



**douzelage.org**

European Town Twinning

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

**SUŠICE : TÜRI : ZVOLEN**

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ALTEA (E)  
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BUNDORAN (IRL)  
CHOJNA (PL)  
GRANVILLE (F)  
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)  
SUŠICE (CZ)  
TÜRI (EST)  
ZVOLEN (SK)

# 32nd Douzelage Conference

## TÜRI

**8th - 11th May 2008**

**Draft Minutes**

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## PARTICIPANTS

1 = GENERAL MEETING, 2 = EDUCATION MEETING, 3 = YOUTH WORKSHOP, 4 = VISITOR, 5 = INTERPRETER, 6 = LECTURER

### ALTEA

MRS PEPA PERLES<sup>1</sup>  
MRS GEMA CORCOLES<sup>2</sup>  
MRS PEPA NARBO<sup>2</sup>  
MRS M<sup>a</sup> PEPA ROSTOLL<sup>1</sup>

MRS MARIA JARAVA<sup>2</sup>  
MRS ROSA MARIA ROSELLO<sup>1</sup>  
MRS M<sup>a</sup> ANGELES BERENGUER<sup>1</sup>

### BAD KÖTZTING

MR GÜNTHER PECHER<sup>1</sup>  
MRS EVA MAURER<sup>1</sup>  
MRS PETRA HOHAUS<sup>2</sup>  
MR CHRISTIAN DREHER<sup>2</sup>

MRS BARBARA WENDL<sup>3</sup>  
MR BENEDIKT SEIDL<sup>3</sup>  
MRS ELKE PECHER<sup>4</sup>

### BELLAGIO

MRS DONATELLA GANDOLA<sup>1</sup>

MRS FIOELLA CATANIA<sup>1</sup>

### BUNDORAN

MR JOE Mc NULTY<sup>1</sup>

MRS DENISE CONNOLLY<sup>1</sup>

### CHOJNA

MR ADAM FEDOROWICZ<sup>1</sup>  
MR WOJCIECH DLUGOBORSKI<sup>1</sup>  
MR CEZARY SALAMONCZYK<sup>1</sup>

MR STANISLAW SLODKOWSKI<sup>3</sup>  
MR JUSTYNA SIWEK<sup>2</sup>

### GRANVILLE

MR ANDRÉ GENDRE<sup>1</sup>  
MR JEAN-ALAIN SAOUL<sup>1</sup>  
MRS DELPHINE BOUGEARD<sup>2</sup>  
MR ALEXANDRE DOUVRY<sup>3</sup>  
MRS ANNE-SOPHIE GAUTHIER<sup>3</sup>

MRS FAY GUERRY<sup>5</sup>  
MR JEAN-CLAUDE GUERRY<sup>5</sup>  
MRS ELISABETH GUERRY<sup>3</sup>

### HOLSTEBRO

MRS METTE SORENSEN<sup>1</sup>

MRS LENE VESELY<sup>1</sup>

### HOUFFALIZE

MR ALPHONSE HENRARD<sup>1</sup>  
MRS MARIE DUBOIS<sup>1</sup>  
MR LUC NOLLOMONT<sup>1:2</sup>

MR MAXIME CLOSE<sup>3</sup>  
MRS ANNE REDOTTE<sup>3</sup>  
MR MATHIEU CLOSE<sup>2</sup>

### JUDENBURG

MR WILLY SCHNEDL<sup>2</sup>  
MRS ISA PAUMGARTNER<sup>1</sup>  
MRS ANDREA KOBER<sup>1</sup>

MR MARTIN SIX<sup>3</sup>  
MR MIKE LANGGNER<sup>3</sup>

### KARKKILA

NOT ATTENDING

MR ISTVÁN MATRAI<sup>1</sup>  
MRS ILONA TALOS-MATRAI<sup>2</sup>  
MR ZOLTÁN BAKOS<sup>1</sup>  
MR MÁRTON VECSEJ<sup>3</sup>

MR LOETY COHEN<sup>1</sup>  
MR RICARDO OFFERMANS<sup>3</sup>  
MR JOOP HOSMAN<sup>1;2</sup>  
MRS THERA JANSSEN-ELSHOUT<sup>2;3</sup>  
MR NICO VAN DE VLIET<sup>1;2</sup>

MR STUART ATKINSON<sup>1</sup>  
MRS MONIQUE BRAUN<sup>1</sup>

MR MATS ERICSSON<sup>1</sup>  
MRS MARIA VEJDAL<sup>2</sup>  
MRS JOHANNA THUNBERG<sup>3</sup>

MRS SOFIA LAHANA<sup>1</sup>  
MR DIMITRIOS TRIVLIS<sup>1</sup>  
MR CHRISTOS MAIS<sup>4</sup>

MRS RIMA ZABLACKIENE<sup>1</sup>  
MR RAIMUNDAS MARKUNAS<sup>1</sup>

MRS FELICIA COSTA<sup>1</sup>  
MRS CRISTINA CONCEIÇÃO<sup>1</sup>  
MRS CÉLIA RIBEIRO<sup>2</sup>  
MR JORGE CRISTÃO<sup>3</sup>

MR JEREMY BARKER<sup>1</sup>  
MR CHRIS MACAIDIE<sup>1</sup>  
MR PAUL CARLING<sup>1;2</sup>  
MR MICHAEL BALFOUR<sup>1;2</sup>  
MR ALAN ASHBY<sup>4</sup>  
MRS HELENA PEART<sup>4</sup>

### KÖSZEG

MRS ILDIKÓ GELENCSEI<sup>1</sup>  
MR PÉTER REGE<sup>1</sup>  
MRS ORSOLYA BAKOS<sup>4</sup>  
MRS ZSÓFIA LAGLER<sup>3</sup>

### MEERSSEN

MRS MARLIES HOSMAN<sup>4</sup>  
MRS WIEPKE VAN DE VLIET<sup>4</sup>  
MR PETER GILLISSEN<sup>4</sup>  
MRS MIEKE BAYER<sup>4</sup>  
MR BAYER<sup>4</sup>

### NIEDERANVEN

MRS MARIE-ANTOINETTE PAQUET-TONDT<sup>1</sup>

### OXELÖSUND

MRS SANNA GODEAU<sup>3</sup>  
MRS KARIN LÖNN<sup>2</sup>

### PREVEZA

MRS KONSTANTINA AVTHIKOU<sup>3</sup>  
MRS ANTIGONI ARHIMANDRITI<sup>4</sup>  
MRS IOULIA ALIVERTI<sup>2</sup>

### PRIENAI

MR VYTAUTAS GRIAUSLYS<sup>1</sup>  
MRS VILMA VALALYTE<sup>1</sup>

### SESIMBRA

MR JOÃO CASACA<sup>3</sup>  
MR FRANCISCO JESUS<sup>2</sup>  
MR JOSÉ RIBEIRO<sup>4</sup>  
MR MARCIO CIMBRANELLI<sup>4</sup>

### SHERBORNE

MR MICHAEL PEART<sup>1</sup>  
MRS MARGARET BALFOUR<sup>4</sup>  
MR KEVIN WATERFALL<sup>1;3</sup>  
MR MICHAEL MORRELL<sup>1</sup>  
MRS SCILLA COPPER<sup>1</sup>  
MR TONY COPPER<sup>4</sup>





## I) Speech of Welcome by the President

The President welcomed the delegations of all the Douzelage towns except KARKKILA, who unfortunately could not attend this meeting. He underlined that attending the meetings is extremely important.

He especially welcomed Mr Adam Fedorowicz, the Mayor of CHOJNA, Mr Ricardo Offermans, the Mayor of MEERSSEN and the Mayor of ZVOLEN, Mr. Miroslav Kusein. He pronounced an extra welcome to the delegation from PRIENAI, the Lithuanian town which the assembly would hopefully accept as a new member of the Douzelage during this meeting.

Finally he expressed his thanks to KÖSZEG, to Mr. István Mátrai and the delegation of KÖSZEG and especially to Mr Zoltán Bakos, because they transported the translation equipment and had a lot of work in preparing the room for this conference.

As it was after one year of heavy work that the Douzelage met in TÜRI for the 32nd meeting, the president gave a brief report about what had been achieved as presidency. He underlined that this year was marked as hardly another by the number of activities which had been organised and one can only but congratulate all those who contributed by their commitment to this extremely positive result.

He mentioned the most important events which took place and in that the Douzelage presidency was involved.

- 10-12.05.07      The Douzelage was represented at the Twinned Town Conference in Rhodes "Sharing for Europe – Thematic Networking of Twinned Towns" by the Vice-President Alphonse Henrard, who assisted as a lecturer. Several preparation meetings were held with the president and the vice-president in order to prepare this conference.
  
- 18.05.07          An article/website "So good they launched it twice" was published on the launch of the new EC program in Rhodes, presenting the new publication "Sharing for Tomorrow's Europe" by Mr Pierre Mairesse, with examples of successful networks. An article on the "Douzelage" with pictures of our workshops and the folk singers from SUŠICE at the SHERBORNE festival are in this brochure.
  
- 12.06.07          The DG4 of the EC visited the Adepts in HOUFFALIZE with 50 officials on 12 June 07, inclusive Mrs Boon-Falleur, the Head of Unit, Mr. Risto Raivio the Deputy Head of Unit and Mr Marc Jorna, the Head of Unit of the EACEA, the unit that is dealing with the twinning applications. It was really a very successful day and it was an excellent opportunity to present a typical Douzelage activity.
  
- 03.08.07          The local Douzelage committee NIEDERANVEN welcomed the EUYO (European Union Youth Orchestra) conducted by Sir Colin Davis, that stayed in Luxembourg before starting their tour around the world. A spontaneous performance had been given to a young and interested audience and the evening was buckled by a common grill party in the local centre of culture.
  
- 9-12.08.07        Vice-president Alphonse Henrard and the president Ed Weber assisted to the 800th Anniversary Ceremony of the Douzelage partner town SIGULDA. They had contact to the SIGULDA branch of Latvia University of Agriculture that began its work in autumn 2005. It offers extramural courses of higher education in Agriculture – zootechnics, sociology of organisations and social administration and 1st level of professional higher education in commercial science. The Director of this Research Institute is Professor, Dr. habil. agr., Dr. med. vet. Aleksandrs JEMELJANOVŠ.
  
- 17.08.2007        The president and his wife assisted to the wedding of Martijn and Triin Hosman at the Vihula manor in Estonia.
  
- 23-26.08.07        The president attended the Days of European Integration in CHOJNA with a delegation from SHERBORNE. During these festivities the delegation of the Douzelage laid flowers on the memorial monument of the CHOJNA cemetery.
  
- 5-6.10.07          The president had been invited to the 20th anniversary of the Cultural Routes Ceremony of the Council of Europe. Besides this ceremony of awards, a fair and a seminar took place in the Centre Culturel de Rencontre of Neumünster Abbey in Luxembourg. The ceremony took place in presence of Mr Robert Palmer, Head of the Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage, DG IV of the Council of Europe, Mrs Octavie Modert, Luxembourg Secretary of State for Culture, Higher Education and Research and 50 Ambassadors of the Council of Europe Member Countries.



- 11.10.07 Edition of the book "A Europe of cities and citizens" published by the Hellenic Republic Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating the Douzelage as "one of the most important international associations and networks on European and international level". Another publication where the Douzelage is mentioned was made by the Mediterranean Actions in European Union who had launched in 2007 a Town-twinning Information Campaign.
- 16.10.07 The Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has recently published on its website an article giving detailed information about the Douzelage, its origins, its network and its website. It was notably the managing director of the Europaforum, a new department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs destined to handle and inform about European topics, who had called upon the Douzelage president to present the Douzelage.
- 25-27.10.07 The Douzelage was represented by Janet Parsons from SHERBORNE at the conference "Youth in Europe through Town Twinning" in the St Patrick Centre, Downpatrick, Co Down, Northern Ireland.
- 8.11.07 The Douzelage was represented by its president, the vice-president Alphonse Henrard, Ms Patricia Salvatore-Moes and Ms Manuela di Pinto at the "Europe for Citizens Forum 2007" and the 2007 Golden Stars Award in Brussels.

The president further visited two towns in Lithuania interested in accessing the Douzelage, Druskininkai and PRIENAI and he had 3 meetings in Brussels at the EC and EACEA.

The Douzelage was represented at the "Foreigner's Festival" organised by the Foreigners Board of the municipality of NIEDERANVEN, where 20 different countries were represented. The Douzelage stand was visited by the Consuls of Colombia and Croatia the honorary guests of this festival.

Finally the two exhibition panels, which had been acquired after the decision had been taken in KÖSZEG, showing the Douzelage, were finished. Thanks to a gift of 300€, the Douzelage received from Mr. Franco Avena, the "Loewner" professional graphic designers could be charged to design this beautiful, friendly and modern displays. Mr Avena is a former European Commission official, the Douzelage had as guest of honour in the NIEDERANVEN General Meeting in the Jean Monnet Building in Luxembourg in 2001, together with the EU Commissioner Mrs Viviane Reding, Mr. Jul Christophory, Head of the European Commission's Delegation in Luxembourg and Mrs Annemarie Bruggink, Head of sector for Town twinning of the EC.

Finally the Douzelage secretary office moved into its new office in the House of Culture situated in a beautiful park in NIEDERANVEN. This was quite a lot of work but finally it could be managed to arrange a wonderful office, equipped with the newest technology. The president expressed his satisfaction about these facilities, generously put at the disposal of the Douzelage by the town hall of NIEDERANVEN.

## A) Business Matters

### 1) Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held in KÖSZEG 10-13 May 2007

As no major comments or corrections were brought to the minutes after they had been published, the delegates unanimously agreed the minutes of the meeting held in KÖSZEG from 10-13 May 2007.

KÖSZEG thanked for the very detailed minutes of their meeting, which showed to be an extremely big help when they had to proof to the EU the work that had been done.

### 2) Approval of the accounts 2007 – 2008

Because the appointed auditor Bernard Husson left GRANVILLE to live in Paris again, a new auditor had to be designated. The proposal of the president to appoint M. André Gendre from GRANVILLE was unanimously accepted.



After that the accounts, reflecting the actual financial situation of the Douzelage had been checked by the two auditors Chris MacAdie and André Gendre, they were unanimously agreed. Actually the Douzelage has 14156.56 € on its account. 5407 € are on the translation account and 8748.62 € on the presidency's account.

The president mentioned that the closing date was the 25th of March 2008, the date when the last statement from the bank was received. All transfers executed after this date will be booked on the new exercise 2008-2009.

Towns were kindly asked to check their situation concerning the payments of the annual contribution and the translation equipment participation. Action: All

The delegates of HOLSTEBRO explained their financial problem, due to the refusal of the municipality to support the local committee and to stand for the annual contribution. Even if for the moment they do not know how or when they will be able to pay, they explained that they will balance their account within the next 6 months.

The president expressed his satisfaction for seeing that at the moment the Douzelage managed to save a comfortable reserve of money on its account. These economies could be very useful in the new multi annual program especially when the Douzelage itself will have to apply for the subvention.

### 3) Annual Douzelage membership

The proposal to remain at 300 € for the annual fee, according to the decision taken in SESIMBRA [SESIMBRA, para 2, 15/08/2003] was unanimously agreed.

### 4) Simultaneous Translation accounts

The proposal to remain at 50 € for the annual contribution to maintenance and transport of the translation equipment, according to the decision taken in OXELÖSUND [OXELÖSUND GM Minutes, para 2a and 2b], was unanimously agreed.

Because of to the enlargement of the Douzelage new translation units, in addition to the 21 microphone units owned, had to get purchased. A unite price of 575€ (19% VTA incl.) per unit could be negotiated with Houben Mediatechniek in Roermond (NL) in 2008. This contact had been established by Nico van de Vliet in his career as person in charge of the translation equipment. Additional head units were purchased, so that actually every delegation can have at least 2 headphones. A new flight case was purchased as well. All this has been delivered prior to the TÜRI meeting. Actually the Douzelage owns 26 units, so that for the next future the needs are covered. The information on this purchase had been circulated to every delegation in the annexes of the agenda.

In GRANVILLE in 2004 the participation fee to the translation equipment for the new towns had been agreed to 1100€. Now it can be noted that the financial situation is going better and because of the good discipline of the payments of all the member towns and the strong efforts of the towns to help with the transport, especially KÖSZEG and SHERBORNE (Mr Mátrai and Mr Ashby), a lot of money could be saved. In agreement with the Douzelage treasurer, the proposal made by the president to reduce the amount for the five new towns who accessed the Douzelage in 2004 to 800€ and to stop payment after 2008, was unanimously agreed.

Nico van de Vliet remarked that the equipment, still working properly for the moment, will be out of date in a few years. He suggested to make economies in case further purchasing would be necessary or to cover eventual loss or damaging of the equipment because the total equipment had never been insured.

The president replied that if everybody pays, an amount of about 1100€ a year can be saved from the fees of the translation equipment. The presidency account on the other side has a big reserve for the moment, so that if ever anything would happen, the presidency account could come and help in this case.

Nico van de Vliet further informed that the Municipality of MEERSSEN is buying new equipment, because they are changing to a wireless system. As they were using the same system eventually spare material could be received from MEERSSEN. He further informed that although he is leaving the Douzelage, Houben Mediatechniek still remains his customer. So in the future he still can help with the equipment if necessary.

The delegate of KÖSZEG remarked that, because they were carrying back and forth the equipment by car for a couple of times now, it was sure that the equipment could not get lost on the airport. But the risk of a car accident however remains.

The president thanked the delegation of KÖSZEG and especially Zoltán Bakos who is taking care of the equipment now after Nico left the Douzelage. He further reminded the decision taken in SHERBORNE that the Douzelage supports eventual additional costs that KÖSZEG might have to pay to transport this equipment (i.e. for



next meeting in CHOJNA). It was unanimously agreed to reimburse the transport costs of 500€ to KÖSZEG for transportation and installation of the translation equipment in TÜRİ.

## 5) Programme for further meetings

CHOJNA confirmed the dates of the autumn meeting 2008 to be held from 11-14 September.

The ALTEA spring meeting will be held from 14th to 17th of May 2009. It will be for the 3rd time that ALTEA is going to receive all the Douzelage delegations. ALTEA thanked CHOJNA for changing the date of their meeting especially for ALTEA.

The main topic to talk about will be the environment. But the final theme is still left open. ALTEA underlined that for them it will be very important that the financial support is granted by the European Commission. At the same time an Education meeting is foreseen with as main topic the international cultures (cultural diversity).

The 2010 spring meeting in SUŠICE will take place from 29th April to 2nd of May.

For the meeting in 2011 no candidate could be found for the moment.

The president encouraged also the “old” Douzelage towns like for example those with 2 meetings, i.e. BAD KÖTZTING, BELLAGIO (2 meetings, the 3rd cancelled in 2006), BAD KÖTZTING, BUNDORAN and PREVEZA, to consider in the next future to take the responsibility and organise their 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Action: All

## 6) Douzelage enlargement

Concerning a possible accession to the Douzelage, the president informed that a negative response has been received from Geroskipou in Cyprus. 2 other towns in Cyprus may be interested. Every effort will be made to present new candidates in the next meeting.

Further the president informed about his visit of Druskininkai in Lithuania where he assisted to the festivity “Druskininkai my town”. He thanked the Mayor, Mr Ricardas Malinauskas, for the warm welcome and the hospitality. It was an excellent opportunity to talk to the Lithuanian Prime Minister and other authorities during a barbeque evening. The Prime Minister, Mr Gedeminas Kirkilas, was very interested in the Douzelage and its idea and the president expressed his confidence that also for PRIENAI Mr Kirkilas will give all the support he can give to make the Douzelage prosper in his country.

Druskininkai, in fact was looking for “Spa town partners”. They are an important Spa town, with a former Russian Spa resort offering all facilities. Druskininkai in deed is planning in a much larger dimension than the Douzelage can afford. So they finally decided not to apply for a membership in the Douzelage and to look for a partnership with a similar sized Spa town, as it had been their initial idea.

The president further reported on his visit of the second Lithuanian town of PRIENAI. PRIENAI is since a long time a partner town of TÜRİ and i.e. both towns have been working together in the “Innovation Circle” project. TÜRİ had proposed PRIENAI as a new partner town a long time ago. PRIENAI has sent in their official application on the 7th of August 2007 and all Douzelage towns have been informed about this request and about the link on the internet, where they could find what this town has to offer. The PRIENAI region with a population of about 34000 inhabitants and the town with 9900 inhabitants is geographically seen well situated and not too far from the national airport. New hotel accommodations are available or are in construction or planning. The president was impressed by the fact that the Mayor is absolutely in favour of this town twinning. At a meeting on 24th of April, where the president presented the Douzelage Town Twinning association, the town council decided in favour of an official Douzelage accession. Another meeting was held with the Mayor and delegates of the town administration where it had been explained what a Douzelage partnership means in terms of work. As a conclusion it can be said that all decision takers in PRIENAI are fully informed now about what it means to be a member of the Douzelage.

The president mentioned that during his stay, he also visited the Žiburys Gymnasium in PRIENAI, which is already very committed in European projects. This gymnasium had already been distinguished several times for its successful European activities.

Michael Peart from SHERBORNE, who is a former British ambassador in Lithuania, confirmed that after many discussions with the delegates from PRIENAI in the last 24 hours, after that the film that had been shown and the commentary of the president made, there seems to be a real enthusiasm in this candidate town. The enthusiasm for Europe goes right back to the independence of Lithuania in 1991 and the first thing the president of Lithuania said to Michael Peart in October 1991 was “We want to join the European Union”, we want to join the “NATO”,



“we will be good men within the European Union”. In his opinion that has been fully demonstrated here. Lithuania has a very good commissioner in the EU and very active members of Parliaments there and everything he could see in his visits to Lithuania reflected this will to belong to Europe. So in his eyes it seems that the Douzelage has got a very good candidate.

Finally the president welcomed the two delegates from PRIENAI Mr Vytautas Griauslys and Mrs Vilma Valalyté who showed a short film about their town.

After a tour of the table all towns unanimously agreed to the accession of PRIENAI as a new member of the Douzelage. The president expressed his congratulations to the new town and thanked their delegation for presenting the 22<sup>nd</sup> town in the Douzelage.

Concerning Malta, the president informed that the town of Sliema has resigned. Another candidate town from Malta, Marsascula has sent an official letter saying that they are willing to join the Douzelage.

As there are some more questions to be clarified, the president will follow the invitation of the Mayor and visit Marsascula in the next months. Every effort will be made to have a definite response by the end of November 2008. Chris MacAdie had proposed the town of Rabat as an alternative. In order to avoid having 2 candidates from one country the first contact with Marsascula should first be followed before contacting another town. If ever no answer will be received by the end of October from Marsascula, contact with Rabat will be taken.

The Slovenian town of Ptuj also resigned for financial reasons. They have other town twinning activities already and they would like to continue with these activities instead of beginning something new. JUDENBURG informed that their mayor, Mrs Gruber, is in contact with the Slovenian town of Portoroz. Mike Balfour informed about the town of Skofialoca. The president mentioned that Skofialoca seems to be a very nice historic town, with a good geographical situation (25 km from Ljubljana), so that transport would not be a problem.

The president reminded that the decision says that it must be the town who applies for membership with the town council standing behind the application. Best would even be to have a formal political decision from the town hall.

## 7) Elections

### [a] Douzelage president

The president reminded that the last elections were in HOLSTEBRO in autumn 2003 where the actual president and vice-presidents had been elected. During the SHERBORNE meeting in autumn 2006 it was agreed on the renewal of their mandate. So normally in autumn 2009 these mandates would come to the end. In the Douzelage statutes however it is mentioned that elections should always take place in the spring meeting. Therefore it is proposed and necessary to stretch their mandate from autumn 2009 to the spring meeting in SUŠICE in 2010.

The honorary president Jeremy Barker said that this is a very satisfactory arrangement and he thanked for agreeing to keep the presidency office a little further. He reminded the delegates of SUŠICE that they will be in charge of the elections.

The president pointed at the Annex H of the agenda. This document, determining the profile of a new president, was generated in a special workshop during the general meeting in HOUFFALIZE in 2002, which had then been the last meeting before the elections in HOLSTEBRO. These recommendations are still valid and they should be considered at the coming elections too. The only detail the president suggested to change was the condition for the vice-presidents that he/she has to speak at least English. The practice has shown that it is not absolutely necessary for the future, because the official languages in Brussels are French and English. It is proposed to change this sentence to “at least English and/or French”.

The president further pointed out that it is not only the task of the president that has to be assumed by the new town, but also the task of the secretary and the treasurer. The new town should also try to fulfil the requests of infrastructure, at the disposition of the new presidency.

MEERSSEN mentioned that the maximum of re-elections has never been defined in the statutes and therefore they suggested leaving this matter out of the election procedure. The president confirmed that Art. 4. (c) of the statutes says that the president can be re-elected; this article does not say how many times. It had been suggested in the Annex H mentioned before, saying 2 mandates maximum (1 re-election).

Jeremy Barker confirmed that it had never actually be decided how many times you can be re-elected. He had accepted his third election very reluctantly, because nobody else could be found at that moment. By thinking, in principle, in his view it is better for the health of the Douzelage that at least every 6 years a change of the



direction should be made by having a new president. He emphasised that in no sense this is directed to the actual president, who in his eyes is doing the job extremely well. Indeed there had never been fixed a rule on a third election.

KÖSZEG absolutely agreed with MEERSSEN and requested to leave out the note where it is written that there is only 1 possibility of re-election. The Douzelage should comply with its constitution where it has been written that the presidency can be re-elected.

Finally after a longer discussion on other twinning experiences and the pro and contra of a determined number of re-elections, it was agreed not to deal this important question in this short time then, but to put this item on the agenda of the next spring meeting.

### **[b] Education chairman**

The same rule will also be applicable for the re-election of the Education chairman. In the education committee there are also elections every 3 years. Paul Carling from SHERBORNE was elected in BUNDORAN in 2005 and was unanimously confirmed in this meeting for a second mandate. For the coming year it was agreed that Stuart Atkinson from NIEDERANVEN would assume the task of Secretary of the education committee, administering business and communication between the towns, as well as energising the education part of the website.

## **8) The new "Europe for Citizens" Programme 2007-2013**

Different aspects of the new "Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013" were discussed. The president pointed out the last updates of this programme.

## **9) The "Youth in Action" Programme 2007-2013**

The "Youth in Action" program has changed for the period 2007-2013. One major change in this program for example is the age limit of the participants extended from 13 to 30 years. More importance has also been put on the evaluation of the results of a project. The president encouraged all the delegations to take the time and read carefully this "Youth in Action" program from 2007-2013, which is available in 27 languages. He further pointed out the link on the EU Website called "frequently asked questions (FAQ)", giving answers to most of the questions organizers of projects might have.

SHERBORNE noted that they have been working through this process over the last 2 or 3 months and that they found some difficulties concerning the question of risk assessment notably when bringing young people under the age of 18 to a Douzelage meeting. Then a rather complicate "bureaucratic" risk assessment is necessary as youngsters under 18 are counted as children. So for the meeting in October they are raising the lower age limit from 17 to 18 in order to avoid the bureaucracy of a huge risk assessment.

They also found some problem with quoting airfares. When they said to the British council "if we put in airfares i.e. from TÜRİ to the UK, today we might get a flight for 1£, tomorrow it could be 250£, the British council said "It does not matter you have to put a fare in". SHERBORNE asked whether anybody else has made already this experience and whether they have come up with a solution. They finally went to a travel agent and asked for airfares from the capital cities of each European country and they just put those in with 50% uplift.

They further informed that they have the so-called Criminal Records Bureau, from which everybody dealing with children has to have a clearance before. This is a real bureaucratic nightmare, costs 35£ and 6 months ahead you do not know who is going to be available to attend the children. As a conclusion SHERBORNE decided to have now 18 to 25 years as an age range for their youth meeting.

The president thanked SHERBORNE for these remarks and explained that if no national regulations exist concerning the insurance and all the responsibility questions on youngsters, it has generally been admitted that at least the document Child Protection Rules, the Irish Youth Ministry has edited some years ago about child protection, should be the minimum to respect. This has been considered as a general rule sufficient for all Youth in Action insurances. A link to this document is on the Douzelage Youth Website.

Concerning the airfares, there is a special link on the website: [www.amadeus.net](http://www.amadeus.net). It is not supposed that participants of EU projects exclusively ask for low cost flights. If for any reason low cost flights are not possible or not available, participants are supposed to take regular flights. These regular flights are admitted.

CHOJNA asked if the idea discussed some meetings ago about travelling funds is still actual or if the idea has been given up. The president confirmed that this is still valid. This discussion concerned the fact that the



Douzelage has now on the president accounts a surplus of money that is not used for the moment. So if there is a need and a possibility to advance money for a youth project for example, this money can serve to cover the advance payment delegates have to pay when they participate to youth projects. When the EU support is paid, this advance payment must be reimbursed by the participants. Nobody asked until now for this support but now a rule will be proposed saying that this money can be requested exclusively to advance travel fees for the young participants of a youth activity. **Action: Presidency**

## 10) Multi-annual grants for thematic networking of twinned towns

Concerning the multi-annual grants, the president said that all towns have been advised from the European Commission by mail ("New opportunity in multi-annual grants"). This letter of the EC was signed by Jim Dratwa, the guest of honour and lecturer of the TÜRI conference.

The president and the vice-president Alphonse Henrard will have an appointment in Brussels in the next weeks with Mr Raivio and Mr Dratwa, in order to discuss these multi-annual possibilities. There are still some questions left open, i.e. how can the Douzelage integrate its activities and its meeting schedule in this multi-annual project scheme. It is true that these multi-annual projects would offer better conditions, because reimbursement has been raised especially for larger twinning organisations. In addition to this strong support, money can also be received for secretarial and administrative work. This work can be made by any town, if it is the town itself who applies, or it can be made by the Douzelage presidency office. The Douzelage has never been an applicant until now but with the new system, the Douzelage itself, as an entity, can also apply. There are some other important details to be discussed, i.e. the situation when a project is not accepted. Hopefully these doubts can be clarified soon, so that the Douzelage can start the multi-annual program in autumn 2009, possibly with a meeting in Brussels and a visit of the European Commission and its institutions and end it in autumn 2011, including the SUŠICE meeting and all the other activities that may be organised in this time frame.

## 11) Douzelage in the World Wide Web

### (1) Douzelage Website update

The president apologized for the short delay the update of the website took, because of the move of the presidency to its new office. He thanked OXELÖSUND for hosting the Douzelage Website and especially John Pettersson, the web-manager.

Followed a Power point presentation about the Douzelage Website by Michael Morrell from SHERBORNE and the information the visitors should find on it. The president thanked Mike for this good initiative and his suggestions. He encouraged the towns to update their local information as soon as possible according to these suggestions. He reminded that if there is any technical problem, towns should not hesitate and contact him or the Douzelage secretary.

If there is a need and if there are people who would like to take part in an IT-workshop, this could be organised during the autumn meeting in CHOJNA or at next spring meeting in ALTEA. It will depend of the availability of the web-manager, John Pettersson and on when this workshop will be held.

Concerning the Youth website to be integrated in the Douzelage site, proposals from the young people are awaited. The education committee also should send in their proposals for the creation of the education part on the website. **Action: Youth and Education committees**

Chris MacAdie from SHERBORNE offered again his help for the translations. Translation from the major European languages like French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese into English is no problem for his translation agency. He would be happy to provide that service to all member towns free of charge.

### (2) Douzelage Contact addresses

The president pointed out the importance of having up to date contact addresses. He informed the delegates, by showing on the website, how to register as a member, how to login to the member area and how to find here the address-lists of all the towns as well as all education contacts. Towns were encouraged to permanently keep their contacts updated and to inform the secretary of any change. **Action: All**

These lists are up to date and complete. To send a mail to all towns, you just have to click on the link "town contacts" to get all the valid addresses.

Four options can be found:

- the town contacts



- the education contacts
- town and education contacts together, in case everybody should be informed
- young people addresses.

### (3) Youth projects – partner search

Towns are informed that a “Youth Projects Partner search” item has been added to the youth website.

The Douzelage is receiving an increasing number of information on European youth projects looking for partners or candidates. Towns are encouraged to use this opportunity and encourage their schools or youngsters, who would like to participate in such European projects. The president reminded also that the “Salto” youth Website link gives the possibility to find European projects running worldwide.

He further showed the link to the Amadeus.net which is one of the most important flight finders. It is available in many European languages. This site, which can be used for booking flights, can also be used to find the provisional flight prices needed for applications. The same program is used by many travel agencies.

### (4) Download menu

A new download menu has been added. Logged members have access to the member area (green layout) and can find here the documents they should add to their application: the Charta signed in GRANVILLE, the Codicils and the constitution drawn up in BAD KÖTZTING and others. Further the document “Who we are” and “What we do”, which has been updated and changed in the layout recently, can be found here. All these documents are in a perfect resolution quality ready for printing.

CHOJNA mentioned that the Douzelage website is an excellent website. However from the old website they liked one point: Getting the information on the main page if something had been changed or added. The president will get in contact with John Pettersson to see if these features, giving the possibility to see the last updated document, figuring on the first page, are possible or not. **Action: Presidency and webmaster**

Further the president showed how to use the calendar. If there is an activity that is missing in the calendar, it is up to the organiser to check if the activities he wants to have on the Web are there. If there is something missing, he should send the information to be added to the secretary who will put it online.

The document “What we do” contains the summary of the Douzelage activities, which is regularly updated and regroups all the activities up from 1991. By looking at this activities list, it can be noted that there had been more activities than ever before in the last years.

## 12) Looking for partners

Many of the Douzelage towns or regions are already twinned with other European towns or involved in other European projects. It would for sure give more importance to our Douzelage if we could show how many European towns are really linked to our network.

These contacts could also be used to find candidates participating at our activities. The experience showed in the past that it is sometimes disappointing for the organiser of a project if he puts very much energy in organising an event and then finally he cannot find enough partners. For a youth project i.e., as a participant, you hardly do not have any costs: participants just have to fill in the form and reply. Travel costs are reimbursed by the European Commission. 30% only are to be paid by the participants themselves. So that there are no additional costs for the towns and it is just a matter of enhancing the importance of our projects to find partners in other towns.

Therefore towns should send the name of their linked towns and contact persons to the secretary,. All the twinned towns outside the Douzelage will be mentioned on the website. So the Douzelage network can be enlarged in case of necessity. Also for the European Commission it is important to see that the network is even much larger than the 22 Douzelage member towns. **Action: All**

### [a] EICR – European Institute of Cultural Routes

Contact with the European Institute of Cultural Routes could be established in the last months. This institute is an organisation under the Council of Europe and it is seated in Luxembourg. The director and the vice directors are very lovely people and they offered their help. The link to this institute has been published and it is absolutely no problem to log in and to get access to its library where all kind of information concerning cultural routes can be downloaded.



As an example of a link via a cultural root, the president cited the St. Martin's trail which is going to be opened next year, starting in Szombathely near KÖSZEG, running through Slovenia, Italy, France and then via NIEDERANVEN to Germany.

The president encouraged the delegates to visit the "Council of Europe" website, where important information concerning culture, education and cultural heritage, youth and sports can be found. The Direction 4 of the Council of Europe, whose director is Mr Palmer, is dealing with exactly the same subjects as the Douzelage is dealing with the DG4 of the EC in Brussels. Information on education, intercultural dialogue, youth, north-south centres, sport centres etc. as well as citizenship and natural heritage and a lot of other interesting links can be visited on the Council of Europe website.

As for the roman project, which Jeremy Barker and Jan Swanenvleugel initiated, similar projects realised in the same domain can be found on the EICR website.

### **[b] SIGULDA branch of Latvia University of Agriculture**

The president mentioned the SIGULDA University (branch of Latvia University of Agriculture) as another good example of a possible cooperation in the future. He and the vice-president visited this university and talked to the director Mr Jemeljanvos, who was very much interested in a possible cooperation in the future.

### **[c] The Institute for Social and European Studies at the Europe House in KÖSZEG**

Mr Kristóf Boda, MA in International and European Studies and the Academic Coordinator of the Institute for Social and European Studies at the Europe House in KÖSZEG, was the moderator of the Minorities Working Group at the last Douzelage Conference in KÖSZEG. This very important contact should absolutely be kept alive.

Links to both universities will be put on our website. If ever the Douzelage will initiate bigger Interreg projects in the future, it will be more and more dependent on universities, as they have the specialists to manage these kinds of projects. Therefore it would be important to have universities, high schools or gymnasiums as cooperating partners. Towns that have such kind of institutions should try to get in contact with the headmasters and send the addresses and links to the secretary in order to put links on the web. Action: All

## **13)The Douzelage Youth Committee project [ANNEX N]**

Michael Peart from SHERBORNE made a presentation of the SHERBORNE project "Young Euro Citizens" that is going to take place next October:

*"SHERBORNE Douzelage has invited delegations of 2 people from Interdepartmental towns, one youth expert and one young person aged 18 to 25 to a study visit on Youth Issues in SHERBORNE, entitled "Young Euro Citizens - The future for Douzelage member towns" and the working language of this will be English.*

*So flowing from SHERBORNE conference in October 2006, when we looked at Youth issues, this will be an opportunity for a closer study of the problems, facing our young people and the solutions that our communities have devised.*

*We intend this to be a specialist meeting of experts in youth issues, who will bring to the table certain professionalism and experience. We're keen to demonstrate to our stakeholders, that are the people that support us, not least the European Union, but Douzelage can offer serious work in areas of life that affect towns of our size.*

*We also see this as the start of ongoing series of exchanges between youth managers. We hope that other towns will see value in arranging similar study visits in due course. And I think that presentation by Gerd Tarand shows that TURI has a lot to offer in this area.*

*However Douzelage must increase its field to younger people themselves. There is no doubt that much as we would wish otherwise; all of us in this room are moving further away from our youth. What we saw as important in our holidays is different to the issues that concern today's youth. Only they themselves can explain these new issues. And here is a start to do something for the youngsters while at the same time engaging them in the ideals and work of Douzelage. With their new blood, we in Douzelage, we will be reinvigorated.*

*With this philosophy very much in mind, SHERBORNE Douzelage believes that it will be crucially important that the youth delegate from each country and each town, to have experience and to be of an ability to contribute fully to the discussion, as well as to learn and take back their ideas to the home community.*



*Last week we circulated our 1st newsletter with the draft program and that is now up on the Web thanks again to Ed. I have a copy here with me for those who have not seen it.*

*With the arrival to SHERBORNE on Wednesday, we intend with **Thursday** the first working day will be a day for looking at policies, pursued by the UK of our teams but most importantly with inputs from delegations explaining their own policies in these subject areas. This will be in Dorchester, the administrative centre of the county of Dorset, a town well known for its links to Thomas Hardy, the famous writer of the late 19th early 20th century.*

*On **Friday** we will be in SHERBORNE for a focus on help of policies that are applied on the ground, as well as to look at democracy issues and Leonardo exchanges.*

*On **Saturday** we will take delegations to the Jurassic coast of World heritage sight to discover what that has to offer and in particular how young people are engaged. We also plan an introduction to the "super valuing bourse award scheme" for young people.*

*Now this is a scheme which is being introduced into certain European countries. It involves young people doing tasks and gradually achieving points for helping the community developing themselves and they get a series of awards starting with the bronze award and the silver award and then the gold award. In the UK young people who had been through this system and include this on their CVs, future employers take a great deal of notice on this. It shows that the person has the ability to do work for themselves and for the community and employers put a great importance on that. This will also be introduced into schools, colleges, scout groups and other youth institutions in certain European Union countries. So we want to assure you that.*

*There will be a little preparatory work for delegations. We ask you to provide answers to a questionnaire on youth policies in your towns and ask you to forward that to SHERBORNE in advance. It will not be detailed but I think it will be a maximum of 2 pages, but it sets the scene for the discussion over these 3 days. We are very pleased to say that our Action 4 using action EU bid for funding has actually been approved in principle by the British Council, who are the National Authority for the European Union funding in Great Britain. We got that news on the day we left SHERBORNE. But it is only approved in principle because there were 2 or 3 things we had failed to produce in our application.*

*I hope that you will agree that our plans for this study visit should provide a good opportunity to meet the objectives which I sent out about. I urge you all to try and participate in this through sending good people. If any delegate has any question of general interest with the chair's agreement I will attempt to answer it now, but otherwise I am sitting over there and will be placed to speak to people separately.*

*Finally in our action 4 bid, we ask towns to sign a return statement to us, which I distributed yesterday. We failed to submit that. I got most of the forms back, but those who still have the forms to complete and sign, please let me have them, so that I can take them back to SHERBORNE on Sunday. Thank you very much."*

The president thanked Michael Peart for the explanations and the successful application. He expressed his congratulations to SHERBORNE for this initiative and for the excellent preparation work for this event.

On the question what a "youth expert" means and what kind of a job this youth expert has, Michael Peart explained that following their definition this is really somebody who is working in youth issues. This could be an official, working at the municipality or it might be somebody running a youth club, or somebody in a launch school, who has responsibility for those extra curricular youth activities which young people need. It should be somebody who really understands the policies in the towns that most involve with youth work. Usually these are national policies, which the national government set and then the local government implement, so it should be somebody who is dispersed in these areas. What SHERBORNE would like to do is to try to make this gathering as professional as they can, so that they can produce an outcome, which will be recognized by the twinning authorities in Brussels as a good piece of work with relevance to the Douzelage towns.

SUŠICE remarked that they are afraid not to have any proper youth expert in SUŠICE because there is a big lack of young people between 18 and 25 who would be interested to work in this way. Most of their students go to Universities. They just have 2 secondary schools (gymnasium), where the maximum age is 18 or 19. So if they should participate in such a conference, they have to find students who are not staying in SUŠICE any longer.

Michael Peart précised that probably not everybody up from 18 goes to university, some people start to work too? Participants must not absolutely be students; they may be people in employment in the town for example. Obviously SHERBORNE does not want somebody to send just for the sake of sending somebody. It is better to send somebody who is interested, so if there is nobody interested in a town, this town cannot participate then.

KÖSZEG confirmed that this is not only the problem in SUŠICE but it is a problem in many other countries and moreover not only talking about this project. In some cities there might also be a problem finding experts



speaking English on a specific area. For example: in the parallel education meeting which informed to be very important to participate, but those people who are working in that school, which is exactly for the handicapped students and the mentally challenged students, nobody speaks English. They speak Hungarian but not English.

They reminded the first time they went to HOLSTEBRO and took part in a workshop for social problem or elderly people; they took an expert who works with these people and a translator, which was very difficult. What KŐSZEG will do is to widen the doors, so they will not take the expert from their city but from the neighbouring city. This is a larger city, because according to the Douzelage constitution, most member towns are around 10000 people. Those little towns sometimes do not have the experts, because they go to a larger city.

In his comment Michael Peart confirmed that this is a very good solution. The reason why SHERBORNE has the first day of discussion in Dorchester, which is 28 km from SHERBORNE, is that the experts in youth are in Dorchester. But they are the people who manage what goes on in SHERBORNE. So in his view the solution of KŐSZEG is a good one and maybe SUŠICE might think about that.

HOUFFALIZE finds the SHERBORNE project very interesting, as it is a good opportunity to involve the youngsters in the most fundamental theme on what is valid in the area of youth policies, as well as looking for new techniques to improve those types of action. They have already launched the demand for possible candidates, although they have some problems to find a real expert too. But they are confident to find a solution to this problem and they will anyway do their best to participate in this project.

GRANVILLE and TÜRİ confirmed as well that they will also try to do their best to send 2 of their best young people from this field of interest.

SUŠICE asked why only 2 students are invited to this conference. It's much easier sometimes to go by car and have the car full than to send 2 people to any other country like SHERBORNE.

Michael Peart noted that it is a study visit of particular interest for the young people, because it is about young people and it is about what they wish to see in their towns. It is quite important that we hear from young people. But as far as the management of this conference or study visit is concerned, the maximum that could be managed was 2 people from each town. If 22 towns decided to come this would already make 44 people. Therefore SHERBORNE decided that the best option is to have somebody who understands youth policies, a youth worker and a young person to say what they want and what they already see in their towns and what is missing in their opinion. One should learn from the other.

## ***Survey of recent events***

Because all towns had been kindly requested to send a brief description of their Douzelage activities since the meeting in KŐSZEG (both internal and external), together with their plans for the future to the Douzelage Secretary, the following reports on activities only mention the most important events. The many other activities can be found on the activities list on the Douzelage website.

## ***C) Projects not yet finished or in preparation***

A tour of the table was made in order to receive the reports concerning projects in preparation or running already.

**TÜRİ:** The summary of the TÜRİ activities had been distributed already in the meeting. They had a very intensive year this time, especially for preparing this meeting. Nevertheless they have also announced interest in other projects (Global Warming, Young Euro Citizens and a project with KARKKILA and PRIENAI). TÜRİ will try to organize next year a special summer camp for children with various abilities, a kind of hippo therapy youth camp, together with not disabled youngsters. So this was the first "pre-call" for partners to participate to this project idea of a summer camp, together with parents or with teachers. A short summary of these ideas will be forwarded to the secretary in the next weeks to put them on the web.

The president thanked TÜRİ for this initiative and mentioned the European commission makes efforts to adapt the Youth in Action program to people with special abilities. Many comments from organisers and project leaders said that if you have projects with disabled people, the time schedule and the regulations are not adjusted to these people.

**ALTEA:** In ALTEA, since June 2007, the local government has changed. Of course the new government will support the Douzelage definitely, just as the former did. ALTEA did not prepare any project due to the local elections. This is why they once again apologized to KŐSZEG for not attending their meeting. ALTEA is preparing



the coming General Meeting in May 2009. They will participate in CHOJNA as well as in the SHERBORNE youth project.

**BAD KÖTZTING** picked out 2 activities showing their good relations with SUŠICE, which is a town, not so far away BAD KÖTZTING. Both towns have close contacts between their schools and not only the pupils but also the teachers meet each other for social event, sports activities etc. This is running quite well without demanding many efforts from the Douzelage itself. Another interesting point is the school exchange with the school from HOLSTEBRO. This is an exchange that is well alive and active for the last 10 years at least. As a social event BAD KÖTZTING hosted a group of friends from NIEDERANVEN, who spent a week-end in their town.

The president, on behalf of the visiting delegation from NIEDERANVEN, thanked BAD KÖTZTING for the warm welcome they had and the wonderful time they had at the Faust Festival.

**BELLAGIO** apologized for not having prepared the activity list. They promised to send it later. Concerning their activities, the Miniparliament 2008 will not be organised this years but surely next year maybe in October.

The president thanked BELLAGIO and cited a letter from Mr Sancassano who apologized for not attending this meeting. The president thanked Mrs Donatella Gandola, who wrote a thesis about the Douzelage in the frame of her further studies. He thanked her especially for having chosen this interesting theme.

**BUNDORAN**: BUNDORAN will send a teacher and a young person to the youth project to SHERBORNE in October. A band from BUNDORAN participated at the English Song festival in CHOJNA, which was very successful from their point of view. Jo McNulty personally thanked Mr Cezary Salamonczyk for the organisation of this excellent project, which the participants from BUNDORAN enjoyed very much.

**CHOJNA**: In the beginning of April they organized the 15th English Song Festival together with 103 young musicians from SHERBORNE, BUNDORAN, from Germany and Poland. Students from CHOJNA took part in a march against racism in Germany and they prepared several applications for future projects. The first one is about their first general Meeting in CHOJNA in autumn dealing with "social exclusions and small communities". They also prepared and sent on 1 April 2008 the application of "Follow the birds II", a Youth in Action program with KÖSZEG, NIEDERANVEN, Tartu (Estonia) and CHOJNA. There is a high possibility that the project will be accepted. A continuation of the project "work experience in European hotels" has as well been prepared; this is a Leonardo da Vinci program with SHERBORNE and several towns from Hungary and Germany. Students from secondary schools in CHOJNA will take part in projects, organised by OXELÖSUND and KÖSZEG and primary students will attend the Adepts. They have chosen a new Douzelage committee and new members of the committee will visit SHERBORNE in July, together with a musician from CHOJNA and the 2 winners of the ESERA (European Science Education Research Association) competition (in English) in CHOJNA. There was the topic "CHOJNA - a place to be" and the winners were chosen by the former president, Mr Jeremy Barker. 2 students took part in the "carnival à GRANVILLE" and it was the last year of the primary school Comenius project coordinated by the preparatory school in SHERBORNE. 4 people from CHOJNA visited SHERBORNE in beginning of May including the mayor of CHOJNA, the catholic priest, a local journalist and a Douzelage representative.

The president thanked Mr Salamonczyk and he expressed his special thanks for the Birdwatch project. He also asked if there is any candidate to take over this Birdwatch project for the next year. The project idea is all ready on paper, so the new organiser just has to pick it up and adjust it to his local situation. Chances are very good that this project can be accepted and supported by the Youth in action programme. Other towns with natural reserves or birdwatch areas should think about organising this event.

**GRANVILLE** mentioned its new project "Cycling for Europe". They think it will be important for the Douzelage committee to meet other associations in GRANVILLE and try to build a new project. This year is the first try they are tempting. It is foreseen that 15 cyclists will participate in this project described in a preparation document that has been distributed prior to the meeting. From the 15th to the 30th of June 2008, they will start to cycle from the source of the Danube to ZVOLEN. What they have planned to do in 2009 is to open this opportunity to participate for all the Douzelage member towns. Already now in 2008 they would be happy to share some stop over of that run with some local cyclists of the different towns, like for example from BAD KÖTZTING, situated not too far from ZVOLEN. The real project will be for 2009 and the preparations are already done in 2008.

The president thanked GRANVILLE and informed about some changes in their local committee. He welcomed André Gendre as the new president, who took over from Jean-Marc Julienne. He asked André Gendre to pass the deepest thanks to Jean-Marc for the precious work he has done for the Douzelage in his long mandate. GRANVILLE has also got a new mayor. On behalf of all the Douzelage towns, the president expressed his thanks to the former mayor for the strong support he always gave to the Douzelage over all these years. It is extremely nice to see that the new mayor is also in favour of the Douzelage. So in GRANVILLE the Douzelage can be sure to be in good hands with the new committee and the new mayor.



The president also informed the delegates that the former vice-president of the Douzelage, Mr Bernard Husson has moved from GRANVILLE to Paris and that unfortunately he can no longer be a member of the committee. He thanked Bernard Husson for the very important work he has done for the Douzelage and he expressed his personnel thanks for the deep ties of friendship he shared with him.

**HOLSTEBRO'S** list of activities was very short as they certainly had not arranged anything, due to their local problems. The delegates were not quite sure if HOLSTEBRO had participated to any activity because they use to send all the news about projects to the people who could be interested or to the schools and sports clubs, but never got any report back, so that probably nobody from HOLSTEBRO had participated in any of the proposed activities.

**HOUFFALIZE** had in 2007 their traditional sports event for the youngsters at the Adeps centre. By this occasion they had the honour to have the visit of an official delegation of the DG4 of the European Commission. In 2008 the Adeps will happen from 8th of June until the 14th of June and OXELÖSUND, GRANVILLE, CHOJNA and SUŠICE will participate together with classes from HOUFFALIZE. In spring 2007, 4 youngsters from HOUFFALIZE went to GRANVILLE, escorted by Mr Luc Nollomont. HOUFFALIZE also participated in the KÖSZEG meeting last autumn. At the same time vice-president Alphonse Henrard had the occasion to participate at the European Twinning meeting in Rhodes. This gave him as a lecturer, the opportunity to spread information about the Douzelage and its activities among 400 participants. They also organised the traditional Benelux meeting between MEERSSEN, HOUFFALIZE and NIEDERANVEN. This year it was decided to launch a project for young people aiming to train them in the different tourist offices of the Benelux towns. In March 2008 the Brass band from HOUFFALIZE did host the Brass Band from GRANVILLE.

**JUDENBURG:** Next week there will be a performance of local choirs and dancers with visitors from KÖSZEG, SHERBORNE and PREVEZA. JUDENBURG will also take part in the Global Warming project in OXELÖSUND in 2008. In September JUDENBURG is invited to go on a visit to OXELÖSUND in order to attend a community meeting and exchange thoughts concerning the project "Meeting of JUDENBURG Citizens – We help to develop using our creative power". They had a choir exchange with SUŠICE who visited JUDENBURG this time. There will be a common performance of the choir Svatobor SUŠICE and the local choir "Voces" on Oct 11 this year. On Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup> the guest choir will sing a mass at the parish church.

JUDENBURG also reported that it is not easy to connect people, which is the aim of partner towns within the EU, by fostering common thinking and understanding one another. The main problem is in fact the travelling costs. In order to be able to offer all active clubs the same conditions, the town council decided to develop a correct sponsoring model for all club members taking part at festivities of their partner towns. It started on Jan 1 2008. Each active club member will be sponsored when certain demands had been made.

**KÖSZEG** reminded that one year ago they had the general meeting in KÖSZEG and they thanked all the delegations who attended, understanding the reasons why some of the delegations could not come. During that time they also had a preparatory visit for the project "Neighbours", which actually was short and parallel to the General Meeting. At the end of May there was a Comenius project that finished in NIEDERANVEN, with partners from NIEDERANVEN, PREVEZA, OXELÖSUND, SIGULDA and KÖSZEG. The Kindergarten in KÖSZEG is ready for another project, because the experiences with all these cities they working together, were excellent. At the end of June they had the "usual" summer program: Youth exchange "Neighbours", where 60 youngsters from SUŠICE, CHOJNA, JUDENBURG and Oulx were taking part (Oulx is out of the Douzelage and they just substitute BELLAGIO). It was lucky that they set up the theme in one week and that they could come. It was an excellent project and everybody had a good time. At the end of September during the harvest festival, a magnificent visit of the "Wessex Morris Men" had enriched this festival in KÖSZEG. In October there was the first meeting of a Comenius project in which KÖSZEG is involved. This project is organised and coordinated by SESIMBRA. Right now they were in SESIMBRA for the project meeting where also Christina was a precious help. In November a group of youngsters from KÖSZEG had been invited by JUDENBURG youngsters. Those were able to manage this exchange completely alone, without any help. In December a group of students took part in a contest in Hungary, where among others, they had to introduce an international organisation and these youngsters introduced the Douzelage. The Hungarian team did win the first prize (a one way trip to Brussels) with the Douzelage theme. Finally 2 weeks ago an exhibition opened in KÖSZEG: a poster show of the entire town twinning activities, including the Douzelage meetings and all the programs listed before. In April, just 2 weeks ago, a group of students from BAD KÖTZTING took the opportunity to come for one day to KÖSZEG.

As for further activities, KÖSZEG will be involved in the Global Warming project in Sweden as well as in the SHERBORNE project. If they get the support, they will be participating in the Birdwatch project and they will have again a multilateral youth exchange called "VI-4-YO(E)U", including CHOJNA, SUŠICE and another non-Douzelage town from Slovakia. In May 2009 there will be a group of singers and dancers who will go to JUDENBURG for the



“Mai-Singen”. In August, if it will be supported, there will be another youth exchange with JUDENBURG and other cities from Croatia, Serbia, Turkey and Germany. In October KÖSZEG will be introduced in Brussels, where they will also give a speech about their town twinning, notably the Douzelage. By this occasion they will probably set up the exhibition about the Douzelage and the expandable posters. On their way back they will stop in NIEDERANVEN or HOUFFALIZE for a short visit. They also try to prepare a new project for 2010. It will be a summer project about major minorities which will be on the Website and interested people are welcome to join. Finally they expected some news from the Brass Band in NIEDERANVEN, concerning their 100th anniversary.

The president replied that the festivities of the brass band in NIEDERANVEN together with other Douzelage towns had unfortunately been cancelled. Then he welcomed Loety Cohen, the new president of the Douzelage committee of MEERSSEN, which had been restructured some weeks ago.

**MEERSSEN:** One of their activities (if it can be called “activity”) is the wedding of Martijn Hosman. They were also busy with the preparations of the Roman Project; they are planning together with SHERBORNE. They had a meeting in November and by this occasion they showed Jeremy Barker the Roman relics in the area around MEERSSEN. They had a lot of change in the board of the Douzelage in MEERSSEN. One of the reasons was that Nico van de Vliet moved to another part of the Netherlands (middle-East). Another fact was that Joop Hosman had serious health problems. Luckily Joop recovered very well but he can no longer be the secretary of the Douzelage committee. Mr Jan Swanenvleugel assumes now the secretary task together with Thera Elshout and they will nominate as soon as possible a new chairman. Mr Cohen assumes the charge of chairman only until another, a younger one, will be appointed. The MEERSSEN Douzelage committee had a special “good-bye” meeting with Nico where they asked him to join the GM in TÜRI.

Obviously emotionally moved, Nico van de Vliet gave a short review on his activity in the Douzelage and the private trouble he had to sell his house. He underlined that he never regretted anything he did for the Douzelage and he expressed his gratefulness to be here at this meeting. During the general meeting in MEERSSEN the president had already given a present on behalf of the Douzelage to Nico. Unfortunately it was already “consumed” being a very excellent wine. To conclude, Nico said that he will miss the Douzelage but he promised that to join some of the meetings in the next future, although that he will probably be active in another twinning association, a much smaller one. He uses all his experience, which for certain will be very helpful to this new twinning committee. Concerning the translation equipment Nico reaffirmed his disposal to help at any time.

The president thanked Nico for all he did for the Douzelage during all these years, as the person in charge of the purchasing and maintenance of the translation equipment and the leading of the committee of MEERSSEN, a task Nico did in an exemplary way. He promised to meet Nico very soon in Almelo in the Netherlands and to bring new wine because bringing it to TÜRI was too difficult by plane. Further the president expressed his wishes for a good cooperation with the new committee and he expressed his special pleasure to see Joop in good health again. He also thanked Martijn and his wife Triin, Joop and Marlies for the nice wedding he and his wife could attend in Estonia last summer.

**NIEDERANVEN** pointed out of their long list of activities one special event, the Multicultural Festival they had in October 2007. The Foreigners’ board of the municipality of NIEDERANVEN organised this festival, where the foreigners in the municipality invited all the inhabitants to come and discover the cultural, social and economical specialities of their native countries. 20 different countries were represented and even the consuls of Colombia and Croatia had been among the honorary guests. Culinary specialities alternated with musical performances and the presentation of arts and crafts. The local Douzelage committee was represented with an informative stall about the different Douzelage member towns. As it had been such a big success, it has already been decided to repeat this event every 2 years.

**OXELÖSUND** gave some supplementary information about their summer project “Global Warming – or what can young European people do about global warming”. They were overwhelmed by the mass of interested people. There will be about 55 young people from 13 different countries of the Douzelage and about 15 to 20 adults, discussing this subject in August. The EU commission granted the project with 38.000€ of a global budget of about 45.000€. In the EU, the environmental theme with its multicultural aspects is an absolute priority for the decision makers. They announced that they will make a white paper (or green in this case) about the suggestions of the participating towns and the ideas that all those youngsters will bring to the meeting. A very important point is that OXELÖSUND would really like if any other town could take the opportunity to make out of this project a multi annual itinerant project, just like the project “Follow the birds”. The subject of this project is of such a crucial question that for sure there will be no problem for any other country to get financing from the EU to do something similar. They encouraged the towns to check if they could organise this project in their country in 2009, 2010 or later.

Action: All



The president thanked Mats Ericsson for organizing this project and also for reminding that those projects can be easily be organised in other towns too, that this is notably the idea of the Youth for Europe program, that, once a project is drafted, the same scheme can be used in any other town again.

**PREVEZA** underlined that they are an active member of the Douzelage since 1991 and that they consider themselves very lucky to be a member of this association. They said that they accepted the invitation of TÜRİ with enthusiasm and that they find the conference for young children with special needs a very interesting idea. In the last months they had a Comenius event with students from Latvia. Their students visited SIGULDA in April and they are looking forward to have Latvian students in September. They also had an invitation for the towns, having the same Roman background as PREVEZA. In September they have a program for the first international symposium about the ancient Necropolis, a big Roman city. They will invite other Douzelage towns to discuss about these ancient cities and the related problems.

**SESIMBRA** explained that they have tried to make a project on the national social level, but unfortunately it had not been accepted for being granted, so that they decided to make a smaller project, more limited on the local area. Last week they had an event of a Comenius project with KÖSZEG. They had some students from KÖSZEG, from Sweden and Slovakia coming, but the only Douzelage participants had been from KÖSZEG. In the near future they are trying to host the Birdwatch project in 2009. They are also thinking about taking part in the Roman project with SHERBORNE and MEERSSEN. It will be a very important project for them, as SESIMBRA has also very close links with the ancient Romans' history.

The president thanked SESIMBRA for the excellent news that they will host the Birdwatch project. In fact the heart of the NIEDERANVEN Douzelage committee is linked to this project and they are very happy that their initial project is being continued.

**SHERBORNE:** Beyond all the activities listed on their activities report, SHERBORNE specially draw the attention to 2 major points: the English Song contest in CHOJNA, where they managed to send 17 young people to CHOJNA, who reported that it had been absolutely fantastic on one hand and on the other they will have 14 golfers from SHERBORNE going to GRANVILLE, resurrecting the annual exchange. Another golfing exchange with HOLSTEBRO is also in preparation.

Jeremy Barker first thanked Nico van de Vliet for the long lasting ties of friendship and the excellent cooperation they had during his long mandate as Douzelage president.

Then he reported on the relevant part of Roman project. In fact the youngsters of MEERSSEN had the idea and this project affects something, which is absolutely at the heart of the European culture. Roman routes are undeniable and ever present. So the aims are to investigate an historical topic, which are of great general interest to come up at the end with something which can be used an educational tool. Most of the Douzelage towns were in the Empire and some just outside, but all influenced in one way or in another. The means to achieving will first be to collect all the information about what the Roman occupation was in each area, what its long term affects were, what impact is still to be seen. The means are maps, archaeological evidence and why not lean on University departments for more detailed information. The idea is to work through local historians and at least one local school and that there should be much involvement by pupils as well as by adults. What is needed from all the people interested in joining this project is a contact, a local historian who knows something about the area and a school with a contact person in that school. It should be critical of course that ALTEA, SESIMBRA, PREVEZA and BELLAGIO, which were very much at the heart of the Roman Empire, should be on board.

For the organization of the project, Jan Swanenvleugel and Jeremy Barker will let circulate the details of it within the next few weeks and once they have worked out things in more details, they might perhaps have a coordinating meeting in MEERSSEN and set out the size of what it is. The president mentioned before that there might well be EU funding, perhaps from Interreg for this and that will also be investigated. Once the information is gathered, there are then obviously good opportunities to have meetings in the various towns and PREVEZA had already agreed in principle that the first meeting could be there. The Necropolis is very interesting and well preserved all things considered. From the Roman side it is the site of the battle Actium, but there is other work of archaeology and the amphitheatre is obviously the perfect place to start.

KÖSZEG remarked that this project could also be a Comenius project because it is to be planned for schools.

**SIGULDA:** SIGULDA reported on the celebration of the 800th anniversary of their town in which the president and the vice-president took part. Secondly they had a Comenius project between Latvian school and the PREVEZA gymnasium and one of these students also took part in this meeting. The next action will be that the Police of SIGULDA will visit OXELÖSUND; it is not a Douzelage project but very enriching though.



The president thanked SIGULDA for their hospitality and congratulated them for the extraordinary festivities that took place at the occasion of the 800th anniversary.

SUŠICE underlined their excellent relation with BAD KÖTZTING and précised there are not only teachers and students but also their choirs to have good relationships and visit each other. Their students took part in the final meeting of a Comenius project (Comenius-Söprus). They also expressed their gratitude for the contact that could be built with JUDENBURG. A band from there visited SUŠICE last year and they will be going to JUDENBURG this autumn. The choirs from SUŠICE are also going to take part in a concert in MEERSSEN. Further they are going to HOUFFALIZE in June, to KÖSZEG in July and they will participate in the Global warming project in OXELÖSUND.

ZVOLEN specially mentioned their Douzelage exhibition, organised 2 weeks later, where they introduce the Douzelage, its members and the possibilities of cooperation to ZVOLEN basic schools, secondary schools and NGOs that might develop further activities on international scale. They are setting up the Douzelage committee and this should be done before September, until the meeting in CHOJNA. Concerning the Douzelage exhibition they asked the delegations for exhibition material, pictures, brochures or something about the towns.

PRIENAI being the new Douzelage member thanked all the delegations for their unanimous vote and promised to make every possible effort to become a strong Douzelage member in order to be able to present their plans for the future next year.

Finally the president specially mentioned the Poetry contest which is still open in GRANVILLE and where 14 countries have responded positively by sending in poems from children aged up to 12 years. Probably this book will be published in 2009. A request had been addressed to the commissioner Jan Figel to write the foreword and it will be a book where the Douzelage will be one of the main participants. Towns that have not yet sent in their poems were encouraged to do so very soon.

KÖSZEG asked about the translation of these poems as it is very difficult to translate them. He suggested that all these poems should also be read and recorded in an MP3 format, so that a CD about the poems could be made.

The president explained that the poems will be published in 4 languages: the home language, English, French and German. Translation is guaranteed, so towns can easily send in their poems in their own language.

At the end of the tour of the table the president thanked all the delegations for their strong commitment and the numerous projects they initiated. It is with pleasure that it can be noted that the Douzelage never had so much activities as in the last years.

## ***D) Provisional Agenda for the CHOJNA Conference SEP 08***

CHOJNA reported on the preparation of the Autumn Conference scheduled from 11 -14 September 2008.

Before starting the presentation about the CHOJNA and their meeting, Mr. Salamonczyk gave a few technical details: CHOJNA did not send any newsletter about the conference until then. As the time is quite short they did not want to mix with the main conference in TÜRI. There is not much time left and therefore all towns were asked to reply to the emails without any delay. It is known that the conferences in autumn are always quite difficult to organize, as the host town gets the responses about the number of people and other things quite late. Due to their geographical proximity to the Berlin airport, travelling will be easy and not too expensive. Therefore CHOJNA encouraged all the delegations to come to their meeting. They précised that because they are a little bit short of rooms, they cannot promise single rooms for everybody.

In a presentation they showed some pictures about CHOJNA and a few things connected with the conference. The main topic of the conference will be dealing with social exclusions. There are a lot of problems socially excluded people have to fight against in their daily life. So they would like to concentrate on issues like health problems, social exclusion because these are very often the reason of permanent unemployment. The third issue will be made together with the youth committee. There will be discussions about problems of education for young people and how they see the problem of difficulties at school. Those discussions will mainly happen among young people themselves, without experts.

A very interesting slide show about CHOJNA with statistical, geographical and historical comments followed.

He explained that according to the general plan of development, their 3 main areas of development are the food processing industry, the agriculture production, trade and services and tourism. They have a lot of lakes, forests and logistic providing sufficient work force and excellent conditions for those who wish to run a business here. They are interested in various industrial investments as long as they do not cause any damage to the natural environment. They are ready to cooperate in many fields like food processing industry, agriculture, services trade and tourism. The district is connected with other cities by a good network of roads and railways and not far from



CHOJNA at the Polish German border there are 2 check-points about 8 km from the town. What is quite interesting is that one of these check-points (Krajnik Dolny) is a very small village and this is a quite short way from Berlin. There are not many people living there (something like 40 or 50 persons) but there are 70 or 80 barbers and hairdressers.

The old CHOJNA town was first mentioned as a Slavic market settlement in the 13th century. In the second half of the 12th (c.f. Wikipedia) century CHOJNA was granted a Charta by Prince Barnim 1<sup>st</sup> and then there was the part of New Marchia (Neumark) which belonged to the order of the Cross. At the term of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries CHOJNA was one of the biggest and greatest towns in New Marchia. In 1945, 80% of the town had been destroyed. With such an interesting past CHOJNA offers for tourism a number of unique gothic buildings. The St. Mary's Church of the 14<sup>th</sup> century is a huge gothic brick and stone church with a lovely spire, design made by Heinrich Brunsbergh. It is one of the best buildings of the wets Pomeranian region and of the whole Europe. It has been rebuilt and renovated at the moment, in the frame of a huge project organised by former citizens of the town, who live now in Hannover. The Gothic Town Hall was built by the townsmen of CHOJNA and became the "House of the Merchant"; since 1433 it has been the headquarters of the local council and nowadays it is a public library. The Town Hall, apart from its unique historic value, is also the cultural centre of the town when festivals and cultural events are organized in CHOJNA (the annual CHOJNA Days, Days of European Integration...). Children can attend baking and music classes and have a good choice of after school activities.

They have 2 gates: the Barnkowska gate, which closes the town from the east and Schwedter gate, which closes the town from the west. There is a very unique place which is called "Love Valley", a beautiful picturesque area, lovely landscape with ponds and statues of Adam and Eve, a high viewpoint, full of interesting and rare plants. The place belonged to a German van Humbert family and was built in 1829. Now there is a kind of renovation taking place in this area with its lakes and forests. They also have some hotels and one of them is called Piastowska which is a hotel and restaurant.

As mentioned before, the main topics of the conference will be on employment and the special situation in CHOJNA, where the area was full for state farms. For example a farm employed 300 people and after the changes in 1998 only 5 people were needed. So the rest, without being well qualified, had to stay in the village and could do nothing. So it had been very difficult to deal with the social situation and they still have some students that started secondary school and have never seen their parents getting up in the morning going to work. They have a very good day care centre for people with disabilities and for mentally retarded people. They would invite the delegates to visit the place and they would like to talk about how to involve these people into the life of the society. This place is situated in a former Russian airport, which was a small town outside CHOJNA, fenced and with a hospital school. It was a separate town and Mr. Salamonczyk remembered when he was nine or ten years old, they were trying to get there by a hole in the fence to buy some sweets, chocolates in the shops and if they were caught by the soldiers, they were put in a truck, driven away for about 5 or 6 kilometres and they had to walk back home, a fact that served as a lesson to them. Today the day care centre concentrates on helping mainly people with brain disabilities.

As for the school problems theme, they have a separate school for children with special needs in CHOJNA. They also have a children's home, a children's house in the same area. Therefore they also like to talk about exclusion connected with the employment level and family situation and about people having no opportunity to get well educated because of the financial situation or problems with a low intellectual level.

To close his presentation Mr Salamonczyk pointed out the excellent idea, connected with the conference, which Mr Mike Balfour from SHERBORNE, the initiator of the idea described in a few words:

From discussions in the education meeting about young disabled people, they wanted to produce some practical conclusion, something productive the Douzelage could achieve. His idea is very simple: it is Christmas cards, produced by the young disabled people of the next host town. Because the paintings of young disabled children have a special charm of their own, many of the delegates would like to buy those Christmas cards all by supporting charity. So the first step for the next host town would be to speak to their school or centre for disabled children and ask them to produce some paintings on the theme of Christmas. After that, they should choose what would be suitable and email a choice of three or four or whatever they decide, to all the Douzelage member towns and put it on the Website. All delegations could put their orders so that the exact number of cards to be produced is well known, in order to avoid a financial risk. The cards finally can be collected at the conference. If every town orders 50, this will be 1000 cards that can be sold and hopefully more can be ordered. The profit that will be made is a gift from the Douzelage to that local group of disabled children, so that they could buy some more equipment to help them. To conclude, Mike Balfour expressed his hope that all delegations will support this idea. The wonderful thing is that CHOJNA is the next host town and as hopefully everybody is going to say "yes we will do it!"



The president thanked Mike Balfour for this excellent idea and asked if all the delegations would agree. After a positive response, he encouraged the initiators to proceed in this charity project.

To close the conference, the president thanked CHOJNA and especially Mr Fedorowicz, the Mayor, first for attending this meeting and second for the strong support he gives to the Douzelage in hosting the meeting in CHOJNA next September.