



Hyphen 52

Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux
association sans but lucratif | autumn 2013



CONTENTS

Hyphen 52

News from the Office

- 3 **Leading article**
- 5 **Decision protocol**
- 6 **Study session: Conclusions of the working groups**
- 8 **Diplomas: Description of the projects (1st part)**
- 17 **The garden of wild bees**
- 20 **The allotment gardeners from Slovakia present themselves**
- 21 **The allotment gardeners from Austria present themselves**
- 23 **Great-Britain: Blackpool federation Allotment Associations and its reorganisation**
- 25 **Great-Britain: Efforts to develop allotment sites for the future(North-West)**
- 27 **Germany: The allotments in Schleswig-Holstein yesterday and today**
- 30 **Poland: The future of the allotments**

The European Year of Citizens 2013: Allotment gardeners united for Europe



JEAN KIEFFER

Jean Kieffer,
President of the Luxembourg
Society Gaart an Heem

After a time of instability and the Cold War, the citizens of Europe have become closer than ever. Europe was built and consolidated. Thanks to the Schengen Agreement, we can travel freely. Borders are no more than a symbol for a place where two countries converge. Despite all the criticisms of the common currency, the Euro has become a significant link that facilitates the exchange of freight and economic cooperation. Around 25 years ago the Berlin Wall was knocked down. Nowadays we must take care not to build new "internal walls". To this end, contact between European neighbours is needed more than ever so that we can find our common ground and learn to tolerate each other's different characteristics.

"Europe is what its citizens make of it. Europe is a fantastic adventure! Everyone must make their opinion count during the European Year of Citizens and be aware of their European rights", wrote the Vice President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding.

And allotment gardeners have played their part, however humble it may be. In Europe we, as allotment gardeners, share our love of the land and being close to nature and the environment, which not only leads to work and relaxation in the garden, but also creates social contacts beyond the border of the garden. We not only share gardening experience or successful methods, but we also connect as humans. In this way, important connections are formed between people young and old, native and foreign, as well as between people of different race, religion and beliefs. In this way we have noticed that it is simpler to overcome problems and difficulties together, as a common portrayal of interests can open doors more easily.

What matters for the local branches of our organisations also matters on a national scale and, in an even stronger way, in the wider community of European allotment gardeners under the umbrella of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux. Founded in Luxembourg

in 1926, it is the biggest not-for-profit organisation of 14 national societies of allotment gardeners, with more than three million families and allotment gardeners. To paraphrase Mrs Reding's words: "The allotment garden movement is what the allotment gardeners make of it."

Common activities allow us to attract attention to the interests and needs of fellow gardeners. The Office International speaks before the European Commission and the Council of Europe to support the demands of the European allotment gardeners. Because of this, the Office International has also become this year a member of the large pan-European organisation Europa Nostra.

The fate of allotment gardeners is currently being decided in Poland. There have been long years of attempts to reduce the legal protection of the allotment garden sites. All of the Office International's societies support the Polish federation through a petition to keep their legal protection.

The important role of allotment gardens for the quality of life in urban areas is underestimated by many countries, even though studies have proven it. Across Europe, allotment gardeners work to protect nature and the environment. The appreciation of this should be increased significantly to avoid allotment gardens falling victim too easily to town planning. This has already been the case several times in Luxembourg, even though it has been admitted that allotment gardens should be an integral part of town planning.

We are adamant that allotment gardens deserve a more important place in the eyes of town planners. This involves a better understanding of the benefits of allotment gardens in society by local, national and European decision-makers. A key part of this is the public's and the media's per-

ception of allotment gardeners. It is pleasing to see that over recent years our movement is more and more often represented as a movement associated with the earth, with the aim of maintaining and promoting biodiversity through gardens grown on the basis of environmentally friendly methods without pesticides.

Unfortunately we do not have a significant lobby in front of European bodies like other environmental organisations. Nevertheless, we must succeed in convincing politicians of our cause. We must constantly remain in discussion with politicians and the media to attract attention to our work in the interest of the community and our environment. The consultations at the Berlin seminar in August and the planned congress in Utrecht help to draw up a significant strategy for communication and the future.

Decision protocol of the general assembly held in Berlin on 22nd August, 2013

Were present: the federations of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland

Were absent: the federations of Finland, Norway, Slovakia and Sweden

- 1) C. ZIJDEVELD heartily welcomes all the delegates.
 - 2) N. FRANKE gives the necessary information on the seminar.
 - 3) Several topics are added to the agenda, which is then adopted with unanimity.
 - 4) The amended decision protocol, sent on 23rd April 2013, as well as the report of the March general assembly are adopted with unanimity.
 - 5) W. HOENTGEN gives information on the congress 2014 in Utrecht.
 - 6) E. KONDRACKI gives information on the situation in Poland, on the results already achieved and the problems waiting to be solved.
 - 7) On proposal of the executive board the general assembly decides with unanimity to grant the diploma for innovative projects to Bronfair Allotments and Cold Barn Farm Allotments.
 - 8) The delegates decide to conduct an activity "Children and Nature".
- The target are children of parents that are not allotment gardeners. N. FRANKE will present a concept until November and then the federations will be invited to send in their ideas in order to carry out the project together. The results will be digitalized.
- 9) After discussion it is decided that the Cost Action is a very important scientific project for us and has to be supported in an optimal way. People representing the Office always have to send in a written report.
 - 10) A Vademecum for the keeping of bees on the allotment sites has been worked out. The national federations are invited to add the national specific literature and links. The text will then be translated and put at the disposal of the federations.
 - 11) The federations have been informed in writing about the affiliation fees for 2014. They include the automatic adaptation decided in 2008.
 - 12) Non-payment of the affiliation fees by the Norwegian and Slovakian federation: Unanimously the delegates decide to suspend the application of article 28 of the statutes until C. ZIJDEVELD had a discussion with the Norwegian president/committee respectively W. WOHATSCHEK with the Slovakian federation on the situation in the respective country. This point will be dealt with by the executive board in November.
 - 13) C. ZIJDEVELD informs on his visit of the Norwegian allotment gardens (Parselhager) and the discussion with their representatives. A decision on the requested affiliation is postponed until C. ZIJDEVELD has met the Norwegian president.
 - 14) It is decided with unanimity that the Office will take part in the IGA 2017 in Berlin.
 - 15) Following the problem raised by the spam from China it is decided to check if the name "Jardins-Familiaux" can be protected.

Deduction of an approach for defining a strategy for the International Office for the congress 2014 in Utrecht

Ton THUIS



In Zurich and in Berlin we have intensively been dealing with the question on how we can strengthen the position of the allotment garden movement in the future. In order to be able to do this we have asked people from outside of our movement for help, who have then shown us our reflection in a mirror. It is now our task to actually implement all the suggestions to improve our image. Next year, the results of the meetings in Zurich and Berlin will have to lead to a joint strategy. Within the frame of the preparation of the international congress 2014 in Utrecht, we would like to ask you to summarize the results of the meetings in Zurich and Berlin in a visual presentation.

As I mentioned already yesterday all our members are invited to produce a visual presentation for the international congress 2014 about the allotment garden movement in their country in form of a PowerPoint presentation, a video film or a home video. The objective is to use audio and video means to show how you want to draw the attention to the allotment garden movement.

I would like to emphasise once again that the moderator Mr. Jack de Vries has also designed a proposal, which you can use as a starting point for the presentation.

Imagine that the existence of the allotment gardens in your country, your region or your city is in danger. You are given five minutes at a political gathering to show why the endangered gardens have to be protected. You can use audio and video means and decide which aspects you want to focus on.

However, you should take into account that the message has to be clearly understood by everyone despite language issues. The presentation should not exceed five minutes.

In Utrecht the auditorium offers a very special cinema to show the presentations.

Mr Jack de Vries, who is one of the best PR advisors in The Netherlands, will, as the moderator of the workshop provide tips and suggestions on the basis of the presentations, which will help us in our PR work in the future.

Might be that the presentations could be published on the website of the Office in the section of the different affiliated federations.

In the last decades increased interest could be noticed for allotment gardens in various parts of Europe, but in particular in urban areas. However, in these areas the already rare grounds are more and more converted. This is why it is important to more clearly show the added value of the allotment garden sites in a sustainable urban development.

During the international congress 2014 in Utrecht we hope to add the last pieces of the puzzle to determine a joint strategy for the future.

The allotment garden associations of Utrecht would be happy to welcome you in 2014 on their allotment garden sites. Most of the allotment garden associations in Utrecht have an active PR strategy and in addition to gardening events they also organize other activities on their sites. The associations in Utrecht would be happy to exchange thoughts with you about this in 2014.

I would be really happy to welcome you all next year in Utrecht.

Netherlands: The association Stadspark in Groningen received the Office Diploma for an ecological gardening



Stadspark is situated at its present location in the west of Groningen since the sixties. The site has 205 gardens all different in size.

In 2004 Stadspark started the road to the National Quality Mark. This led to beautiful four dots on the ladybird in 2012.

Stadspark has developed a considerable number of projects, for example:

- A butterfly garden with log book.
- Two toad pools
- A website with variety of information about a natural gardening
- Guided walks, tree route, wilderness
- Wild indigenous plants in the public spaces

- Social activities that contribute to a group cohesion within the association as well as stimulate natural gardening
- Organizing several workshops
- Publishing information on natural gardening in their own magazine 'Het Groene Boekje' (The Green Book)
- Promotional activities on local level

- A nature trail
- Dune garden and volunteer ornamental plants in a nature garden near the toad pool
- Information signs for visitors with up-to-date information about natural gardening
- Tasty route through the park with 20 different types of fruit, nut and berry plants
- Name signs for plants in the butterfly garden and along the tasty route
- Many benches for visitors
- Wilderness with a bird lookout hut
- Courses: making batboxes and shelters for hedgehogs
- Reuse of trimmings
- Reuse of building materials
- Exchange of building materials, paving stones, furniture etc.
- Water saving toilet tanks, use of CFL
- Over 40 different kinds of nesting boxes suitable for swallows and other birds, hedgehogs, bats etc.
- Woodblocks for solitary bees and insect heaps
- Artificial hatcheries, nesting places, shelters like stone heaps, dry stone walls, wooded banks, branches dead wood, heaps for grass snakes
- Several lectures and films on relevant subjects
- Inventory of flora- and fauna on the garden site

At this moment about 85% of the member gardeners participate.

Germany: The allotment garden association Neugrabener Moor e. V. in Hamburg received the diploma for an ecological gardening



Neugrabener Moor's humid biotope

On the permanent allotment garden site of around 10 hectares, the Neugrabener Moor e.V. society's members manage the Feuchtbiotop Neugrabener Moor nature trail (Feuchtbiotop Neugrabener Moor's humid biotope).

Because of the close proximity of the Moorgürtel nature reserve, the huge site designed as a park is characterised by a lot of greenery and a fauna and flora typical of marshland.

A large number of animals live in the surrounding storm drains and marshland that is rich in vegetation. It's im-

possible not to hear the amphibians like the marsh frog, pond frog and grass frog.

Dragonflies, amphibians and small fish have perfect living conditions. This is equally true for a wide range of species of birds and other small animals.

The association members contribute through different stations on the nature trail that maintain the biodiversity. Elsewhere, they have also made the site much more attractive for visitors and people interested in allotment gardens. The association has been able to take a big step towards its goal of forging a better understanding and

awareness of nature; not only among its gardeners, visitors and walkers from the large housing estates, but also primary school classes and nursery groups.

Construction of the nature trail began in 2004. It was opened in 2007 and is made up of the following:

- A thatched cottage with a roof made of reeds, housing a stork's nest as well as a permanent place for bee-keeping
- An agricultural garden
- A forest nature trail
- A fruit tree walk
- An insect house

The stations were mostly sponsored by political parties, environmental protection organisations, banks, businesses, organisations and federations. The association members' contribution was the construction, upkeep and maintenance work on the stations.

1. Agricultural garden with a stork's nest

The 650m² agricultural garden is arranged in a traditional style with small allotments. The allotments are in boxed areas, and they are maintained and grown by the members. Where the paths meet there is a rose house, which is being more and more overtaken by roses.

The rose house and the other frames are built from galvanised steel. Elsewhere, the agricultural garden is separated from the car park by an embankment.

The stork's house is a thatched cottage with a roof made of reeds. The building serves various purposes:

- With the stork's nest, the association has provided an incubation place for the white storks in the nature reserve. The nest has been built on an oak post 10 metres high. There are sufficient materials in the surrounding area to build the nest, so the nest can be repaired from time to time. Although storks are sometimes seen flying above the site, none of them have made it their home as yet. The association is patient, because white storks often return to the nature reserve and young storks search for places to build a nest.
- The pediment has an opening for the bats and barn owls that are often found there.
- On the side, an opportunity was made available for the association's beekeeper to set up his boxes for the bees. At the moment there are 10 swarms. Along with hives provided by three other beekeepers on the

two allotment garden sites, the bees ensure that plants in the allotment gardens and neighbouring private gardens are sufficiently fertilised.

- In the thatched cottage there are tools for beekeeping and other activities, so that it's possible for groups of children from the nursery and primary school classes to have biology lessons there.

2. Forest nature trail

A little gem on the site is the Erlenbruch. This marshland forest of approximately one hectare is mainly formed of alder and birch.

The marshland's typical flora has spread thanks to unhindered growth. Marshland herbs, rushes and strawflowers create the main landscape along with trees.

A small old peat bog offers the perfect habitat for amphibians.

So that this natural landscape is accessible to visitors without having to change the soil and damage nature, the association built a 162m wooden platoon on oak posts through the Erlenbruch forest to create the forest nature trail.

Through this forest nature trail, the visitors can see the plants and animals in complete tranquillity. As in this case, it is more about small rather than large animals, so with a bit of patience you can see intense animal life. It is therefore necessary to look closely. For this reason, a wooden bench was erected in a central place.

In this location you can also see the grass frog that was sponsored in 2008 by the Harburg constituency as part of a campaign for biodiversity.

The involvement of the association's members was restricted to building the wooden platoon. In no way did they interfere with Erlenbruch's natural processes.

3. Insect house

With the insect house, the association contributes to maintaining the biodiversity of the insect world.

Even if the insects take the opportunity to find shelter in the allotment gardens, they will nevertheless find many insect-friendly plants around the insect house that are not really seen as such in the allotment garden; notably nettles but also other bushes that attract insects.

4. Fruit tree walk

In the fruit tree walk, trees that are specifically old species have been planted; trees that are worth looking after and would otherwise be neglected in a profit-driven culture. The association members were guided on the topic by a promotion for the Altes Land region.

Conclusion

The attractiveness of this site which is always accessible has really increased. There are no unused plots.

The residents of the surrounding housing estates have adopted the allotment garden site as their recreation ground for walking and sporting activities. The nature trail stations complete the association's offering. Groups of children from the nursery and primary school classes benefit from it by learning about the environment. They can also get to know and understand the flora and fauna of this exceptional place of nature.

Germany: The allotment garden association “Dresden Altleuben e.V.” in Dresden received the diploma for social activities

Frank Hoffmann, 1st president



Facts

Founded: in 1912

Size: 6.8 hectares of which 5.9 hectares are gardens with 186 allotments.

Association facilities: Society house, used as a restaurant open to the public, thematic garden with greenhouse.

Social initiatives: Accessible garden for handicapped people for work therapy and recreation.

The Dresden Altleuben allotment garden association has one of the nicest garden sites in Dresden and is a model example of allotment gardens. The site is in countryside meadows, at risk of rising water levels from the “Altelbarm” of Dresden. It was nearly 80% flooded by the century’s highest water levels in 2002. Through well-organised collaborative work by all of

the association’s gardeners and the help of local partners, the partially destroyed site was rebuilt. This sense of community has been maintained and the association does this by taking part each year in the public initiative to clean the “Elbwiesen” meadows and, above all, through the association’s social interactions.

The allotment garden site is permanently open to the public and is a popular place for excursions, not just for patrons of the association’s restaurant.

The association regularly organises parties and actively includes people from the local area. Gift vouchers are sent out and received by social services for children in need.

A financial arrangement is in place so that socially disadvantaged families can have an allotment. Where necessary, the association pays for the content of the allotment and agrees a staggered payment for the new tenants.

More and more young families with children are among the tenants. This is reflected in the layout of the gardens, which has been adapted for children’s needs.

These children as well as groups from the nursery school and pupils from the primary school learn about protecting plants and nature through the thematic garden. In particular, the “see-touch-smell-taste” activity is very popular.



In order to help older gardening friends to use their allotment until an advanced age, support measures between neighbours and relief of general duties are arranged.

To support a local care institution's needs the association has equipped an allotment garden plot so that it is accessible for handicapped people, with a shed, toilets and parterres. It has allocated that allotment to the institution so that it can be used as a therapeutic garden.

Many people of foreign origin also became member of the association and enrich the social life. They are actively integrated into the association's activities and contribute positively to the development of allotment garden sites.

France: The Mazargues allotment gardens in Marseille received the Office diploma for social activities



The Mazargues Gardens situated on the Joseph Aiguier site are part of the city of Marseille's historical heritage. They were created thanks to the generosity of Joseph Aiguier, who left a profound mark on this part of Marseille. In 1905, he founded the "Oeuvre des Jardins de Familles" (Allotment Garden Association).

The Mazargues Gardens are the only one of their kind in France. In fact, it's the only allotment garden site that has a climatic spa, which was created to fight tuberculosis; a disease which was rife at that time. Consequently, the gardens deserve to be protected like the Cité Radieuse of Le Corbusier.

The gardens are in the process of being graded by the Potagers de France association for their remarkable features.

With their 3.7 hectares of pinewood, these gardens provide a greenbelt for this area of the city as well as an unrivalled reserve of biodiversity in Marseille.

The Mazargues gardens allotment enable more than one hundred gardeners' families to grow a large proportion of the vegetables that they eat. The economic benefits significantly contribute towards reducing our carbon footprint and energy conservation particularly as the majority of gardeners travel by foot to their garden.

The Mazargues Gardens welcome a wide range of disabled people including those with reduced mobility, and handicapped people in wheelchairs, for whom gardening is an essential activity to overcome their day-to-day hardships.

The Mazargues Gardens are a place for training and education. Children are encouraged to learn and discover the rhythms of nature, how to work soil, plant and animals lifecycles and the real value of sustained work effort and patience. Furthermore, who better than gardeners have the opportunity to have a varied, balanced diet with at least five fruit and vegetables a day?

The climatic spa and the Mazargues Gardens contribute to the physical and mental health of both gardeners and visitors. Numerous scientific studies have demonstrated the therapeutic value of gardening.



At a time where our society has a tendency to become fragmented, the Mazargues Gardens is one way that allows the social ties to be maintained and cross-generational interaction to take place.

Some of the gardeners are elderly and have worked on a small plot of land for several decades. We believe that taking away this allotment garden in which they have accumulated so many memories would be to condemn them within a very short time.



Cold Barn Farm Allotments and their cooperation with Abersychan School at risk children



In 2010 Cold Barn Farm Allotments received the Office diploma for social activities. In fact the association was dedicated to children and young people and helping them making a difference in their lives.

Meanwhile the project has been extended and improved in an innovative way on the initiative of the youngsters.

Cold Barn farm allotments are working closely with Abersychan comprehensive school and Torfaen youth service on a project called ASDAN. The project aims to include young people who find themselves close to exclusion from school. A group of ten young people come to Cold Barn Farm weekly and have recently started work on the allotment extension. They have

done all the ground works and built the new raised beds.

The young people are currently working on erecting an additional poly tunnel at the site. Although each young person comes with their own issues they are all engaging well and enjoying the gardening work. We have learned that even the most disruptive young people will work hard when given a leadership role and a project they can be Hands on with. The school teachers have noticed a marked improvement in the young people's attendance and behaviour since they started the project.

Willow and bamboo plantations

We planted a willow and bamboo plantation on site 4 years ago with the view

to use it in the allotments and youth centre. Due to much interest from other community groups and community allotments we now supply two allotments and the play and youth services with free willow. Our young people harvest and also show other allotment holders the many uses willow have on an allotment site. We also use it for arts and craft activities.

This summer the young people will be building a bird hide from willow. This has come from a big interest in bird watching amongst our youth club members. We have installed a very busy bird feeding station that is attracting many different species.



Garden Hülptingen
Hans-Jürgen Sessner

The garden of (wild) bees

By: Dr. Corinna Hölzer,
Veronika Ladewig, Cornelis Hemmer

Wild bees are not bees that live in the wild, despite what many people think. They are insects which, with more than 700 species in central Europe and around 200,000 species globally, generate an incredible diversity of pollination. As opposed to the bees that form colonies, they are – with the exception of bumblebees – solitary bees and have a very different but just as fascinating a life. Like bees living in colonies, these wild bees are very important as pollinators of trees, flowers and plants. Unfortunately in central Europe alone, more than half of local

species are threatened by extinction. However, it is very easy to help our zealous friends the bees by creating places for them to live and plants for them to live off.

Habitats

Wild bees need a montage of very different habitats. Soil with little nutritional value with their typical plants is more and more uncommon. However, more than half of the species of bees make their nest in the soil. So it is important to mix between thick lawn, paving and turned soil each year. Open spaces

with soil that is light and unturned, covered with leaves, plant sprigs, moss, small stones and twigs etc. In nature, soil like this is found naturally. Only in this way have the numerous species of wild bees been able to make their nests and protect themselves from predators for more than millions of years. Today we must make an effort to recreate these natural surfaces.

What you can do:

Make habitats. A garden can be far more than just a multi-coloured scenery for us! A garden for bees is also



Megachile
Hans-Jürgen Sessner

pleasant to look at. As well as dahlias with big flowers, begonias and geraniums, which are all completely uninteresting for bees, **local plants** with an abundance of nectar and pollen should have a place in the garden. **Places where these very useful wild bees can build a nest** can be found in even the most cramped garden. It's about stone structures, untreated wood, piles of leaves, sand, wild bushes and groves. These are good places to lay eggs and shelter for a number of insects, such as wild bees, but also for amphibians and reptiles. In other words, animals that live off the "parasites" found in gardens such as slugs, caterpillars and lice.

Paths and covered areas are the most expensive and most durable elements. It's good to think hard about it. Use natural stone, pebbles and planks of wood or recyclable building material. Bark also makes a nice covering.

These structures **help wild bees make their nest, as more than half of their species make their nest in the soil.** If you would like to have order in your garden, you can use an artificial nesting box and have a small "wild corner" in a part of your garden to welcome a number of animals who will feel safe there. Insect nesting boxes that you



Herb spiral
Corinna Hölzer

can buy have drilled holes but are only suitable for around 14 of our species of wild bees. Nevertheless, they are useful for getting close to small pollinators and observing their activities in amazement.

Food plants

Nurseries are delighted with their success in creating bushes whose flowers keep getting bigger and more colourful. The dahlia's big flowers are a true pleasure to see. For bees, though, you may as well replace them with plastic flowers, as they can't get to the bottom

and therefore to the nectar of these double flowers. The extra leaves on the flowers were developed by nurserymen from stamens, which means that a number of double flowers no longer have pollen and are of no interest to bees and other insects from a food perspective. Other creations like hybrids of forsythia or geranium aren't double-flowered but don't produce nectar or pollen. Many wild bees have established themselves over thousands of years on "their" preferred flowers and search for nectar and pollen there. What's more, a number of other plants can only be pollinated by certain species of bumblebees or wild bees – the plants and bees evolved together and adapted to each other. If the plant is missing, the bee is no longer there and vice versa.

What you can do:

Think about **local plants** when you are planning your garden! **Wooded strips** can be much more than a green partition between neighbours. If you combine several bushes, you get a hedge that has a different look each season of the year; it feeds bees in spring and produces fruits for you or animals in autumn whilst offering places to nest.

The good old **herb spiral** is useful for both bees and humans. Alongside



Allotment garden – numerous herbs
Cornelis Hemmer

dill, chives and parsley, you can grow a good 20 species or more to enrich your cooking with herbs like rosemary, hyssop and thyme, or use aniseed, fennel, chamomile, sage or lemon balm to make infusions. The majority of these medicinal or seasoning herbs like the sun and the warmth and prefer poor soil. In places where these plants flourish, you will soon find a wide variety of wild bees, butterflies and other very different and useful insects. Build the spiral with natural stones and a bit of earth. At the bottom of the dry stone wall it is more humid and shaded than at the top, which allows different types of plants to be considered.

If you have a large lawn that you can also use for leisure activities, you can nevertheless – and without depriving yourself of these activities during the summer – help the bees: in autumn plant **spring flower bulbs** like crocuses, snowdrops, winter eranthe or spring snowflakes underneath the grass. Already in February or March small purple, yellow and white flower heads break through the earth and announce the arrival of spring. It's unlikely in April that your children walk barefoot on the grass and therefore they don't run the risk of walking on a bumblebee that could sting them in fear of its life. In summer, the bees are happy if they discover a patch of wild flowers in your garden. Try to sew a mix of native wild flowers along the path or



Andrena
Hans-Jürgen Sessner

fence. By leaving flowers, daisies and dandelions a few weeks longer, especially when plants aren't yet or no longer in flower, you have uncovered a hub for bees and other insects. Humans seek order but nature likes (organised) disorder. Recognising the relationships between these phenomena and rejoicing it gives bees what they need; it is the sense of the initiative called "Deutschland summt! Summen Sie mit?" (Germany buzzes!

Are you going to buzz too?). **Garden competitions:** "Der bienenfreundlichste Garten gesucht!" (Search for the most bee-friendly garden) organised in Berlin and Frankfurt during this initiative show to what extent a natural garden can be aesthetic. They also show that there are still reserves and lack of knowledge amongst gardeners/allotment gardeners with regards to the needs of bees and their usefulness to humans. It is nevertheless clear that a number of gardeners are increasingly interested in these relationships and are very open to advice so that their garden "buzzes".

How do I prepare my garden for winter without killing things?

It is a habit of many gardeners: they prepare their garden for winter by getting rid of the last little dead leaf in the bin. Not a single twig remains and the bushes are cut back. Unfortunately, this leaves the soil exposed and without protection during the winter. The same goes for the inhabitants in or on the soil. This isn't the case in nature. Insects, earthworms, hedgehogs, toads, slow worms and other animals always find enough dead leaves, branches or holes in walls to shelter from the cold during winter. Numerous wild bees are in need of protected places in winter as a cocoon or adult bee. If this isn't the case, the field that will flower in summer will be useless.



Decoratif hotel for wild bees
Jürgen Schwandt

So think of bees in winter and leave a few dead leaves on the ground or only cut back your bushes in spring – animals will appreciate you for it.

For more information visit
www.deutschland-summt.de



The allotment gardeners from Slovakia present themselves

Structure

40 county committees, 1800 associations, 88,000 members

Allotment gardens

88,000 allotment gardens, with a size between 250 and 400 sq metres

Administration

Voluntary work and paid employees

The Slovakian Federation was founded on 15th October 1957 and is based in 817 02 Bratislava, Haulickova 34. It unites 40 county committees and 1,800 associations. The organisation as a whole includes 88,000 allotment gardens. The size of an allotment garden varies between 250 and 400 sq metres and the overall total of allotment gardens amounts to 5,700 ha. Each allotment garden is connected to

a used water supply system and electricity is as well available. The annual contribution for the central federation amounts to 4 € per member.

The work for the federation is done both on a voluntary basis and by paid employees.

When transferring an allotment garden, the new tenant does not have to pay a handover fee to his predecessor. The allotments are used as fruit and vegetable gardens as well as recreation and flower gardens. There are no regulations stipulating that a minimum of the plot must be used for fruit and vegetables.

There are building restrictions on the plot. Buildings can have a maximum size of 40 sq metres and a cellar.

There are no limitations regarding the building's height.

There are many different types of buildings, ranging from simple garden sheds up to summer cottages where the gardeners can live during the summer months. 50% of the allotment gardens have a private toilet, 50% use common toilets in the community buildings.

In 1997 an allotment garden law (no 64/1997) was released which gave the option to the allotment gardeners to gain ownership of their allotments. The government supports the allotment garden movement.

The Slovakian Federation offers many different courses to its members.



The allotment gardeners from Austria present themselves

Structure

5 country (Länder) federations, 385 associations, 39,400 members.

Allotment gardens

39,400 allotment gardens with an average size of 350 sq metres established on leased land and privately owned grounds.

Administration

Voluntary work and paid employees by the central allotment garden federation.

Ownership

75% communal land owners, 17% private land owners, 8% land owned by the allotment garden federation

The Zentralverband der Kleingärtner und Siedler Österreichs is based in

A – 1020 Vienna, Simon-Wiesenthal-Gasse 2. It unites 5 independent federations at Länder level with 385 allotment garden associations. The organisation as a whole includes 39,400 allotment gardens. The average size of an allotment garden is 350 sq metres and the overall total of allotment gardens amounts to 824 ha. Each allotment garden is connected to a water supply and electricity is as well available. The average yearly rent is 1.02 € per sq metre. The annual contribution for the central federation amounts to 5.66 € per member.

The allotment gardens exist both on leased land as well as on privately owned land. 75 % are owned by the communal authorities, 17 % by private landlords and 8% are owned directly by the central allotment garden feder-

ation. At the end of the lease, the new tenant must pay his predecessor an average hand over fee of 30,000 € in the Länder and 120,000 € in Vienna. The use of the land as allotment garden is obligatory. The allotment garden use has to cover 2/3 of the plot.

The work for the federation is done on voluntary basis. The central federation itself has however paid employees besides the people working on voluntary basis.

As far as the building restrictions on the plot are concerned, there are differences between Vienna and the other federal countries. In Vienna you can – according to the urban planning scheme – build allotment houses (35 sq metres with cellar and garret) or allotment garden residences (50 sq



metres with cellar and garret). In the other federal countries (Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg and Styria) you can only build a shed covering between 10 and 35 sq metres. In Vienna you can use your allotment garden as your main home if the category of the urban planning scheme regulating the land on which your plot is situated allows this use. In all the other federal countries you can only stay occasionally in the garden overnight. All allotment gardens have electricity, drinking water and have a private toilet. The effluent removal is done either by a connection to the public sewage system or to a septic tank.

On the common parts of the allotment garden sites more important buildings can be built if they are necessary for the functioning of the site. (community buildings, tool sheds, restaurant).

Since 1958 there has been a federal allotment garden law. It regulates the lease terms, its restrictions, the rent, the possibilities to terminate the rent

and the compensation to be paid, the handover of allotment gardens as well as the form of the accounts.

In Vienna and in Lower Austria there are also specific laws concerning the local allotment garden movement.

The central federation keeps its officials and members informed via its review „Kleingärtner“ (allotment gardener) which is published eleven times a year.

The central federation of allotment gardeners also organises different courses. We can quote for example courses for obtaining a certificate of aptitude, courses for technical advisers and courses for board members. The courses for technical advisers have been completely restructured in 2010 in order to guarantee in future an adequate and up-to-date supply of training.

Because the handover fee for allotment gardens is not precisely regu-

lated by the allotment garden law, the allotment garden federation uses “taxation masters” or arbitrators who are trained by the central federation. In 2009 new taxation masters for all federal countries were trained in courses organised by the federation to ensure that they all got the necessary knowledge in order to make the correct valuation in cases of a plot transfer.

The central federation of allotment gardeners started a new project in the gardening year 2011. The central federation has created so-called ecological kitchen gardens. (Öko-Ernteland-Parzellen) These ecological kitchen gardens are no allotment gardens in the usual sense of the word. The federation divided land into plots of approximately 70 sq metres. These plots which are already planted with different types of vegetables are given for a seasonal rent of 105 € to interested people. Because the first attempt was such a great success the Austrian Federation decided to offer more plots like this in the following years.



Blackpool Federation Allotment Associations and its reorganisation (Great-Britain North West)

Allotments and growing has increased over the last few years and has become popular due to gardening programmes on National Television. Clearly the days of cloth cap guys who went down to the plot to get out of the way of the wife for a couple of hours peace has changed and allotments have become more part of the community and a great hobby for all ages.

Blackpool federation was formed in the mid 1990's following the closure of an

allotment site and this despite a fight. With the fear that this may happen to another of the boroughs allotments a Federation was formed. This group of people has become strong and working in partnership with the council has ensured that all the available land for allotments has been used.

In 2010 Blackpool Council approached the Chairman of the federation Andy Percival to discuss the allotment movement and the possibility of

becoming totally self-managed. At that time the council did already pay some sites to do basic maintenance like cutting the grass and litter picking but not all sites were paid and this clearly wasn't fair.

Allotment sites were already attracting funding from a wide range of external sources including the Big Lottery which was help to fund toilets, car parks, offices and welfare units on allotment. This was the start of improv-

ing allotments and bringing them into the 21st Century.

The Federation met with the council to agree a term of reference and commitment to work together and look at the possible changes to total self management. The formal process although slow sometimes has taken over 18 months to agree and by April 2012 Blackpool Federation became totally self managed in running its own allotments leased from Blackpool Council.

There has been many hurdles to get over from gathering the basic information on how much water costs per year per site, to ensuring our tenant database was correct, to looking at external costs of running an office with a computer, electric, telephone. Its key is that the basic costs of taking on self management have to be agreed and calculated to ensure that the service can continue to run and that the costs are not just transferred to the plot holders.

A suitable location was found to establish an office with mains electric and all the amenities needed to run a full office. A computer database system was invested in and slowly the transfer to self management had started.

Meetings on each site had taken place and the support was fantastic and the safeguard of allotments would be granted for the future. The council helped provide a wide range of services prior to the changes and have continued to be an active part of the transfer over the last year.

After full negotiation a signed agreement was reached in March 2012 and a transfer date was agreed for Blackpool Federation to control the allotment service from 1st April 2012. The first few months were hard as we all adjusted to working in an office instead of our plots and then trying to ensure we had a work and plot life balance.

Blackpool Federation agreement is to

operate the whole allotment service involving invoice payments, site inspections, monthly meetings with federation representations from each site and budget forecasting for the future.

Two trustees monitor the budgets and costs versus income to ensure that the service runs smooth and also to keep the costs to our plot holders low.

Twelve months after the agreement was signed and the handover happened the Federation have found that the changes have gone very well and there has been a large amount on interest from many other associations and councils, several site visits have been arranged so that other councils can see the professional service which is now running. We have just issued our second year of invoices and are very proud to keep the costs low to all plot holders.

Jointly working together has seen all our sites with toilet and welfare facilities, improved security with all sites now fenced with secure gates to all sites. A range of site events including open days, summer fairs and local fund raising events are taking place.

While we understand that self management is not always suitable for all associations - and there has to be the interest and commitment to work together with the council for such a project to be successful, - we have proven in Blackpool that continued joint working involving the plot holders and researching the facts has ensured and safeguarded allotments for generations to come within our communities.

Efforts to develop allotment sites for the future (Great-Britain North-West)

Alan Hull, North West Mentor

Allotment Development Initiative,
National Allotment Society



Allotment Development Initiative North West Mentors reports on work for Cheshire West (CW) and Chester Allotment Roadshow

Saturday the 13th April saw the North West Counties NAS Region and the Allotment Development Initiative working together at a road-show in central Chester for the benefit of the allotment family.

An incidental meeting between a C and CW plot-holder and myself the

ADI Mentor for the North West region at Southport Flower Show led to a series of visits to the area that revealed the need for some in-depth support from the National Allotment Society.

What did I find?

- Many sites with no associations
- Sites had many problems with councils
- Councils had many problems with sites
- Very little funding obtained for region.

- No federation in area.
- Some sites unorganized and not interested
- Very little national allotments society - membership - some had never heard of us.

I felt that there was a great deal of development work to be done.

What did I do?

- Met with both Council Officers and Sites with a view to bringing both parties together for the benefit of

allotments in area.

- Offered help with the staging of a Road-show to share information and assess support for forming of an Allotments Federation.
- Held a Meeting with North West Counties' officers, where it was agreed that they would all work together to address problems in the area; including sharing of good practice at the Road-show.
- Enlisted the excellent support of a few allotment holders in region who contacted sites and ensured a healthy attendance at the Road-show.
- Agreed funding between NWC and C and CW council for the event to take place.

What was achieved on the day?

- 56 representatives from 25 sites attended and worked together as one allotment family
- The Council Officer gave an update; some sites are being transferred to Parish Councils others to Housing Associations.
- Advice was given to sites that need to form associations.
- Good practice was shared i.e. sites with associations thinking about Self- Management were given expert advice from Site Reps who had already taken that step. The support of the Legal advisor at the NAS Head Office was recommended when signing a lease.
- Information was given about the benefits of joining the National Allotment Society and the services of the Allotment Development Initiative Mentors.

- **The main success** of the day was the agreement to set up a Federation for the Region; this will enable the Council to deal with one body rather than 22 different sites.

- I am pleased to say the update from the region states that 22 sites have signed up to the Federation with others showing interest. Also some 6 new sites have joined the National Allotment Society.

SUCCESS most certainly and we hope to deliver more Road-shows in the Region over coming months.

Mentor Report

I felt it was an excellent day - well worth the time and effort, the most pleasing aspect is being available to help individual allotment holders wanting to develop their sites for the future.

The allotments in Schleswig-Holstein yesterday and today

Hans-Dieter Schiller, President



Schleswig-Holstein

Schleswig-Holstein (in Low German Schleswig-Holsteen, in Danish Slesvig-Holstein) has the motto of "Up ewig ungedeelt" (forever undivided).

It is surrounded by the North Sea to the West, the Baltic Sea and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to the East, Hamburg and Lower Saxony to the South and Denmark to the North.

The landscape of Schleswig-Holstein is outlined from East to West by the Marsch, the high and low Geest and the rolling landscape of Schleswig-Holstein.

The West coast is characterised by the Wadden Sea, with numerous flooded islets, before the Northern Friesland to the North.

Schleswig-Holstein has around 35,000 allotment gardeners grouped into 198 societies.

Our history

An organised allotment garden movement in Schleswig-Holstein started with the creation of the gardens for the poor in 1814.

As part of this, Pastor Schröder made land from the pastures belonging to the Scheunefeld church available to the citizens of Kappeln who not yet had a garden.

The total area was divided into 24

gardens with an average surface of 2 Schipp (1 Schipp 500 m²).

1 Schipp corresponds to a surface that can be planted with 1 Schipp of seeds = 25 pounds.

With the act establishing this small group of 24 allotment gardens on the Kappeln land also being designated for "those interested in gardening", the first form of allotment garden association was born.

The conditions and clauses agreed in the lease contract signed on the 28th of April 1814 corresponds to the basic rules of the state law on allotment gardens and today forms the basis of the allotment garden movement in Germany.

The Scheunefeld garden site still exists today.

In 2014 the Kappeln allotment garden society will celebrate its 200th year of existence, and it will start the festivities on the 26th April 2014 with an undercover fair next to the "Kürbisklause" society house.

In 1938, a number of names were regrouped under the name Landesbund Schleswig-Holstein der Kleingärtner. In 1945, the Reichsbund der Kleingärtnervereine (federation of allotment garden societies) ceased to



exist in Germany. There was a new foundation in 1947 with headquarters in Lübeck. In 1948, the headquarters were relocated to Kiel.

On 3rd February 1947, the Land law on allotment gardens was adopted as a basis for the allotment garden movement in Schleswig-Holstein, and it was replaced on the 1st of April 1983 by the federal law on allotment gardens.

With the support of the government of Schleswig-Holstein, the Land of Schleswig-Holstein federation of allotment garden societies was given the mission welcoming the thousands of people chased from their home country and giving them an allotment as a base for their new life. Because of this, the number of 80,000 allotment gardens in Schleswig-Holstein before the Second World War increased to reach 300,000 allotment gardens. On 1st January, 1950, Schleswig-Holstein had 315,740 allotment gardens on an area the size of 11,688.68 hectares, with an average surface of 360 m² per allotment.

On the 1st of March 1947, the society's magazine, *Der Kleingärtner*, was published for the first time.

On the 11th November 1855, the horticultural society was created (*Verein für Gartenbau*). It was presented as a society with a trans-region vocation and from that time forwards would extend across the practically unchanged landscape of the Land Schleswig-Holstein.

Since 2007, the *Landesbund Schleswig-Holstein der Kleingärtner e.V.* society has been known as *Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein der Gartenfreunde e.V.* and includes 15 regional societies with 197 societies and 5 associated societies, totalling 33,586 members.

Our objectives and missions

The *Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein der Gartenfreunde e.V.* society is

the federation of the allotment garden movement in Schleswig-Holstein, with headquarters in Ellerhoop.

Our mission is to promote the allotment garden movement, to create the basic conditions that allow a meaningful occupation, and let citizens from all parts of the population relax in the allotment gardens in their spare time. We must attract the attention of the public as to the importance of an



allotment garden and show the value of the joy that gardening in nature can bring.

A priority mission for our era is to protect and maintain the existing allotment garden areas in urban areas. Because of continuing climate change, urban areas have more need than ever of these "green oases" that make up public green spaces.

The allotment gardeners play an important role when it comes to protecting the environment and nature and protecting our planet's natural balance.

Allotment gardens must remain accessible to all parts of the population in the future. For this reason, it is important to ensure and extend the environmental protection and town planning aspects of the allotment garden movement and protect it. We must stop allotment garden areas from being converted. We must protect the long term

future of allotment gardens by law.

As a federation, we offer our member organisations and societies a vast range of public relations. Targeted training is on offer, consisting of strong, specialised, national training that supports the societies' specialist advisors and sends additional messages for the numerous questions concerning nature and environmental protection. Competitions and events

in the organisations and societies contribute towards getting and promoting the general public's interest in the allotment garden movement.

Children are our future

We want to and must do everything to create diversified habitats for our children, in which they can develop themselves positively. Our allotment gardens constitute these diversified spaces for learning and discovery. Children can experience nature there in a natural environment, feeling safe and comfortable, and satisfy their curiosity and love of adventure.

Integration as a mission for the executive boards

Foreigners, immigrants or repatriates – our towns' populations have diversified. This is already and actively reflected in a number of our allotment garden sites. Allotment gardens have for a long time been a place of integration. Working together on a project, supporting it and organising it:



that makes allotment gardens a place where, in spite of undeniable issues, integration happens in an exemplary fashion. The societies contribute significantly to communication between generations, and to the integration of different social and ethnic groups.

More than 1,100 volunteers in regional societies and associations look after our community of allotment gardens together in Schleswig-Holstein.

The Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein der Gartenfreunde e.V. is the central federation and the communication centre.

Training, seminars and professional guidance within the federations and associations ensure a professional and competent level of knowledge for members and specialist advisors.

The Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein der Gartenfreunde e.V. is seen as a service provider for allotment gardeners and its members, and is in constant contact with its associated organisations, the Bundesverband Deutscher Gartenfreunde e.V. At a local level, it is in contact with the mayors and presidents of regional communities, colleges, ministers and environmental protection organisations.

Two-way information and personal contact create a trusting partnership. For this reason, the Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein der Gartenfreunde e.V. has an office at Thiensen 16, D-25373 Ellerhoop. Tel. 0451-7068360.

Public relations are very important: for this, we use the society's publications "Der Gartenfreund" and "Der Fachberater".

Newsletters, press releases, technical evaluations, a website and e-newsletters form our internal communications offering.

In conclusion

The modern day Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein der Gartenfreunde e.V. has kept its independence since 1855.

From a horticultural society (Verein für Gartenbau), it became a central society and the allotment gardeners' society of Landesbund Schleswig-Holstein der Kleingärtner e.V., and today it is the Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein der Gartenfreunde e.V. It has survived all of the battles of war, and today it is an essential part of the allotment garden movement in Schleswig-Holstein.

The Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein now has a modern profile. It is seen as open, tolerant and committed.

Voluntary work is whole heartedly appreciated.

Federal law on allotment gardens (Bundeskleingartengesetz) is interpreted according to the needs of our era. The law's value and contents are essential for the security and continuity of the allotment garden movement in the German Federal Republic.



The future of the allotments in Poland

Eugeniusz Kondracki, President of the PZD



Prime Minister TUSK meets the allotment gardeners on an allotment site

Today, the future of over 115 years of allotment gardening in Poland is seriously threatened. The Constitutional Court challenged the system of organisation and legal functioning of the Polish allotment gardens. In particular, it questioned the basis of the Polish Allotment Garden Federation (PZD), which is currently an association of around one million Polish allotment gardeners. Our Federation which was established in 1981 based on a law, which unified in the PZD the allotment gardeners of the allotment sites operating in Poland at that time. In 2005, Parliament passed a law on family allotments, which became the new legal basis for the functioning of the PZD.

Over the last 30 years the Federation has been successfully developing and strengthening allotment gardening in Poland. It should be said that in the early years of its operation, the land area for new allotments grew by 14,500 hectares and 360,000 families received an allotment. Thanks to the Federation, there are now nearly

5000 well-managed allotment sites in Poland with nearly one million allotment users and their families. Today the PZD is a strong, independent and self-governing social organisation, operating mainly on the basis of the social work of more than 100,000 activists. The great achievements and traditions of the Federation are widely appreciated in society. At the same time for more than 20 years, the PZD has been an active and full member of the International Office of Allotments and Leisure Garden Societies.

Today the Polish allotment gardening movement is in the most serious crisis since its beginnings. This situation is the result of the judgment of the Constitutional Court of July 12, 2012, which challenged the regulations governing the operation of the PZD. The reasons behind the Court's judgement ground on the opinion that PZD owns a monopoly over the conducting of family allotments and the Federation's right to the gardens excessively limits the powers of the state and local

governments, who are the owners of the land occupied by allotments. In its judgment, the Polish Parliament is required to pass a new legislation by 21st January, 2014. Otherwise, the Federation will lose its legal existence, and, as a result, property rights to the land and infrastructure of all family allotments will expire, which at the same time will deprive the allotment users of their rights to use the land. Such a situation would mean ruining the over 115-year-old achievements of Polish allotment gardening.

Therefore, the allotment gardeners did not wait for the politicians' initiative. Within the Federation they independently developed and brought to Parliament a civil draft of a bill on family allotments. This project not only meets the requirements of the Constitutional Court, but also retains the property and organisational rights of the allotment gardeners, which will ensure the existence and development of the Polish allotments. At the same time the project meets the expecta-



Picket of the Polish allotment gardeners

tions of the allotment gardeners and society, to which more than 924,000 signatures under this project provide great testimony. The actual support is even larger, as it was also expressed in thousands of appeals, petitions and other individual and collective speeches.

It would seem that such great support is the best indication of what solution should be adopted to ensure the future of the functioning of allotment gardens in Poland. Unfortunately, other drafts for a new law have been put forward, in which some political parties, including the ruling party, are enforcing the demands to eliminate the independent and self-governing social organisation, which is the PZD, and the nationalisation and municipalisation of its assets (without compensation), which would dramatically worsen the legal situation of the individual allotment gardeners.

Huge concerns are raised especially by the threat of expiration of property rights of PZD and allotment gardeners, which currently are the basis for the functioning of almost 5000 allotments sites and the use of the land by nearly one million Polish families. Therefore, in contrast to other legal proposals, the main objective of the

civil project is to preserve those rights because this is crucial to maintaining the further existence and development of allotment gardening in Poland.

The General Assembly of the International Office also expressed their view on this matter, which took a clear position in support of the civil draft and called on the authorities to adopt it. Also, hundreds of European allotment gardeners sent their petitions supporting the civil draft to the Polish authorities. Unfortunately, so far this important voice has also been ignored by the political environment, which aims to radically weaken the allotment movement in Poland.

Therefore, Polish allotment gardeners took more decisive actions and throughout the country they organised pickets at the offices of MPs hostile to the project, and then big rallies at the offices of public authorities. In Warsaw, the allotment gardeners were protesting under the Prime Minister's Office, who received the delegation and listened to their demands. As a result of these activities the Prime Minister met with allotment gardeners in one of Warsaw's allotments and declared his support for the main demands in the civil draft. The effect of this declaration

was the consensus of the members of the ruling party in recognising this project as the leading one in further parliamentary work.

Despite this turn of events, Polish allotment gardeners do not remain passive. They continue to actively support their project, so that the Prime Minister's promises will be fully put into practice. They also hope that they will still be able to count on the support of their European friends. This support is extremely valuable and especially appreciated by Polish allotment gardeners who are grateful for their support and solidarity in the fight to save the over 115-year-old allotment movement in Poland.



CONTENTS

Hyphen 52

- 33** Council of Europe: Landscape and transfrontier co-operation
- Identifying trans-border landscapes (extracts)

Council of Europe: Identifying trans-border landscapes (extracts)



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Introductory remarks

In July 2006, the First Interreg Landscape Symposium was held in Perg, Austria, as a joint initiative of the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences of Vienna, the Southern Bohemian University Budvar, Ecovast Austria and Ecovast International. The main aim of the three day event was to discuss the problems of identifying landscapes that extend across national borders and to draw up solutions. The event dealt with four crucial points of the European Landscape Convention: to identify landscapes, involve local people in this process, raise their awareness and include landscape in education.

Identifying and appreciating landscapes

Identifying landscape (units) is one of the major targets of the European Landscape Convention. The question is whether this only concerns experts or whether local and interested lay people – if guided – can also be involved. We are convinced that this is possible. This is supported by the results of the pedagogical research (learning pyramid according to Bales).

Whereas only 5% of information that is passed on to the public through speeches, e.g. in meetings and information events, is remembered, and 10% of the contents of written infor-

mation, 50% is remembered from discussions and up to 80% when people are active.

Active participation of the interested and concerned population during landscape identification, the definition of quality goals for the landscape, and the elaboration of measures are therefore essential for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention's landscape policy and really leads to a higher appreciation of landscapes and behavioural changes which will facilitate landscape protection, management and planning. In turn, people will be able to perceive landscapes with more attention. In the

Landscape Symposium, it became clear that state of the art methods of landscape identification frequently do not comply with these requirements. To support successful implementation of the European Landscape Convention, methodological approaches that allow active public participation could be developed and applied.

Developing and applying such methods is complex. There is common agreement that landscapes are a multi-sense experience depending on people's perception (which again has to do with education). The dominating sense for landscape perception is vision. But other senses are also involved, for example hearing (wind and water), feeling (heat, cold, humidity) or even taste when trying typical local food.

One method designed for grass-roots level work is the Ecovast landscape identification method with its 10 layers. The basic layers (numbers 1-4) refer to the naturally created constituents of landscape: surface geology, climate, soil and landform. They are those landscape elements that can not be changed by humans or at least not easily (in a short time). Numbers 7-10 are the landscape features created by people (e.g. houses and settlements), whilst numbers 5 and 6 are hybrid features with essential natural elements but seriously influenced and/or changed by humans. To put it briefly: the basis of landscape is nature, in which the "cultural elements" are rooted. Yet to identify landscapes and their character, both elements have to be taken seriously, the natural and the cultural.

At the Landscape Symposium, cross-border landscapes between Austria and the Czech Republic were identified. Having tested this Ecovast method during a one day workshop, some of its strengths and weaknesses were pointed out, like the easy applicability and the holistic landscape characterisation on the one hand, and the

predetermination of landscape objectives through the selection of identification criteria, on the other hand. It has been concluded that most weaknesses can be overcome when the group using the method is guided by an expert in landscape protection, management and planning.

The peculiarities of transborder landscapes

It is only rarely that a border-line between different authorities, e.g. national borders, can be seen in the real landscape, with the exceptions of borders that are marked by large rivers, the foot line of hills or the ridge of mountain chains. Landscapes tend to extend such borders. But what do you have to take into account when dealing with trans-border landscapes?

Let us use the example of the "Wood Quarter" in the north of Austria and its Czech equivalent on the other side of the state border, where the First Interreg Landscape Symposium took place:

- The natural elements of the landscape and their visual impression are almost the same on each side of the border (the same geology, soil, climate and land form, layers 1-4 of the "matrix of Ecovast's method to identify landscapes)
- The land cover and the characteristic features and patterns of agriculture and forestry are also almost the same (the "two-fold landscape" dominated by the almost rhythmical alternation of big clearances/fields and areas of forest; you need a trained eye to notice the differences in details).

These six points (items 1-6 of the matrix) result in the fact that it will not be



possible to recognise the state border-line when looking at the landscape from either Austria or the Czech Republic (this even includes to a certain extent the "inlay of a karstic region" around the famous cave "macocha" north of Brno).

The personal experiences of landscape on both sides of the border are not the same:

- There are differences in the fabric of the settlements (e.g. in the Czech Republic; almost every village – not to mention small towns – has at least one significant building from "socialist times", the so called "panelák"; it is an interesting fact that some architects have already begun arguing that some of those "panelák" should be put under monument conservation, as symbols of their time).
- But what counts much more is that it feels like being in a strange country due to the totally different languages, giving the whole landscape experience a different quality.
- It is the same with the signs; they are written in a different language and do not look alike.

- Here is an additional difference that applies to layer 10 “spirituality and added value”. The Austrian people living in the “Wood Quarter” identify with the region and landscape; they call themselves “Wood-Quarter”. In the Czech Republic the landscape has not been given a specific name by the inhabitants; they do not identify themselves with the name of their region or landscape. Only geographers or spatial planners call the region the “Moravian Uplands”.

Since it is agreed that landscape recognition is a holistic and sensual experience, account has to be taken of all the impressions that add up to landscape perception, and not only those confined to the eye.

So the challenge, when identifying cross-border landscapes, is to choose the appropriate line on the map when working at European scale. The solution suggested to this problem (on the map) is: draw the usual black line surrounding the identified landscape unit but add an additional broken and thinner black line to the red line that indicates the state border.

Involving local people

The Ecovast method of identifying landscapes has been designed to make a seemingly complicated matter more understandable and enable the involvement of local people. Ecovast has had some good experiences with this approach in various countries, and dealing with various landscapes. The hand-out for this method is an “open source” for everybody and can be downloaded free of charge at: www.Ecovast.org. In the course of practising this method, it became obvious that dealing with landscape, particularly landscape identification, has much to do with education; in fact, it is a manner of education!

Therefore, Ecovast has started a pilot project. From the beginning of 2009, four selected (higher) schools of the region “Wood Quarter” in Austria and in the corresponding region in the Czech Republic will start identifying their surrounding landscapes in both countries. If this project delivers good results, this approach will be extended to other parts of the “Wood Quarter” and the neighbouring “Wine Quarter”. Ideally, it might end with something like a “Landscape Register” achieved

by local people and schools and other educational organisations.

To avoid misinterpretation, two points should be made clear from the beginning:

- The method and its results will give a first rough but correct alternative view and description of the landscapes of a region or a country, their character and names on which further research can be based if need be.
- This task should not be confused with any wide scale or biotope mapping.

Final remark

The identification of transborder landscapes requires intensive co-operation between nations implementing the European Landscape Convention at all levels of administration, scientific institutions, and the people living in those landscapes. Ecovast hopes to offer successful contributions with the help of local people after carrying out the intended cross-border school project.

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