

**TWENTY-THIRD
DOUZELAGE
CONFERENCE**

HOUFFALIZE

10th - 13th October 2002

PRESENT

Altea	Tomas Gonzalez Feli Navarro Ma Pepa Rostoll Inma Cortes Gregorio Cortes Jose Juan Lanuza Josefa Perles
Bellagio	Maria Angela Gilardoni Donatella Gandola Daniela Fioroni Alessandro Nettuno Armando Luperto
Bundoran	Joe McNulty Denise Connolly Michael McMahon Vincent Rooney Martin McAndrew
Chojna	Janusz Cezary Salamoczyk Robert Ryss Katarzyna Salamoczyk Agnieska Skrycka Kazimierz Kunisz
Granville	Jean-Marc Julienne Bernard Husson Mathilde Prost André Gendre Frédérique Heurguier François Heurguier Mme Julienne Julienne 1 Julienne 2 Pierre Audrain Jacqueline Audrain Thérèse-Marie Andrin Bénédicte Gaunet

Holstebro	Mette Grith Sorensen Jette Hingebjerg Dorte Storper
Houffalize	Alphonse Henrard José Lutgen Paul Georges Manuela Di Pinto Ghislain Kech Malou Henrard Dany Dubé Jean Pochet Denise Hansenne Régine Cobraiville Luc Nollomont
Judenburg	Gerald Dobnigg Margit Ergert Andrea Kober
Karkkila	Helena Palm Riitta Huovinen Harri Lipasti Matti Kosonen Antti Velin
Kötzting	Wolfgang Kerscher Agathe Kerscher Petra Hohaus Evi Maurer Günther Pecher
Meerssen	Nico van de Vliet Joop Hosman Jan Swanenvleugel Martijn Hosman Peter Gillessen Betsie Gillessen Sophie Majoor Rob Waltmans Marlies Hosmaan Irene Raedts Hans Ruysink Olga Ruysink

Oxelösund	Benita Vikström Christer Wargert Gunilla Wargert
Niederanven	John Bauler Patricia Moes Jos Mouton Jeannot Poiré Ed Weber Marie-Antoinette Paquet Albert Paquet
Preveza	Dimitros Loupas Georgios Alisandratos
Sesimbra	Felicia Da Costa Ana Teresa Martins Luis Xavier
Susice	Vera Svobodova Eva Beniskova Petr Malek Milan Rippel
Sherborne	Mike Balfour Chris MacAdie L Stephens Jeremy Barker Karin Robson John Sutherland-Smith
Türi	Ervin Jürisoo Katrín Ametmaa Marika Toots

José Lutgen, Mayor of Houffalize, introduced Bernard Caprasse, Governor of the Province of Luxembourg, who holds responsibility for the economy of the South area of Belgium.

Bernard Caprasse expressed his pleasure at welcoming citizens from the fifteen member states of the EU as well as representatives from the candidate countries. Twenty years ago such an international gathering would have been impossible to contemplate but now Europe has become a family. He particularly noted the debt to Greece and that the whole world should support the ideas of democracy and human rights.

M. Caprasse concluded by confirming his support of the Douzelage projects and especially the proposals to encourage young people to visit and gain work experience in EU countries.

Jeremy Barker, President of the Douzelage, thanked M. Caprasse for his support of the Douzelage and the people of Houffalize for their welcome and all the hard work that had gone into the preparation of the event. He then went on to emphasise the particular importance of this Conference for the future of the Douzelage.

We had gathered, he said, to do four things:

- to network
- to give attention to the usual Agenda
- to elect a new President
- to discuss the Consultation Documents on the way the Douzelage could evolve in the future.

This last, he said, was crucial. It involved the future of our unique and extraordinarily successful multi-twinning organisation. How were we to build on that success? The challenge was all the greater because of the momentous decision made by the European Union's leaders the previous Wednesday to include a further ten countries in the Union. The decision was a testimony to the power of the European dream; it reminded us of what the EU was all about, an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe, entrenching democracy, preventing armed conflict, spreading prosperity.

What we of the Douzelage had now to do was decide whether we can match that vision. We were given a vision by Monsieur Poirier and Henry Hafray to build that ever closer Union at the grassroots, among the ordinary people of Europe, and we have been boldly in the forefront endeavouring to do so ever since. In the process we have brought thousands of people together. Can we now match the dynamism of the EU at our own level? Are we to be bold or timid? True to the vision or content with a cosy exclusive club of fifteen?

The answer surely is that we must be bold and true.

Business Matters

1. The Minutes of the meeting held in Oxelösund, 16th - 19th May 2001, were approved.

2. The Interim Balance Sheet for the period 1st April - 30th September 2002 was accepted. It was noted :-

there had been the request for the Accounts to be kept in euros but in discussion with the Honorary Treasurer it emerged that it would be more expensive for the Douzelage to operate this way. The present system would therefore continue until a new town held the Presidency.

auditing of Accounts will be done in the future. All invoices are necessarily submitted to the Treasurer and it is hoped this will satisfy the requirements of all towns.

3. Simultaneous Translation Equipment

During the Oxelösund conference the delegates had been informed by Nico van de Vliet that one of the booths had been severely damaged. The total cost for repair would amount to €800 which would entail an additional payment from each town in 2003: meantime there were still some towns who had not paid the annual €50 for 2002.

**Action: ALL TOWNS except
Niederanven to pay Nico van de
Vliet as soon as possible**

Delegates were also informed that the damage sustained in Karkkila was exceptional and that it was therefore still cheaper not to take out insurance.

4. Website

Some four or five workshops have now been held to help set up local administrators and good progress has been made. There will soon have been 10,000 hits on the website.

The education website was introduced at Oxelösund with teachers being asked for ideas that would be of interest, such as chatrooms, forums and projects, but with little response. **Delegates were urged to press their teachers to put forward their ideas.**

It was also noted that many delegates were experiencing increasing problems with viruses: additional anti-virus information would be forwarded by Oxelösund.

5. Refunding of Travel Costs for Delegates

Preveza have written to Mme Bruggink for advice on payments for the Conference in September 2000.

Niederanven reminded delegates that invoices for the Conference in 2001 had to be received by October 25th.

Action: ALL TOWNS

As invoices for the Houffalize Conference will also be necessary for travel reimbursement, all delegates are reminded to send their invoices to Manuela Di Pinto.

Action: ALL TOWNS

It was agreed that clarification and clear up-to-date directives must be obtained from Brussels and that a Vice-President, or town, could be appointed in the future with this special responsibility. In the meantime the President undertook to set out a format to be given to each town for completion.

Action: The President

B. Survey of Recent Events

Comenius

Judenburg reported that the programme involving Sherborne, Karkkila, Preveza, and Chojna was now in its third year, although the Italian town was no longer involved. It may be necessary to engage new funding methods for future programmes as the EU could not always be counted upon.

Preveza, Chojna, Meerssen and Sherborne are now beginning another programme.

Preveza informed the delegates that Barbara Zandraveli will be circulating a new document but that many of her emails had not been answered. Each town needs one contact name for education emails.

Action: ALL TOWNS

Séjour à l'Adeps à Engreux: Houffalize

Bellagio, Judenburg, Granville, Houffalize and Niederanven were all represented at this year's event which was as successful as ever. The project is well subsidised by the EU and will take place again 2 - 6 June 2003.

Action: ALL TOWNS

Bellagio Mini-Parliament

The 8th Mini-Parliament will take place next year with information to be circulated in December. Kötzting noted how the people of Bellagio give a very friendly welcome to the guests each year and that the Douzelage was always grateful for such kind hospitality.

Action: Bellagio

**to circulate dates as early
as possible**

Kötzting Week of the Young

This annual event was attended by only one representative from a Douzelage town this year. Delegates were urged to encourage their young people to attend this successful and well established event. Information on the 2003 programme will be circulated.

Action: Kötzting

Sherborne Choir visit to Preveza

Twenty-two pupils, aged from 9 - 12 years, from Sherborne Preparatory School participated in the well organised and successful Choir Festival in Preveza. They took part in the town procession, sung in the town square and the castle and enjoyed great hospitality.

The date for 2003 will be 3rd - 6th July.

Sherborne Venture Scouts

Six Venture Scouts walked the Pilgrim's Way from Cherbourg to Mont St. Michel and were supported in their endeavour by the Sherborne Douzelage Student Travel Fund. During the walk they enjoyed two unforgettable days of hospitality in Granville.

Sherborne visit to Gardens of Normandie

This visit is planned for May 2003 and could be extended to include other towns. Exact dates and details of the type of gardens which would be of interest would be sent to Granville.

Action: Sherborne

C. Projects not yet finished or in preparation

1. Sesimbra Symposium: 15th - 18th May 2003

The main theme of the general meeting will be to continue discussions on the future of the Douzelage. The Education Meeting will discuss sustainable development to include all social groups: towns will be requested to report on the integration of minority groups in their local schools. There will also be an IT workshop and more information will be circulated by the end of 2002.

Action: Sesimbra

Information on accommodation for non-delegates was circulated to the towns and Granville advised that they had already organised a coach party.

2a. Programme of future meetings

September 4 th – 7 th 2003	Holstebro
Spring 2004	Judenburg
Autumn 2004	Granville
Spring 2005	Bundoran
Autumn 2005	Meerssen
Spring 2006	Bellagio
Autumn 2006	Sherborne

The dates for the Holstebro meeting had been moved in order to accommodate the staging of the Douzelage Play in the Musikteatret during the same period. The Play

will run from mid-August until 7th September and will therefore enable Douzelage delegates the opportunity to see the Play. There is much optimism that funding for the Play will be found and there are presently 12 towns interested in participating.

***Amendment:** unfortunately the Play will not now take place in 2003 but it is still hoped to stage it in Holstebro in 2004. This is currently under discussion.*

2b. Kötzing Festivities 2003 (Kötzing)

The festivities are being held to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Kötzing achieving town status. It is hoped to include a Douzelage weekend from 4th - 6th July with towns requested to send two representatives for the ever popular Gourmet Market, who would receive free board and accommodation - or at least to send some of their local specialities.

Other events include music and dance, and possibly a workshop on ecology, and it is therefore hoped that there will be some EU funding in addition to that from the Kötzing Council. Towns were requested to advise Kötzing of their musicians and/or dancers who would be attending by the **end of October** and to inform their local citizens of the events and to check the Kötzing website.

Action: ALL TOWNS

Holstebro, Bundoran, Niederaanven, Granville, Karkkila, Meerssen, Sherborne and Judenburg would participate and the other towns all expressed interest.

3. Tennis during Symposia

Following the initiative from Altea, Holstebro were hoping to hold an event and Judenburg would definitely organise a competition. There would be no tennis in Sesimbra as the hire of courts was very expensive and could not be justified by the Council.

4. Primary Health Care and Social Care

Following the excellent report from Karkkila, Holstebro would continue with a two day workshop: the first day would be spent on visits and the second on discussion.

Judenburg also confirmed their intention to further these initiatives during their Symposium in 2004.

5. 'Douze Villes pour connaître l'Europe'

The decision had been reluctantly taken that it would not be possible to update this important and useful document as Jean Pochet had now retired.

6. National Press Conference in Houffalize

The objectives of the Douzelage were well promoted to the media during this event.

7. Football (APPENDIX D)

Oxelösund had contacted all the towns previously setting out the proposal for young people to visit the partner towns to play football. This would not only promote the team activity but also friendship and the opportunity to visit the Douzelage towns and it was hoped that accommodation could be offered in schools and families.

Oxelösund undertook to circulate a proforma to set out the details.

Action: Oxelösund

Sherborne, Granville and Altea all confirmed their participation whilst other towns are hoping to join in.

D. New Projects

1. Promotion of Youth Activities

Meerssen reported on the formation of a Youth Council in January with eight members: a meeting in April was attended by two representatives from Niederanven and from Houffalize. It is hoped that this will encourage the young and that other towns might take similar initiatives to expand the scope.

Niederanven reported that a specific youth forum was now on the website and that interest should be promoted with information on contacts, etc.

Houffalize noted that, following the Benelux youth meeting, several young people, with the support of the Douzelage, organised their own meeting in Bastogne which was hosted by the military. It is vital that the young organise their own events and the website will help.

Action: ALL TOWNS were urged to inform their young people of the website.

2. Sherborne/La Manche Twinning Seminar in Rüdesheim: 25-28 April 2003

The President informed the delegates of the recent meeting in Cherbourg and that the next meeting would be held in Rüdesheim: ten Dorset towns and forty from La Manche region have German twin towns. Delegations will be of four people, to include two young persons, and it is hoped that Kötzing will attend. Costs will be £125 for a single room to include all meals and transport. Further details will be available on the website www.twinning.org.uk.

Action: Sherborne

On 21st - 24th April Bryanston School in Dorset will host a youth music festival at a cost of €120 per person.

Action: Sherborne

3. Cricket in Holstebro

Only two Douzelage towns have a cricket team at present and Sherborne will be visiting Holstebro in August 2003.

4. Historical Exchanges

A party from Sherborne will travel by coach to Meerssen and Maastricht in May 2003. A return visit to Sherborne is planned for 2004 and it is hoped that similar visits will be undertaken between other partner towns.

5. Proposal to hold Douzelage Conferences once a year

This will be considered by the group appointed to discuss the future organisation of the Douzelage.

6. Language and Culture through Community Networks (APPENDIX E)

This proposal is for the learning of the lesser used European languages. Prior to a visit to Chojna, students from Sherborne learnt a few basic words and phrases in Polish. Similar lessons were given in Greek to the pupils, staff and parents who attended the Choir Festival in Preveza: following the visit it is hoped that links will be maintained through email and the internet.

Judenburg informed the delegates that the European Centre of Modern Languages in Graz will be promoting a similar scheme. (www.ecml.80)

All towns supported these enterprises.

7. Douzelage Orchestra and Choir

Altea informed the delegates of the new dates for the meeting to discuss this project. The meeting will take place in Altea from 13th - 16th February 2004 and contact names are still needed from the towns.

Altea also expressed their wish to have the Douzelage banner on display at this event.

Sherborne and Judenburg would have a representative at the meeting and Houffalize had people to play the clarinet, flute, drums and guitar. Other towns expressed their support and all were urged by the President to support this excellent project.

**Action: ALL TOWNS to
immediately nominate a
delegate**

E. Discussion on the future organisation of the Douzelage

Three documents were submitted which would form the basis of the subsequent discussions. These are available on the website as Appendices.

Appendix A : Houffalize Meeting – Election (**Houffalize**)

Appendix B : Mandate of the President & Evolution of the Douzelage (**Niederanven**)

Appendix C : Consultation Document (**The President**)

The following points were noted and unanimously agreed :-

Organisation within the Douzelage has evolved as required and for so many communities to meet so freely is unique.

The international set-up consists of a President, two Vice-presidents, a Treasurer and an Education President. Nico van de Vliet has charge of the simultaneous translation equipment and Oxelösund has undertaken overall responsible for the website. Although the present arrangements are probably adequate, it was agreed that a working party should be organised to prepare proposals on the future organisation and that a report would be made at Sesimbra in May with the Presidential election deferred to Holstebro in September 2003.

Local organisation differs from town to town. Projects are lead by the town that proposes it and most of these find support.

Enlargement from the original twelve towns was an initial task for the President on his election in 1997 and which he undertook following instruction from the delegates. The three new towns of Karkkila, Oxelösund and Judenburg have all added much new vitality and any future partner town would be selected on its suitability.

Enlargement would mean that towns would have to host the international conferences less often but the management of the international meetings would need careful planning. The continuation of the workshops at these meeting would be necessary to attract funding from Brussels.

Granville suggested that specific tasks should be allocated to the President and Vice-presidents, one of whom could liaise with Brussels with particular reference to funding and finance. It was further suggested that one Vice-President might have special responsibility for candidate towns.

Houffalize confirmed their support of the working party and noted the information put forward in the Appendices A and B, from Houffalize and Niederaanven, as well as the earlier document from Nico Hilbert.

Niederaanven stressed the need to decide if the present set-up needs changing and that any changes would be acceptable to the local municipalities.

Meerssen further noted the need to consider language and regional aspects.

Sherborne considered that a total restructuring would be unnecessary but that, in addition to discussions on enlargement and the roles of the Vice-presidents, thought should be given to the number of meetings to be held each year. It should be noted, however, that the search for new candidate towns will not be an urgent matter and that it is difficult to quantify success to local citizens ... other than that the Douzelage is 'good'.

Karkkila emphasised the need to remember the aims of the Douzelage and for a working group to make their recommendations at Sesimbra. Changes concerning the General Meeting and working methods must be made with a preference for one larger annual conference to include larger workshops and seminars.

Sesimbra underlined the need to ensure that, with public money involved, there should be value for money and that local people should benefit. Meetings should not just be an opportunity for a group of friends to get together.

Judenburg felt that a clear structure was important and that benefits to the local communities should be set out. The proposed youth training scheme is definitely a step in the right direction.

Kötzting also agreed that total restructuring would be costly and should not be necessary. It should be remembered that the Douzelage consisted of a group of private people working on a voluntary basis, but that the successful completion of so many projects over the past ten years was not the result of a 'jolly gettogether'.

The number of meetings in a year needed careful debate (with Kötzting of the opinion that one per annum would suffice) as would the management of an enlarged Douzelage. The election of the President should not get too complicated and, as in the view of Kötzting the contact with Brussels is so vital, Jeannot Poiré was an obvious candidate for the position of financial liaison.

Preveza also felt that one meeting in a year would be sufficient and that the local citizens must be persuaded of the benefits to be gained from the Douzelage.

Altea noted that the Vice-presidents needed to have specific roles delegated to them. As financial support was crucial, a country with close contacts to the EU and Brussels could be appointed for this role. Projects also should be carried through more speedily.

Holstebro agreed that the role of President, the website and enlargement needed to be structured but that the established friendly basis of the Douzelage must not be lost. It should further be remembered that the Holstebro and Sherborne committees are not connected to their Town Halls.

Bundoran recognised the need to keep any reorganisation simple and also to identify why some projects were successful and others failed. A sub-committee to oversee funding and provide up to date expertise would be very beneficial.

Oxelösund agreed to the working party discussions to report at Sesimbra and that funding was vital. However it was important to keep things simple and one meeting per annum should be sufficient.

Bellagio noted that increased funding would allow more activities.

It was agreed that the working party should discuss the following topics with the first report to be made in Sesimbra :-

1. The approach to funding
2. The number of meetings in a year
3. Enlargement
4. The structure of the role of President

The meetings would take place in the Benelux countries and the members of the working party would consist of

The President, Jeremy Barker
Two Vice- Presidents, Riitta Huovinen & Bernard Husson (ex officio)
Nico van de Vliet (Meerssen)
Alphonse Henrard (Houffalize)
Chris MacAdie (Sherborne)
Günther Pecher (Kötzting)
Ed Weber (Niederanven)
Paul Georges (Houffalize)

Note: Paul Georges has subsequently withdrawn and the President has written to him to thank him on behalf of everyone for the enormous contribution he has made to the Douzelage over many years.

F. Workshop reports

Discussion on the future enlargement of the Douzelage

Present: Representatives of eight of the Douzelage towns
Representatives of the Candidate Towns: Chojna, Susice, Türi

Chairman: Jeremy Barker

The following points were agreed :-

1. That, in accordance with the Douzelage Constitution, new towns from each of the ten candidate countries would be invited to join the Douzelage.
2. That the five countries already contacted (the Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia, Estonia & Hungary) would formally be invited to join at the first General Meeting of the Douzelage after the countries in question had formally entered the Union.
3. Towns from the other five countries would be phased into the organisation in the years that follow. No further contacts should be sought for the time being.
4. In the interim before joining the Douzelage as full members, the Candidate Towns from the five countries in question are welcome to participate in all educational

Projects and their schools will be included in the Douzelage Schools Directory. They are also welcome to attend the Mini-Parliament in Bellagio, the European Youth Week in Kötzing and the Holiday in ADEPS, and whatever other events that Douzelage towns may invite them to participate in. The details of the towns should be included on the Website.

5. Each candidate town - Susice, Chojna, Sigulda and Türi - will be asked to make a ten minute presentation at the General Meeting in Sesimbra to inform delegates about their schools, economy, tourist attractions etc. etc.

6. The report by the President on the 'Search for a Hungarian Town' is available on the Website as Appendix D and was circulated at the meeting. It was also revealed that Judenburg already had an educational link with Kösweg. The delegates were unable to come to a conclusion and the President was requested to make a fuller report so that a firm decision could be made in Sesimbra as to which of the two towns, Tab or Kösweg, should be invited to join the Douzelage after enlargement in 2004.

Postscript

1. It was noted that the likelihood is that, given that the Presidency continues to be run along the same lines as at present, the cost of five additional towns was more likely to reduce than to increase the annual subscription.
2. It was also noted that it would lessen the burden of hosting Conferences by increasing the intervals between Conferences to ten years.
3. Emphasis was also laid on the fact that it is very much to the financial advantage of Douzelage towns when applying for Funding from the European Union to include towns from candidate countries in their projects

APPENDICES

Appendix A : Houffalize Meeting – Election (**Houffalize**)

Appendix B : Mandate of the President & Evolution of the Douzelage (**Niederanven**)

Appendix C : Consultation Document (**The President**)

Appendix C : Search for a Hungarian Town (**The President**)