiful town.

GRANVILLE explained that at this time of the year, their main activity is to get the Douzelage better known in their municipality. Their objective for this autumn will be to work a lot with their secondary school and local associations. They will try to contact them all in order to have only one person per club as a contact for the Douzelage and at the same time in charge of European matters. After this preparation work they will have a committee meeting and start to discuss future projects. They have already achieved to motivating the local association called "Ville à vélo", with whom they had the first project together: cycling along the Danube, from Granville to Zvolen with a break in Bad Kötzing. Discussions are still running to see whether this project will be continued in one or the other way (maybe cycling to Houffalize or another Douzelage town).

On the President's question about the Carnival idea and the Sailing project, Granville informed that eventually Sherborne will come for a visit on carnival, but that they do not yet have discussed further details. As for the sailing project it is the municipality who takes charge of the Sailing III project and more discussions have to be done before getting more details.

The President suggested that going to Sherborne for the Youth Study visit might be an interesting job for Stéphane Barbier, who did such a wonderful work in organising the sailing project. As he is working with youngsters, he would be the perfect man. André Gendre from Granville explained that he also proposed this already several times to Stéphane but that because of his rather low English skills, this one would not really dare to accept this mission. The President thought that it would be a pity, because the team in Granville did such a wonderful work during the last Sailing event.

HOUFFALIZE first of all excused the absence of Alphonse Henrard, the vice-president, who had exhausting charges on the side of his minister. As for the activities of Houffalize 6 delegates attended the GM in Türi, among them 3 students. One of them was also present in Chojna, showing that he really enjoyed the last meeting. Houffalize organized the 9th Adeps sports and culture project in June. There had been delegations from Chojna, Sušice, Oxelösund and Granville. Next year will be the 10th anniversary of the project and Houffalize would like to have people from all the Douzelage towns. A decision must be taken rather early because the places are limited. In the Adeps centre there are about 130 beds available. If one delegation needs more than 30, it will be difficult to organize with all the Douzelage towns. So this will be a decision to be taken by the local committee later on this year. 4 young people went to the Global warming project event in Oxelösund and enjoyed the week very much. 2 youngsters will attend the Sherborne meeting in October.

The President sent his best regards to Vice-president Alphonse Henrard and thanked him once more for his help and his support by accompanying him to Brussels twice.

NIEDERANVEN reported that they had the preparation of the European Poetry contest launched by Granville. Professional graphic designers could be found in Niederanven, the same young men who designed the extendable Douzelage displays. He agreed to design this book for free as a gift for the Douzelage. A first layout had already been made. The book will have about 150 pages and will possibly be finished by the end of 2008. 2 delegates from Niederanven will go to Sherborne for the Youth Study visit. It will be the head of the local Youth house and the president of the Niederanven Youth Club. Niederanven explained that they are in fact very happy about this new contact (Youth house) in their town. The official opening of the house that will happen by the end of October will be an excellent opportunity to get in contact with the local youngsters. 4 students and 2 leaders participated in the second edition of the Birdwatch project in Chojna, the project that had started in 2006 in Niederanven. The youngsters and the leaders reported about a very interesting and professional lead of this session. Everything was excellent and above all they pointed out the warm and generous welcome, the polish Douzelage friends offered to them. Niederanven further had some official visits: the secretary of the tourist office went to Bellagio and was welcomed by Mrs Donatella Gandola. The Niederanven association, Club 50+ (for elderly people) plans to go to Bellagio in May 2009.



As for the contact with the European Commission, the president and the vice-president Hennard had a meeting with the new head of the D4 unit, Mr Raivio, in order to discuss the new multi annual program. The president and the vice-president will also follow an invitation to the “Europe for citizens” Golden Stars Awards in next November.

The president visited the town of Zvolen shortly after the Türi meeting. He thanked them once more for that wonderful stay and for giving him the chance to meet the headmasters of the different schools, i.e. the Hrnčiarska Basic School that participated in the Global Warming project in summer 2008 in Oxelösund. As a proof of their commitment it can be said that they had already been involved in many other European projects and that they had even been honoured by the European Commission for their excellent work. He also pointed out the Power point presentation about environment, organized by young people in the Jilmenickeho Basic School. The president underlined the extraordinary commitment of these dynamic youngsters, very interested in environment matters. They perfectly fit into the Birdwatch project team, which gets more and more professional. He suggested to the Zvolen delegation to invite them to join the Birdwatch team. In Zvolen the president had also the chance to meet the responsible from the Slatinka Association, an NGO working for Zvolen. A possible cooperation in environment projects in the future was discussed.

Finally the president got in contact with the Danish ambassador in Luxembourg, Mr Ole Lisborg. A possible strategy was discussed to find a solution to the problems the Holstebro delegates encountered. With reference to the mail that Mrs Mette Sørensen sent some days ago, it can be said that there had been a positive reaction from the side of Mr Lisborg.

MEERSSEN: The president welcomed the new chairman of the Meerssen Douzelage committee, Mrs Ilja Aussems. She informed that the committee got reorganised and that they have a new committee now. There are just a few members of the former board left and they also got a few new members, one of them is Mrs Ilja Aussems. Actually Meerssen is looking for a treasurer and a secretary, because Jan Swanenvleugel decided to rescind. As for their activities, they are developing a new Website, as they did not have a proper website until then. Jan is busy developing the Roman project together with Sherborne. Next month they expect to host the Sušice choir in their town. They will participate in the Sherborne Youth Study visit. Mrs Aussems said that they have lots of ambitions and the most important is that they want to make the Douzelage more known to all citizens of Meerssen. As a first step they plan to invite the Douzelage towns to participate in the yearly Marathon in Meerssen. The President thanked Meerssen for their ambition and said he would be very happy to see that there is a new wind and a new power. He wished them good luck for the future.

PRIENAI said that as they had only become a new member of the Douzelage during the last meeting in Türi, they did not have so many activities, but that they are getting established. Since the Türi meeting they have got a suggestion from the town of Celia (Slovenia) to be partner in a twinning project. They confirmed their participation in this project. They will send a delegation to Sherborne for the Youth Study visit and are looking forward to visit Sherborne. They actually have many young people in Prienai who are thinking about developing different projects. For example they have a very active scouts group.

PREVEZA had no special activities to present for that moment, except 2 school meetings. The local Douzelage committee submitted a proposal to the European Commission in the frame of the program “Europe for citizens” to have a meeting maybe in September 2009 with all the Douzelage member towns. Last year they did already submit a proposal in this program, but unfortunately it had been rejected by the European Commission. The reason was that that year there had been too many proposals submitted in this program. So they hoped that this year they will succeed. The project will be about environment and they thought that if they try to organize the proposal much better, they can be successful and get the necessary support from the European Commission. Preveza is also trying to find persons to go to Sherborne for the Youth Study visit.

The president underlined the importance of announcing the activities very early. He suggested to always giving the proposals for new projects soon enough, so that the officials can have the possibility to think about it and discuss it in their committees and confirm their participation. He proposed to prepare projects always at least a year in advance, so that everybody involved can take his decisions. He mentioned then the question from Kostas Kazoukos via Georgios about the theatre play, where it had been asked if there was another new candidate for this event. He asked if maybe Preveza might be interested in taking over this successful project.

SHERBORNE mentioned that the most obvious venue would really be the amphitheatre in Preveza or the castle in Köszeg. The President completely agreed with that.

TÜRI: As they had hosted the last Douzelage General Meeting, their organizing team has met after the meeting to make conclusions. They hoped to finalize this project very soon, after having transferred all travelling expenses. They had taken



part in the Youth project started by Oxelösund (Global Warming) and will participate in the Sherborne Study visit in October. On the end of July they also participated in the already 16th joint cycling trip in Finland of Türi and Karkkila with about 40 participants. Next year the event will be in Estonia. At the beginning of July, folk dance groups from Türi visited the Prienai town festival and the local groups performed 2 concerts and a friendship evening dance. They expressed their hopes that this great cooperation between Estonian and Lithuanian folk groups will continue next year.

Other plans for the future: last meeting they had the idea to organize a hippo therapy summer camp, but actually the location did change. The school is being reorganized and today they are not sure if this project can be done next year, or in the future. They also had some ideas together with Sherborne, like exchanging dance groups next summer. They invited all member towns to participate in the Türi running race (14km) in October. Then they offered to all cultural groups or musicians to come to their flower fair on next spring.

The President repeated once more how perfectly they managed the previous General Meeting and thanked Türi for their warm welcome and the perfect job they did.

JUDENBURG activities: During their traditional “Mai-Singen” on May 22, among other performances they especially enjoyed the traditional variety dancing and the music of the Wessex Morris Men from Sherborne in England. Besides they had a full day program on several days. At this same festival they also had the pleasure to listen to the Hungarian girls’ choir and Hungarian dance group. Both groups were from Köszeg, showing their folk dances and colourful national costumes. A group of 5 pupils of the local grammar school went to the Global Warming workshop, which had been extremely interesting and successful for these young people. Willi Schnedl announced another kind of activity in the Douzelage: from 16 - 18 Sept, 8 members of their municipal authorities will participate at an exchange of experience concerning the contribution of citizens in local decisions and politics. This will happen in Oxelösund. He thanked the Mayor of Oxelösund for having coordinated this event. On Oct 11 the Sušice choir of the Czech Republic will take part at a common concert with Judenburg’s choir.

CHOJNA had hosted the “Youth in Action” Birdwatch II project in July and they had been especially pleased to have welcomed the president of the Douzelage during that meeting. There had been participants from Niederanven, Köszeg and Tartu (Estonia). Chojna expressed its hope to see Sesimbra taking over the Birdwatch project next year, just as they had suggested in Türi.

The President thanked Chojna for having hosted him during the Birdwatch project. He added that he really appreciated this visit and that the meeting they had with the Mayor and the Vice-Mayor to prepare this General meeting, had been very precious.

During the holidays Chojna had the Leonardo da Vinci project “Work experience in European hotels”. 24 students had had the opportunity to acquire work experience in Germany and 8 in England. Cezary thanked the Sherborne Douzelage committee for their precious help in organizing this event. Then they had the “Days of European Integration” in Chojna with the participation of a Sherborne delegation. Their students took part in the Visegard 4 project “VI-4-YO(E)U” in Köszeg together with Sušice and a Slovakian town outside the Douzelage. He thanked Köszeg for the great project and the perfect organisation they managed.

Some students from Chojna took part in the Adepts sports week in Houffalize and other ones in the Global Warming project in Oxelösund. All of them were very happy when they came back to Poland. Chojna will participate in the Sherborne Youth Study Visit in October and they also got the information about proposals from Meerssen, concerning a Comenius project, which could be very interesting. In the future they are interested in more projects for adults. Mr Salamonczyk said that he had the feeling that there are only projects for youngsters and not enough for adults. As there are a lot of new members in the Douzelage committees, it should be thought about involving more adults in the projects, giving them the possibility to travel to the different venues. Members of their local Douzelage committee visited Sherborne in July and they really appreciated this very nice visit.

KÖSZEG reported that their youngsters had been very active in organizing and participating in the different activities. Their first activity had been at the end of June in Köszeg (details concerning this activity will be forwarded later). In the middle of May, 16 of their youngsters and leaders had participated in the Judenburg “Mai-Singen”. They had a wonderful time and a great opportunity to meet former friends from earlier projects, as well as the Wessex Morris Men. In July, 8 youngsters and one group leader took part in the Birdwatch project. This had been a very successful and useful experience for the students. In early August a group of 5 Hungarian students had participated in the Global Warming project in Oxelösund. They enjoyed their stay and came back with very good memories and a well prepared CD



containing the summary and articles about this project. They expressed their thanks to the organizers. As for the future plans, one expert and one youngster from Kőszeg will go to Sherborne for the Youth Study visit mid October. A delegation will go to Brussels in October in order to organize speeches, meetings, exhibitions, etc. There will be a very important conference about Kőszeg in the Europe and city network, emphasizing the Douzelage as well. Next summer in July they would like to organize a new project in the frame of the usual multilateral program called: MAMI (standing for the minorities). They also help organizing a Comenius project in Kőszeg, as many of their schools are willing to participate in Comenius projects. The elementary school, the Kindergarden and the secondary school will also take part in a bilateral and a multilateral program. They would appreciate to have partners, especially in those schools where the subjects are treated in English, like in one of their schools for example, where 3 subjects are treated in English.

The President asked if they would go to Brussels on the 13th and the 14th of October. Kőszeg confirmed, but informed that unfortunately they will have no time left to visit Niederanven or Houffalize. The President regretted as Niederanven had already decided to invite them as their guests on a barbecue evening. He added that if they would need help or assistance for their meeting in Brussels he would be at their disposal.

SESIMBRA showed a power point presentation about a project that their school (Secundario de Sampaio) had prepared, where they invite every town to take part in a project called "Heritage 360°". Printouts had been distributed among the delegates, so that they could already see inside the project. What is planned is to set up a portal or a site, where virtual monuments of all the Douzelage towns can be seen, so that everybody could virtually visit the several areas and maybe get incited to visit this town on a real trip. It is a portal where they can create panoramas of the Douzelage towns' monuments and which will be put on the Web. So if anybody wants to take part in this project it had been suggested to just get in contact with the Sesimbra School. All the necessary mail addresses and contacts are marked on the printout.

Action ALL

As for the Birdwatch III edition, they are willing to take it over but they still do not know yet the dates (maybe early spring or late autumn next year). What they intend to do is to offer the possibility to watch the seabirds that come to Sesimbra. There are 2 main places in the area of Sesimbra: one of it is especially worth for the landscape and eventually they intend to do an observation by sea on a boat. The other site will be a lake that is the Laguna de Albufeira, one of the most remarkable places of the Municipality, where it will also be possible to watch seabirds. Last June Sesimbra tried to get the contact addresses of the local sports associations of the different Douzelage member towns, as one of their sports departments wanted to set up an activity linked to this area. Later on when all contacts have been gathered, they will be put on the Website, so that they will be available for everyone.

The President thanked for the cooperation and he said he has already added the different links of the other towns twinned with Douzelage member towns, so that the real twinning network can be seen in its full dimensions. If you put them together it can be seen that more than 60 European towns are linked in a form of twinning with the 22 Douzelage member towns. He encouraged all the towns to keep on sending him all the known links as to extend this network and of course to put this information on the Website.

Action ALL

SUŠICE: Concerning their past activities, the first to mention was the Comenius Söprus project, which had been recently finalized. It had been a project between Chojna, Sherborne, Türi, Kőszeg, Bad Kötzing and one school from Sušice. Then Sušice had participated in the Adepts sports event in Houffalize, where 13 youngsters and 3 teachers from 1 basic school and some gymnasium students had taken part. At the end of June and the beginning of July there had been the project in Kőszeg (Visegrad 4VI-4-YO(E)U) in which 15 students had participated. It was a project between Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Czech Republic. 4 students and one leader had joined the Global Warming project in Oxelösund. The students liked that very much. As for the scouts project, a group from Niederanven, 13 young scouts (aged 13 – 17), together with 2 leaders came to Sušice to visit the surroundings. A class of students from the Gymnasium Sušice and one class from the Realschule Bad Kötzing spent a week of sports and cultural and educational activities in Waldmünchen (Germany) at the end of June. As for the activities to come, the Children Choir of Sušice will visit the Stella Maris College in Meerssen at the beginning October this year. The Svatobor Choir will perform some concerts in Judenburg by mid October. The Choirs Svatobor and Kammerchor Kötzing are working on a common music project about Carl Orff's Carmina Burana. It is supposed to be finished by June 2009. The last one to mention was a week-end in Sušice, when teachers from the gymnasium and teachers from Bad Kötzing will meet at the end of September in order to do some canoeing, tourism and other leisure activities.

ZVOLEN started with reporting that a delegation from Zvolen visited the General Meeting from Türi. Then there had been a meeting on the second of July, where Mrs Mitasikova had invited the headmasters and the representatives from local organisations to explain their aims, principles and activities. A local committee will be established very soon. A primary



school class from Zvolen took part in the Global warming project. For the future they think that they probably will apply for a multilateral Youth Meeting, because they have already got some good experience in this domain.

BUNDORAN: Early in the year a band from Bundoran attended the Chojna Music Festival and already they had promised to go back next year. There are some other bands interested in participating and it will be a good opportunity to go back. Delegates from Bundoran had been sent to the meeting in Türi. A person from the Sherborne Abbey had come to Bundoran in June on a walk from Sherborne to Bundoran. They also talked with their school authorities about the Sherborne Music project in October and they said that they had some concerns about the age limit (18), because the 18 years old of the school will be having the exam period at that time. From discussions that had been made earlier they will go back and talk to them in order to extend the age limit to 17.

OXELÖSUND thanked every town for participating in the Global warming week. It had been fantastic to have all the young people in Oxelösund. Matts Ericsson showed some pictures and told more about that week, which had been really amazing. They had 13 different countries with 70 people participating. The most important question now was who will take the project over? All the youngsters had expressed their wish to continue this project. On page 27 of the printout that had been distributed during this week, there is a website address of the Sušice contact, allowing them to put together this special leaflet and documentation. Matts promised to send this documentation to every member town. 14 students from Oxelösund went to the Adeps event and others are going to participate in the Sherborne Youth Study visit in October. The Mayor Benita Vikström said that this Youth Study Visit will be of a great use for her work in her hometown concerning communication with the inhabitants. Next week a delegation of politicians from Judenburg will come to Oxelösund.

The President thanked Oxelösund for this extraordinary project. He said that, just as the Birdwatch project, it should become an itinerant project and it would be great to find new candidate towns to guarantee the take over. He added that the structure of the project is already well prepared, so that it would be absolutely easy to adapt it to the different local situations and to continue it in the same way. He encouraged every town to think about this possibility to organize this environmental activity, as it would be especially interesting for the same young participants to continue next year and not having to wait too long.

Action ALL

Oxelösund added that they were granted with 35.000€ by the EU Commission for that project, which can be a considerable argument too! The president insisted on the fact that it is really worth working in the frame of the Youth in Action program.

Finally he thanked Oxelösund also for hosting the Douzelage Website until then. He informed the delegates that the Douzelage Webmaster John Pettersson will stop working for the Town Hall and that he will start his own private company. But as John Pettersson had set up the Website and is the only webmaster, he would like to continue his work for the Douzelage. If Oxelösund agrees, John Pettersson will take over the whole Douzelage website over to his own server and manage the site from his own company. This may cost some server fees, but it will be an affordable amount. This will be discussed later on and of course if there are other occurring fees, the Douzelage will pay for it. John Pettersson will be invited to the Altea General Meeting IT-workshop. Oxelösund said that they had already agreed to these changes and that this would be ok for the Municipality.

The president confirmed that he is very thankful for this and that John had always been a great help for the Douzelage. When problems did occur, he always had responded very quickly to the demands, all by solving the problem. The president confirmed that the optimal situation would be that John Pettersson takes over the whole Website to his own server. Further details about the fees and procedures will be discussed in Altea. The name of John Pettersson's company is "Mediabiz" and a link will be put on the Douzelage website.

BAD KÖTZTING said that they cannot promise an immediate follow up of the Global warming project, but after leaving the initiative of 2008 to Oxelösund, they will try to organize the Wilderness camp in 2009 and the main theme will be ecology and how nature and men go together. Günther Pecher showed a few pictures about this project.

The President asked if it could be arranged as being the same project? Bad Kötzting said no, as the local organising team of the wilderness camp has its own program. It will be same ecology theme (life in the forest, what people can do about ecological questions...) and the same youngsters that had been in Oxelösund could join this similar project then, because the environmental theme will be the same.

HOLSTEBRO said that they had no activities up from the last meeting. Mette Sørensen shortly repeated what she had already written in the email about their difficult local situation. They had applied for money from their Town Hall for the



third time and for the third time they had got a refusal. This time they only had asked for 10.000 DKR. They had got the response that because of the bad economy of the Town Hall; they could not get any money. Help had then come from an unexpected source: it turned out when members of the local Holstebro Douzelage committee talked to friends (restaurants' owners, golf course managers...) that those were willing to pay for a kind of "membership" if they could have a link on the Douzelage website. By this help the Holstebro committee had been able to pay back all depths they had at the bank. They said they are quite happy, because now we could start thinking about sending young people to some of the projects, instead of always having to think of how to pay the bank.

Ms Sørensen continued by explaining the contacts the president made with the Danish Ambassador in Luxembourg. The Ambassador had contacted her and he actually had written a very nice letter to their Mayor, saying that Douzelage was a great idea and that we should take into consideration the work between people of Europe.... Neither the ambassador nor she had ever got a response or reaction from the Mayor or the Town Hall.

Sherborne asked if they have already tried to contact one of their MEPs or MPs. Michael Morrell said that if you have an obdurate Mayor and he spoke as a former Mayor, then you should really try in your most tactful way getting to the point by just passing over their heads. In England they have politicians of different parties who most of all support the Douzelage and he suggested to Holstebro to try to get in touch, with the help of their sponsors with the other more powerful politicians. Holstebro said that there is unfortunately no member of the EU Parliament coming from Holstebro or even close and that they do not know anybody. The president suggested thinking about getting in touch with someone in the EU Parliament and maybe writing a letter together as the Douzelage to the Danish members of Parliament. Holstebro promised to try that option. The President explained that if anybody else has a good link to a minister or an ambassador, or an MEP, it could be very useful sometimes. Finally he thanked Mette for her commitment and wished her good luck on their future Douzelage way.

SHERBORNE confirmed that the Global Warming project in Oxelösund had been absolutely fantastic. The students from Sherborne appreciated it very much and Chris MacAdie thanked Kevin Waterfall, who had done a lot of preparatory work in this project. As for the Wessex Morris Men, they had visited nearly every Douzelage town and they will go back to Chojna in May next year. A kind of tradition had actually been started when 3 golfers from Sherborne visited a local golf course in Chojna. They thought it would be fine if one day before a general meeting, golfer among the delegates could come and have some rounds on Thursday. A golfing party from Sherborne also had visited Granville. As for future events they are hopeful that for the Granville carnival, they can get a large group together, 10 of 15 pupils, who are going to design a carnival float and take it to Granville and join the procession. They were hopeful that they will fill the rest of the bus with slightly older people kind of standing on the side and clap. They had already often been in Granville for the carnival and had always spent a good time, so that they thought it might be a good idea to revive that tradition. Sherborne will welcome a large group of 25 people (among them, 9 dancers, 9 musicians) from Türi in next July. They strongly hoped to invite also the rest of the Chojna Douzelage committee. A group of geriatric walkers from Meerssen will be coming to Sherborne.

Then Jeremy Barker gave some more details about the Douzelage Roman Project.

This Roman Project has not been yet been completed in a year, but they have already strongly advanced. To investigate the Roman Empire in the relevant Douzelage towns, they are in way seeking their cultural roots. At the same time students, teachers and local historians in said towns will be brought together, to provide a booklet at the end, which will be suitable to use in the classroom. Through the project this will allow to establish contacts between the museums, when they exist in the Douzelage towns and to involve students in those museums. The method is that first a committed contact in each town; preferably a local historian is needed. If it would be a local historian and teacher at the same time would be perfect. Then a brief summary of what the Roman Empire was about in those towns will be done, so that a program can be put together and the application for money from the EU can be sent.

As the president suggested a Comenius program as the supporting frame program, they will have a closer look into that. A finalizing meeting is planned, which they hope would be in Bellagio, as the Romans were mainly in Italy. Thereafter once the leaflet is prepared there could be a larger gathering of students in those towns that would be interested in hosting them. For example Preveza, who has absolutely fantastic Roman monuments of all kinds (i.e. the famous site of the Actium Battle). Certainly there could be one meeting in Sherborne and in Meerssen too, but certainly other towns are also interested in hosting such a meeting. The towns relevant in or near the Empire like Preveza, Altea, Sesimbra, Köszeg, Bellagio, Sherborne, Judenburg, Granville, Houffalize, Niederanven, Meerssen. The timetable is that the 2 leaders, Jan and Jeremy will obtain a summary from each of the towns by the end of the year, in order to have something on paper in January. They want the submission to be done as soon as possible, so that they can make a full report of the project in Altea. The idea is that there might be a follow-up then (for example with a Viking project). As several towns had



talked about making the Douzelage better known, the schools in Chojna are a good example on how this can be managed easily. In fact delegates could see on the walls documents with photographs and descriptions of the various projects students had been involved in. These and other students can see this information every day and they are aware of what is going on. Probably this is a model that could be followed. Then Jeremy Barker expressed his joy to welcoming all the participants in Sherborne for the Youth Study Visit. They had been very encouraged by the numbers of projects that are rolling on. It is essential that someone should be found to take over the Global Warming project. It is equally essential that after Sherborne the Youth Study visit project should be taken over. The same is valid for the Birdwatch project and others of course. They are very encouraged by that whole development.

The President thanked Sherborne for the invitation to come to Sherborne. Unfortunately he will not be able to attend this conference, due to important professional duties. Then he gave some more explanations about the insurance in the frame of youth projects, as Mary Clothier from Sherborne did ask details about that procedure. In fact, before the Global Warming event, Kevin Waterfall had been concerned about the insurance problems, arising from the new legislation over health and safety, when children are taken to other countries. So she asked if the Douzelage covers them for insurance.

The President said that the Axa Insurance Company works together with the European Commission in the frame of the Youth for Europe projects. The Douzelage actually has a login identity on this company's website and by this tool insurance can be signed for any other youth project that is coming up. So if a youth project is being organised and towns do not have their own possibility to get insurance, they can make use of this online facility on the www.europeanbenefits.com website. The fees for such a contract are about 27€ a year, covering the whole period of one year. In Niederanven when they had the Birdwatch Project in 2006, they contracted this insurance and they simply included these costs in the fees of the participants. The necessary information will be on the Youth webpage. Payment can be made online by credit card or transfer. The contracts are also very easy to handle. They cover all kind of medical support or rescue.

Köszeg remarked that for them a participation in this Roman project is only possible if there is a financial EU support. Mr István Mátrai confirmed that this kind of project is a typical Comenius project. He added that for a preparatory meeting or visit, Sherborne could apply for in this frame. Later on it can be made a 2 year project, multilateral with 24 travels fully supported.

The president confirmed this and strongly recommended Sherborne to follow this advice.

Then Günther Pecher from **BAD KÖTZTING** gave more details about the Wilderness camp in June or August 2009. (*with a power point projection*) It will be along the same guidelines as the Global Warming week under the same program. The exact dates were not yet known as they could not yet get in contact with the local organizer before the meeting. It will be either by the end of June or the second week of August 2009. It will happen on a site located at about 40km from Bad Kötzting quite near the Czech border at a kind of clearing in the National Bavarian Forest Park. It is a rather new camp infrastructure, where the participants will live very close to nature in simple accommodation. All modern equipments are however on place (kitchen ...). The work in the camp focuses on how people and nature can get along. It is at first sight a very peaceful and picturesque place, but there will be full of activities and the program the local organizer proposes, is about ecology. They will talk about sustainable methods, about ways to save energy, about bio food (all the food in the camp is bio food), water recycling and of course about the forest as a biosphere. The houses (house in the trees, bed in the meadow, hut on the water, the tent in the forest, the star of light and the so-called cave) for the young people are situated around the main building. A few years ago the organizers started a new concept that will result in a second camp will be made of traditional types of housing from all over the world. At the time, there are already 9 different houses for this new concept, all constructed in different styles. For more information, please consult www.wildniscamp.de. Information will be sent by email, so that everybody will have all necessary details.

The President thanked and said that of course all the presentations made during the meeting will be available on the Website (on the member part of the site) with all the related links. He confirmed that this is a really interesting project and that it for sure it will be successful.

Willi Schnedl from **JUDENBURG** suggested to organize a mountaineering camp in Judenburg, because they have a special mountain up on 1800 m and this would be nice to connect the natural history of the Alps with mountain biking. As a summary you could say a theme about global warming in the mountains and glaciers in combination with the natural history of the Alps (Fauna and Flora). He asked Benita, from Oxelösund if she could do the proposal when Judenburg politicians come to Oxelösund.



Then ALTEA gave further details about the next General Meeting, which they will hold in May 2009. First of all they thanked Chojna for having changed the dates of their meeting, otherwise they could not have attended the meeting, as their town is starting the following week with religious activities that will end up with a big parade representing the Moorish and Christian battle. After that they still will have a little bit of more fiestas up to the 5th of October. This was one of the reasons why they did not yet know if their youngsters could go to the Study Visit in Sherborne or not. Since the last meeting in Türi in May, they were preparing the coming meeting in next May 2009. That is why they could not do any other activity besides. But they insisted on the fact that they were of course very much interested in the Global warming project.

Altea presented their town in a power point presentation:

Altea is situated in a bay between the sea, the mountains and a river showing a beautiful church up on the hill. They talked about one of their main festivities in June (San Juan, 4 June) and the many fiestas they have with fireworks, something the people from Altea really like. They have a special annual firework the first week in August, thrown over the sea, all accompanied by a big giant paella.

The main problem for Altea and this will be one of the themes of the GM, is the town planning and the environment. Their problem, as it is the same for many coast towns, is the construction plans and the buildings that have been erected. They have a lot of green spaces they want to preserve as much as possible. Another of their main concerns is recycling, using agriculture and renewable energy and all these issues are planned to be discussed during the meeting. Their Douzelage section wants to support the town planning, appropriate to the environment.

In parallel to the General Meeting will be an Education meeting, treating the theme of cultural diversity.

Altea's Town Hall is supporting the greatest part of the funds needed for this meeting. As for the cultural diversity, Altea has among their inhabitants many different nationalities (English, Scandinavian, Moroccan, East European...) and the problem is that in one same school class there may be 5 or 6 different nationalities. As children speak different languages that is one of their problems. If there are festivities in the schools (5 primaries, 2 secondary and 1 university) they always encourage the parents to come and celebrate together with their children. They can dress in their traditional dresses and costumes and bring their traditional food. So the parents get more easily involved with the people from Altea.

For further information see Altea's website: www.ayuntamientoaltea.es

They insisted on the very important fact that they absolutely have to know in advance how many people will attend the General Meeting. The latest date for telling them is the 31 of December. After the Christmas holidays, Altea hosts the elderly people, who will come to spend the winter, so that their hotels will be fully booked out. Then they have Eastern and then they have May, a marvellous season with a lot of flowers. They need to know the number of delegates because they have to make the reservations by time and if possible at the same hotel, a beautiful site, right at the sea and the shore. As for the airport they explained that either the Alicante airport or the Valencia airport can be used. From Alicante airport it is only 57 km away, Valencia is about 130km away.

The President said that probably most of the delegations will use Valencia as there are more international direct flights. Altea informed that they probably can only have a bus to go to Alicante, but not to Valencia. They will see if pick up at Valencia will be feasible.

The president said that all information about the meeting (documents, info and links) will be put on the Web (in the private member part of the Douzelage website).

Then he raised the question about the non-delegates' fees. Since several meetings now the non-delegates had to pay a certain amount. On his question asking if there is also a sum previewed by Altea, they said no, not yet at this stage of preparation.

On Sherborne's question how many delegates per town will be accepted and if there will be youth or environment experts needed, Altea answered that there will only be delegates for the General Meeting, Education meeting (teachers) and Internet workshop.

Sherborne thought that it has nearly become a rule for a Douzelage meeting to have young people also as delegates. Altea confirmed that no youth activities had been planned for this meeting.



The President added that it was foreseen a long time ago already, that the Altea Meeting will have a parallel Education meeting and an It workshop with probably one IT Manager per town. Of course, if a town would like to bring youngsters they are free to do so.

The president invited the youngsters to get active now, because it is their turn to make themselves an own agenda or activity plan for the coming meetings, just as it had been discussed in Kőszeg meeting. The Youth in action program is the best fitting program for this kind of youth meetings which must absolutely not take place during the Douzelage general meeting, but could be planned in the periods fitting to all youngsters and the different school/holiday schedules.

The delegations where reminded not forget to send pictures about your activities, so that they can be put on the Web in order to illustrate and better describe all Douzelage activities. Holstebro remarked that they had put some pictures on Facebook already.

The president however remarked that the official Douzelage site is the only one that should show the visitors what the Douzelage and its activities represent.