

# **Fifteenth Douzelage Conference**

**MEERSSEN**

**5th-8th November 1998**

## **PRESENT**

### **ALTEA**

Mr. Joaquim Roma Pérez  
Mr. José Davo Mas  
Mr. Luis Morote Barbera  
Mrs. Maria Angeles Berenguer

### **BELLAGIO**

Mr. Alessandro Nettuno  
Mrs. Mariangela Fumagalli-Nettuno  
Mr. Sylvestro Gilardoni  
Mrs. Carla Piccamiglio  
Mr. Carlo Galli

### **BUNDORAN**

Mr. Joe McNulty  
Mrs. Mary McNulty  
Mr. Frankie O'Gorman  
Mrs. Denise Connolly

### **GRANVILLE**

Mr. Bernard Husson  
Mr. Jean Marc Julienne  
Mrs. Mathilde Prost  
Mr. Marcel Michel  
Mr. Hermann Montreuil  
Mrs. Sylvie Julienne  
Mrs. M. Michel

### **HOLSTEBRO**

Mr. Olaf Sielemann  
Mrs. Mette Sorensen  
Mrs. Ulla Hammelev  
Mr. Paul Cederdorff  
Mr. Torben Frederiksen  
Mr. Hans Wium  
Mr. Jens Ove Madsen

### **HOUFFALIZE**

Mrs. Dany Dubé  
Mr. Paul Dubé  
Mr. Alphonse Henrard  
Mr. Francis Collin

### **KARKKILA**

Mr. Risto Hakomäki  
Mr. Matti Poskiparta  
Mrs. Raili Stenberg  
Mrs. Riitta Houvinen

### **KÖTZTING**

Mr. Günther Pecher  
Mr. Hermann Kumpfmüller  
Mrs. Evi Maurer  
Mrs. Christiane Raab-Bauer  
Mr. Wolfgang Kerscher

<b>KÖTZTING(cont.)</b>	Mrs. Agathe Kerscher Miss Barbara Kerscher Mr. Johannes Kerscher Mr. Viko Bauer
<b>MEERSSEN</b>	Mr. Karel Majoor Mr. Cees Rullens Mr. Nico van de Vliet Mr. Theo Wingbermühle Mr. Joop Hosman Mr. Hans Ruysink Mr. P. Gilissen Mrs. Manna Majoor Mrs. I. Bohemon Mrs. M. Deddens Mrs. Y. Spoelder Mr. Henk Roelofs Mrs. Regien Boeren
<b>NIEDERANVEN</b>	Mr. Raymond Poiré Mr. Jos Mouton Mr. Jeannot Poiré Mr. Paul Klein Mrs. Jacqueline Guillaume-Reiter Mr. Raymond Weydert Mrs. Lilian Mouton Mrs. Christianne Poiré Mrs. Sonja Sortorius Mr. Mike Haag Mr. Paul Nesser
<b>OXELÖSUND</b>	Mr. Christer Wargert Mr. Göte Eriksson
<b>PREVEZA</b>	Mrs. Pascal Puryelle Mrs. Sonia Tsipouritou
<b>SESIMBRA</b>	Mr. Christovao Rodrigues Mr. José Manuel Pereira Mrs. Maria Gomes Mrs. Anabela Santos
<b>SHERBORNE</b>	Mr. Jeremy Barker Mr.& Mrs. Michael Balfour Mr. Chris MacAdie Mr. John Sutherland-Smith Mr. Jon Oram Mrs. Karin Robson

The President made a speech of welcome to all the Delegates, making special reference to the representatives of Oxelösund attending as official delegates for the first time.

Christer Wargert then gave a short presentation to the conference on Oxelösund.

**A. The Minutes of the Meeting in Bellagio, 15th to 17th May 1998, were approved.**

**B.(i) Douzelage Accounts**

An interim statement of the Douzelage accounts was received. The request was made that in future sums be expressed in Euros rather than £ sterling.

**Action: Sherborne**

**(ii) Euro Account**

It was reported that it had been difficult opening a Euro account in Sherborne. The present arrangements had therefore been continued, mainly because it had proved to be very much the cheapest option for the Douzelage. It was, however, still the intention to open a Euro account once a way had been found to do it cheaper than at present.

**(iii) Negotiations over Funding for Douzelage Travel**

The President reported that the Minutes of the meeting in Bellagio had been sent to Madame Nicole Fontaine, and that she had acknowledged with gratitude and appreciation for their quality. Subsequently he had written to her to enquire about the progress of our requests and offering to meet and discuss matters further at her convenience.

Other delegations gave their reports on approaches to their MEPs and the following reported that contacts had been made :-

Bellagio	Granville
Houffalize	Kötzing
Meerssen	Niederanven

**Action: All towns are asked to keep lobbying**

**Funding for Conferences**

Meerssen reported that they had had difficulties and had been told that they did not conform to the necessary criteria. This had been challenged and support had eventually been promised, but by how much and when was still unknown.

It was also reported that henceforth it was vital that each Conference have a theme acceptable to the European Union, and all towns were urged to take due note of this when their turn to host a Conference came round.

It was further agreed that a Delegation should be sent to Brussels to negotiate an agreement, to consist of Jeremy Barker, Karel Majoor and one other other.

**Action: Jeremy Barker  
Karel Majoor**

## **C. SURVEY OF RECENT EVENTS**

### **FIRALTEA**

A report and video presentation was made by Jose Davo Mas of this very successful event during which a great deal of business and activity had been generated. There were 169 stands in 1998 which attracted 26,400 visitors and he thanked Bellagio, Kötzing and Sesimbra for their participation; Niederaanven, Karkkila, Bundoran, Houffalize and Granville had also sent publicity and information. There would be a free stand for the Douzelage in 1999 with excellent facilities and he very much hoped that the other towns would take part. The dates of the event are constant - 9th to 12th October each year.

Kötzing, Sesimbra and Bellagio all confirmed the great success of their participation, with some new trade links being established. This event is clearly a financially viable project and presents a breakthrough in the economic promotion of the Douzelage towns.

**Action: ALL TOWNS**

### **Kötzing European Week of the Young 11-22/8/98**

An inspiring report was made by one of the young people, Barbara Kerscher, who participated in this event and which had been circulated to all towns. It was suggested that this report, and that entitled 'Eurowoche 98' should be circulated to the press in each town, and also to the schools, in the hope of increasing participation in this event by the young in the Douzelage towns.

32 young people (but only five boys!) from eleven countries, including five Douzelage towns, participated. Many sports activities, plus videos and computers, were available with workshops, theatre visits and discussions on wide ranging topics such as schools and the future of Europe. During the final buffet a presentation was made by each workshop: souvenir T-shirts and videos were given to everyone. This was an excellent and enjoyable experience for all with many new friendships forged and a greater understanding of other countries.

**Action: ALL TOWNS**

### **Childhood Space**

Karkkila reported briefly on this successful and very popular event held during the Summer and which had attracted EU funding. It had included participation by a student Improviation Group from Sherborne.

### **Amateur Radio Altea**

Contact has been made with Sherborne and it is hoped that other towns will participate. Granville noted the language problem for their Club.

## **D. PROJECTS NOT YET FINISHED OR IN PREPARATION**

### **1. San Felipe**

The request from Sesimbra is for financial assistance from the towns of the Douzelage for the purchase of a school bus for the people of San Felipe - something that is desperately needed and beyond their resources at the moment. Not all the towns said they were able to assist for a number of reasons but Meerssen, Kötzing, Bundoran, Bellagio, Altea and Sherborne said they were willing to make efforts to raise the six to seven hundred Ecus suggested.

It was agreed that Sesimbra would distribute information and literature on San Felipe and this project to all towns, be it to facilitate their efforts for raising the money or, at the least, to keep them fully informed about the project even if they were unable to help.

**Action: Sesimbra**  
**Other towns as appropriate**

### **2. Music Festival in Holstebro**

Details of this event, which will take place over five days in June 2000, were circulated beforehand and each town is asked to select a band, orchestra, choir - covering any and every type of music - and to send a sample tape to Holstebro. From these tapes a composer from Holstebro, Willy Stolarszyk, will compose a work in which all the musicians and singers can participate in an 'Intereuropean Worldmusic' Festival. A letter with further details will be forthcoming but towns were requested to let Holstebro know by **1ST JANUARY 1999** if any of their musicians were interested.

**Action: Holstebro**  
**ALL TOWNS**

### **3. A Stay in the Belgian Ardennes**

With information circulated considerable enthusiasm was voiced for this Primary School project for classes in the age range 10 - 12 years. Houffalize are to receive indication of support for the year 2000 by **15TH DECEMBER 1998**, in order to obtain subvention, and Sherborne will put it on the Agenda for the Spring 1999 Symposium.

**Action: ALL TOWNS**  
**Sherborne**

### **4. Extension of the Douzelage in Austria**

The President reported on the various initiatives undertaken to find an Austrian partner, and especially through the Austrian Embassy in London and the Local Government International Bureau. He thanked Altea, Niederranven, Meerssen and Kötzing for their efforts too, though all had been in vain.

However Granville's suggestion, Hallein near Salzburg, looked likely to bear fruit and contact had been made. Details of the town were circulated for all the Delegates to see. Plans are being made for a visit there in March by Jeremy Barker and Günther Pecher in the hope that Hallein will then send observers to the Sherborne Meeting with a view to joining thereafter.

**Action: Jeremy Barker**  
**Günther Pecher**

## 5. Sherborne Symposium 22nd-25th April 1999

In addition to the traditional pattern of the International Meetings there will be a session of working groups to discuss tourism, economics and any other suggestions. With a parallel Education Meeting there would be two teachers and two general delegates expected from each town: other visitors are welcome and it is hoped that most people will stay with host families - specific mutual interests such as tennis would be taken into account. There is also to be a Photographic Exhibition and Beer Festival. Full details of all activities will be circulated. **Action: Sherborne**

## 6. Kötzing Symposium: 16th-19th September 1999

The overall theme will be tourism as an opportunity and challenge; the Gourmet Market, and possibly a Media Meeting, will also be staged. **Action: Kötzing**

## 7. Programme of Future Meetings

Spring 1999	Sherborne	22-25/4/99
Autumn 1999	Kötzing	16-19/9/99
Spring 2000	Altea	
Autumn 2000	Preveza	
Spring 2001	Karkkila	
Autumn 2001	?	
Spring 2002	? Oxelösund	

## 8. Douzelage liaison: Internet

Considerable progress is being made with many towns already having websites and others shortly to be available. It is hoped that all towns will have pages by the end of 1999.

## 9. Simultaneous Translation Equipment

Document from Jeremy Barker to follow.

## 10. Altea Tennis

The President of the Altea Tennis Club, Luis Morote Barbera, invited all the towns to send players to participate in their new competition, for senior and junior players, which will take place between the 6th and 9th May, 1999. This would be the first major sporting link between all the towns, who were requested to send all details to their clubs. Answers by **JANUARY 1999**. Altea are requested to give further information on the format of the tournament, age of players, how many, etc.

**Action: Altea**

**ALL TOWNS &  
their tennis clubs**

## 11. Conference on Cultural Diversity

**This topic was the main focus of the whole meeting and, as well as much discussion outside the actual meeting itself, there was a long and detailed debate in the meeting itself. Delegates greeted the proposals with much enthusiasm.**

**It was agreed that each town will form a group to discuss the problems  
a report by each town is to be made to Meerssen within a year  
a conference will then be held in Meerssen with representatives of all the towns with an Agenda based on these reports**  
**Action: ALL TOWNS**

#### **12. Breughel Proverbs**

Although some towns have sent translations of the 90 proverbs, Meerssen stated that they were specifically looking for the corresponding proverbs in the different languages. They therefore requested each town to provide a contact name **BY 1ST DECEMBER 1998** with whom they could work.  
**Action: ALL TOWNS**

#### **13. Europoly**

It was emphasised that Meerssen was making the financial input for this project and doing the greater part of the donkey work. There would be no financial loss to the towns but a strong possibility of a substantial financial gain. A simple example of the game was demonstrated and each town was requested to give the name of one contact person by **1ST JANUARY 1999**. The major effort by Meerssen was appreciated.  
**Action: ALL TOWNS**

#### **14. Fishing Project**

Now in its second project it was hoped to include Oxelösund and to rearrange the programme of meetings accordingly.  
**Action: Altea**

**Granville  
Oxelösund  
Sesimbra**

#### **15. Poster Exhibition**

Details have been circulated and it is hoped to stage the first exhibition during the Sherborne Symposium. Towns were asked to select five posters of works by artists of national importance from their major museums. Granville would liaise with Sherborne over setting up the first exhibition.  
**Action: Granville**

**Sherborne  
ALL TOWNS**

#### **16. Exchange of Art (Holstebro)**

Holstebro to FAX details to go onto Sherborne Agenda. **Action: Holstebro**

#### **17. Community Liaison**

Sherborne informed the Delegates of their efforts to promote the Douzelage in their town by means of a Brochure, twice yearly Newsletter and a Noticeboard to be placed in schools, Tourist Information, library, etc. All ideas that help to spread awareness of the Douzelage are always appreciated.



### **18. International Millennium Scout Camp**

Towns were asked to forward a booklet which contains full details of the International Camp, to be held from the 19th to 28th July 2000, to their local Scout and Guide organisations. With EU subvention available the camp fee will be 150 Euros inclusive. Special flight prices are also being negotiated.

**Action: ALL TOWNS**

### **19. Dorset Opera 13th-15th August 1999**

Sherborne will shortly be sending full details.

**Action: Sherborne**

## **E. NEW PROJECTS**

### **1. Proposal to include representatives from sports and social organisations**

It was agreed that the promotion of the Douzelage through sporting contacts - such as the Altea tennis tournament - was always welcome but it was considered not practicable to include a special delegate for sport at the International Meetings. It was also felt, if and when a meeting was held of such representatives, it was vital that it be to discuss specific projects and not abstract generalities. Sherborne said the exchanges implicit in this proposal could perhaps be the subject of a workshop at the next Symposium.

**Action: Sherborne**

### **2. Douzelodgers**

The proposal by Sherborne that each town should compile a list of hosts to offer a base and contact for visitors from the partner towns was widely welcomed. Sherborne to circulate full details to all towns.

**Action: Sherborne**

### **3. Frequency of Education Meetings**

This would be discussed during the Sherborne Meeting; it was considered that there was a lack of continuity at present.

**Action: Sherborne**

### **4. Appointment of Project Co-ordinators**

The suggestion by Meerssen that towns, having initiated a new project, should also supply a contact name, and FAX/telephone number if possible, was fully supported by the Delegates. This would help to ensure that project initiatives were followed up and was important to ensure the continuity of the Douzelage. It was agreed that, when the draft Minutes were circulated, the towns would give the names of appropriate co-ordinators.

**Action: ALL TOWNS**

### **5. Suggestion for parallel meetings for Tourism Representatives**

Not all towns consider tourism to be within their particular remit in the context of the Douzelage, though others clearly do so. In general the Conference decided against this idea, though the point was made again that, if the meetings were to take place, it must be to discuss specific projects and not general principles. Sherborne once more said that this could possibly be the subject of a workshop.

## **6. Special Package Tours for visiting Douzelage Towns**

There was a good debate on this subject and differing opinions. It was emphasised that such tours need a great deal of thought and professional expertise. Not all towns felt this was something they could undertake, though any town wishing to do so as a *ballon d'essai* was welcome to do so.

There needs to be a clear understanding about the aim of such tours - is it primarily a commercial venture to promote tourism, or is it essentially non profit-making in order to facilitate contact, friendship and goodwill between the citizens of the Douzelage towns, or a combination of the two? . . It is a fine line, but it needs to be drawn.

**CONCLUSION** Any town wishing to embark on this is welcome to do so and all towns could learn from the experience. Sherborne said this too might be made the subject of a workshop in the next Symposium.

## **7. Exchange of *Troisième* Age Groups**

It was agreed that these groups are very active, motivated and often have considerable resources. Paul Georges, as a President of the University of the Third Age, has great expertise and would be asked by Houffalize to circulate the towns with information and advice. Sherborne would also put this on their Symposium Agenda.

**Action: Houffalize  
Sherborne**

## **8. Invitation from Sesimbra to Ministers of Religion**

Towns were urged to make their ministers aware of the two special dates, 3rd to 5th May and 25th to 26th September, and to encourage them to visit Sesimbra. The problem of travel costs and time were especially noted. Sesimbra is requested to clarify whether Ministers are invited to either or both of the dates.

**Action: Sesimbra  
ALL TOWNS**

## **Mrs. Ria Oomen MEP : Mr. Jan Willem Bertens MEP**

Mrs. Oomen recognised the Douzelage role in promoting closer union between the European people. The Treaty of Maastricht emphasises respect for human rights and citizenship of the European Union. Mr. Bertens stated that more than 8,000 twinning cities presently exist and, with the expansion of the EU, these numbers will grow. With regard to racism and cultural diversity he was adamant that, following two terrible wars, Europe must refrain from prejudice but that language and cultural diversity still have to be recognised. Both MEPs had listened sympathetically to the debate on the language problems encountered by some of the partner towns but reminded the Delegates that translation was costly and that Euro-English was the *lingua franca*. Nevertheless languages have to be recognised and the Douzelage could help by encouraging language education in the schools. Communication is vital for survival but it cannot always be in all languages.

Considerable discussion continued on the problems of obtaining EU subvention for travel. Delegates were reminded that there was much support from the EU

Parliament for twinning projects, and that the budget has grown, but there was not sufficient for everyone. Delegates stressed that the Douzelage is a unique flagship model for the rest of Europe and that the numbers involved were not reflected in contributions from the budget. Local authorities are presently reluctant to favour one Douzelage town within their area.

It was suggested that an amendment might be added to the Fontaine Dossier demonstrating the uniqueness of the Douzelage project. Furthermore, a small delegation should be formed to put the case to the appropriate people and organisations.

### ***Addenda***

#### **a) Meerssen Welfare Exchange Contact**

Details were circulated and towns asked to pass these on: the contact in Meerssen is Dr. Knols.

#### **b) Bellagio Mini-Parliament**

To be held over four days 5th - 9th May 1999. Details of Gourmet Market follow later.

#### **c) European Red Cross**

Social workers and volunteers can obtain funding from EU to exchange with other towns. Kötzing has contact names and will circulate details. **Action: Kötzing**

#### **d) Holstebro Wind Orchestra and Marimba Orchestra**

Details were circulated for towns to pass on.

#### **e) Douze Villes pour l'Europe**

This book for schools is being updated to include the new towns: contact Houffalize.

#### **f) Kötzing Media Meeting**

Parallel meeting to be held during Symposium. More information to follow and Altea requested to send account of their last meeting. **Action: Kötzing**

**Altea**

#### **g) André Poirier**

It is hoped to arrange a suitable memorial during the Sherborne Symposium.

### **DOUZELAGE COMMUNITY PLAY**

A successful and constructive meeting has fixed the dates for 23rd July to 5th August 2000: the theme will be "In Childrens' Shoes" with approximately 20 actors from each of the participating towns taking part. Production expenses, plus travel, would be the only financial costs to be met by the towns who were urged to strongly support

their players and directors. Letters of support from the highest possible authorities, to be shown to Brussels, were requested by **20TH DECEMBER 1998**.

Jon Oram, overall Co-ordinating Director, considered the Play to be an inspiration for the European community and an advertisement for the Douzelage in seeking a united voice and common interest. Network 2000, set up in Karkkila, enabled towns to see and talk to each other; the Play will further the contacts and help to unite the Douzelage partners. Community plays have taken off throughout the world but this project, with so many countries involved, is an entirely new - and risky- undertaking.

## **CONCLUSION**

The meeting concluded with the President expressing his thanks to all the Delegates and, in particular, to Meerssen and their many special committees. He considered the Douzelage was reaching ever closer to a 'Europe of the people'. Meerssen also expressed their gratitude to the President for his efforts.