



EUROPEAN  
association  
Historic Towns & Regions

# **Annual Report of the European Association of Historic Towns and Regions 2004**

## **Report of the Secretary General**

### **1 Introduction**

1.1. This Annual Report covers the period September 2003 to August 2004. It follows on from Annual Report presented to the last General Assembly in Verona in August 2003. This report will be distributed to members and posted on the EAHTR website

### **2 Norwich Symposium**

2.1. The International Symposium 'Heritage for the Future –Realising the Economic and Social Potential of a Key Asset is the second biannual conference organised jointly with the Council of Europe. It follows on from the Symposium in Kazan in 2002 on Cultural Diversity organised in conjunction with the City of KAZAN.

2.2. The Norwich Symposium has been organised in partnership with Norwich City Council and the Norwich Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust and has attracted a wide range of delegates from over 30 countries. The theme of the symposium - recognising the economic and social importance of heritage takes forward a key priority of EAHTR work.

### **3 INHERIT**

3.1. INHERIT is an acronym for 'Investing in Heritage'. The INHERIT project has been the main work priority this year in terms of identifying and promoting good practice. The mission of the project is to enhance the capacity of cities to regenerate socially and economically through investing in their cultural heritage. The project partners believe that there is currently a lack of 'evidence' as to the benefits of such an approach - why should decision-makers commit to heritage led regeneration? We also believe there is a lack of information as to 'how' to regenerate cities through investment in heritage – evidence of good practice broken down into clear guidance as to what works (and what does not work) in terms of the processes followed by successful cities. The project will also examine the implications for EU policies for regional development in order to improve their effectiveness in relation to heritage led regeneration.

- 3.2. This project is a proposed network operation under the INTERREG 3C Programme and will be submitted on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2004. EAHTR is the lead partner along with the cities of Belfast, Gothenburg, Newcastle, Verona and Gdansk. Aix en Provence, the Lille Area Metropolitan Authority, and Ubeda (Spain) are currently considering joining the project. It is anticipated that the budget proposed will be approximately €800000 over 3 years of which 50% will be matching funding provided by the partners.
- 3.3. The development of this detailed programme has taken a large part of EAHTR's available staff resource and included a meeting of all partners hosted by Belfast City Council in June 2004
- 3.4. The work of INHERIT is seen by EAHTR as very important both in terms of the subject matter which is central to our aims and objectives but also because it involves major heritage cities in the work of EAHTR –something we see as crucial to our future development.

#### **4 EPOCH**

- 2.1. EAHTR is a partner in the EPOCH project. EPOCH is an acronym for 'European Research Network of Excellence in Processing Open Cultural Heritage. This is large network of over 80 partners recently funded as part of the EU's Framework 6 programme of 'Networks of Excellence'. The project relates to the use of new technologies in the field of cultural heritage covering the full range of possibilities, from use of technology for the protection of the physical fabric, through to the use of the new technologies in interpretation of cultural heritage as a promotional tool.
- 2.2. The project director will be making a presentation about the project and how representatives of historic cities and other relevant stakeholders might become involved in ensuring the project meets user needs at the Norwich Symposium.
- 2.3. EAHTR is represented on the management board and will help represent, through its members, 'user interests'. An initial advance has been made of €20,000 to cover EAHTR's costs on the basis of full financial accountability to the project board. This will ensure that EAHTR's involvement in the project is self-financing. The first meeting to agree the programme of work associated with 'stakeholder needs' will take place in Brussels at the end of September.2004

#### **5 SUIT**

- 5.1. The Secretary General contributed to the final symposium related to the SUIT project which took place in Liege in September last year. Suit is an acronym for the 'Sustainable Development of Urban Historical Areas Through An Active Integration Within Towns'. Suit is an EU funded programme, which establishes an extremely useful methodology for the sustainable management of historic centres. It promotes the use of environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment in understanding and enhancing the heritage value of historic areas.
- 5.2. EAHTR has assisted the dissemination of the work of this project by circulating a leaflet on the project to some 600 historic towns and cities across Europe.

## **6 Historic Towns Visits**

- 6.1. EAHTR facilitated a study tour of Slovenian historic towns by the English Historic Towns Forum in July 2004. The tour organised by EHTF and Mateja Hafner Dolenc, Secretary General of the Slovenian Association of Historic Cities visited Kranj, Trzic, Radovljica, Kropa, Skofja Loka, Koper, Piran, Ptuj, Slovenske Konjice and Ljubljana. The Secretary General represented EAHTR and participated in a 'swot' analysis drawn up by EHTF of the key issues facing Slovenian historic towns based on the visit and discussions. The study tour was felt to be a great success by everyone involved and EHTF delegates were particularly impressed with the hospitality and friendliness of their Slovenian hosts.
- 6.2. EAHTR also developed a programme for the Finnish Association to visit English Historic Towns this year but this has had to be postponed until the spring of next year.

## **7 Membership**

- 7.1. The Heritage Towns of Ireland joined EAHTR in July of this year. This is an association of 17 historic towns formed out of the government's Towns scheme in the 1990s with the joint aims of conserving heritage and promoting the tourism potential of Irish historic towns.
- 7.2. The Turkish Town of Elmali, Antalya also joined EAHTR as an Associate member and the City of Gdansk becomes an associate member as part of joining the INHERIT network.
- 7.3. A number of cities have expressed interest in joining including Aix en Provence, France who hope to make a decision shortly. Romania has also indicated that it wishes to re institute its association of historic towns and join EAHTR.
- 7.4. Currently EAHTR has 11 national or regional association members, which with associate members gives a total representation of some 950 historic towns and cities across 14 European countries.

## **8 Secretariat**

- 8.1. EAHTR has benefited from the support of Norwich City Council since its inception. The City Council provides office accommodation and secretarial support. This year there was a period of 6 months where staff vacancies meant EAHTR did not have direct administrative support. A new member of staff, Denise McMullen, has now been appointed on a part time basis. EAHTR also moved offices in April to 15 St John Maddermarket, Norwich NR2 1DN.

## **9 Financial Report**

- 9.1. The EAHTR budget is set out at Appendices 1 and 2. Appendix 1 sets out the actual income and expenditure for 2003 and Appendix 2 sets out a revised budget for 2004 and a projected budget for 2005. The financial assumptions used in compiling the budget are set out in the appendices.

- 9.2. Careful management has maintained an acceptable overall balance at the end of 2003. The revised budget for 2004 and the projected budget for 2005 however assumes that current members renew their membership and that subscriptions are paid within a reasonable timeframe. In fact the overall budget conceals an underlying problem with the current financial position. The overall budget is made of three distinct elements. These are the main EAHTR budget, the INHERIT budget paid for by participating cities and the EPOCH project paid for by the project's EU grant.
- 9.3. While clearly the work overlaps it is essential that EAHTR maintains a sufficient budget to finance its mainstream activities outside of INHERIT and EPOCH. The Secretary General reported last year that the work of EAHTR was constrained by the difficulties created through delayed subscription payments. This problem has persisted this year resulting in a potential significant shortfall in the finance available to EAHTR to carry out its main stream activities, meet its debts and remain solvent. While assurances have been received that payment will be forthcoming the resultant uncertainty has inevitably meant a reduced programme in 2004 to ensure EAHTR 's activities remain consistent with the resources actually available.
- 9.4. In general EAHTR is operating successfully with overall an increased resource base, mainly as a consequence of its participation in European Projects. Clearly if the INHERIT bid succeeds this base will increase substantially as will the work and financial management requirements associated with running the project. The issue of achieving a more robust and viable base budget lies in attracting cities who have a direct interest in the work of EAHTR and greater ability to pay to join the Association. This is discussed further below.

### **Legal Entity**

- 9.5. The Secretary General reported last year on the establishment of EAHTR as company limited by guarantee. Three Directors have appointed as reported last year and form the Board. They are the President. Louis Roppe, Richard Hartley from the Council of Europe and Brian Smith, Secretary General. Brian Smith will act as Company Secretary.
- 9.6. The responsibilities of company registration include the requirement that audited accounts should be submitted to Companies House, UK in October each year. They have been prepared in draft by our auditors William Fisher Ltd and the draft approved by a Board meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2004.

## **10 Changes to the Constitution**

- 10.1. The General Assembly last year requested the Secretary General to review how cities could become more involved in the work of EAHTR and to identify the implications of changing the Constitution to enable towns and cities to become full members of EAHTR. A paper has been prepared and its recommendations considered by the Bureau meeting held in Paris in July of this year. These recommendations will be considered by the General Assembly as part of the Norwich Symposium.

## 11 Future Priorities

- 11.1. The three broad priorities of increasing membership, promoting EAHTR and its member's activities and developing the work programme continue to provide a relevant framework for taking EAHTR forward into 2005.
- 11.2. The main focus of increasing membership should be attracting cities to join EAHTR as full members subject to the General Assembly agreeing the recommendations of the review paper referred to above. It is suggested that available resources are used to prioritise a campaign during 2004 –5.
- 11.3. In many ways the success of EAHTR depends also on developing involvement with member Associations and this in turn relates in part to the level of activity planned within individual Associations. The English Historic Towns Forum is an example of a well run, active national association and both 2003 and 2004 has seen the development of several mutually beneficial activities. It is suggested that in parallel with building relationships with individual cities priority is also given to developing day to day contacts with those member associations that have a planned programme of activities with a view to developing closer co-operation.
- 11.4. Clearly the financial position described in the Financial Report above will define the level of mainstream activity that can be funded during 2005. Subject to this constraint it is proposed to publish a newsletter after the Norwich Symposium in order to promote the conclusions of the symposium and publicise the campaign for cities to join EAHTR.
- 11.5. The work programme of EAHTR will be in part be shaped by available resources and the commitments entered into in 2004. These include: -
- ❑ Completing and submitting the INHERIT project as part of the INTERREG 3C programme. This will be involve detailed contract negotiations if the bid is successful followed by a substantial work programme to establish the project management structure in preparation for a project start in April 2005
  - ❑ Contributing to the EPOCH project in terms of representing 'user needs' as described above. This will involve consultation with members and other stakeholders as well as attending the projects working group meeting and Board.
  - ❑ Working with the Finnish Association of Historic Towns and the English Historic Towns Forum to facilitate a study visit to England in Spring 2005.
  - ❑ Preparing for the next EAHTR symposium which will be hosted by the City of Gothenburg in 2005 as part of the work of INHERIT
  - ❑ Preparing in outline for a follow up symposium on INHERIT in Verona in 2007
- 11.5. EAHTR will continue to support the activities of member Associations, Cities and the Council of Europe in every way possible within available resources.

## 12 Conclusions

- 12.1. 2004 has seen significant progress on several fronts, despite resource constraints. For example in relation to European projects, increasing the overall resource base in terms of turnover, and attracting the involvement of major cities for

the first time with Newcastle, Belfast, Gothenburg, Verona and Gdansk now becoming involved in our work through INHERIT.

12.2. 2005 will be an important year for the long-term development of EAHTR. The constitutional changes of involving cities directly, if agreed, will provide a platform for strengthening the activities of EAHTR and stabilising its resource base. This is a logical development and one that INHERI, with its direct involvement of major cities shows can be achieved.

12.3. As in previous years I would like to thank all of those who have participated in the activities of EAHTR in 2003 -4 with particular thanks to the President, Bureau and Secretariat and of course for the continued support from Norwich City Council and The Council of Europe.

**Brian Smith**  
**Secretary General**