



EUROPEAN
association
Historic Towns & Regions

Annual Report of the European Association of Historic Towns and Regions 2005

Report of the Secretary General

1 Introduction

1.1. This Annual Report covers the period September 2004 to August 2005. It follows on from Annual Report presented to the last General Assembly in Norwich in September 2004. 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' was the second biannual conference organised jointly with the Council of Europe. It was also organised in partnership with Norwich City Council and the Norwich Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust and attracted a wide range of delegates from over 30 countries.

2.2. The theme of the symposium - recognising the economic and social importance of heritage takes forward a key priority of EAHTR work. The main conclusions of the symposium were set out in a policy statement and symposium declaration issued by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. This is attached at appendix 1.

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. This project is a network operation under the INTERREG 3C Programme. EAHTR is the lead partner along with the cities of Belfast, Gothenburg, Newcastle, Verona and Gdansk.

3.2. 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. The development of this detailed programme has taken a large part of EAHTR's available staff resource this year.

Project Approval

- 3.3. The INHERIT project application, submitted on 8 October 2004, received conditional approval on 17 January 2005. The project grant is €636,587 with matching funding from the 7 partners of €385,303 giving a total project value of €1,021,890 spread over 3 years.
- 3.4. Signing of the Subsidy Contract between EAHTR and the West Secretariat was achieved on 15 March following satisfactory contract negotiations on the 12 conditions attached to the offer of grant.

Project Start Up

3.5. Key actions in securing project start up have included: -

- Appointment of the Financial Manager for the project;
- Appointment of an independent external auditor
- Appointment of Queens University Belfast as external advisors
- Preparation of draft agreement between EAHTR and all the project's partners setting out procedures and obligations
- Appointment of website designers and development of project web site. The draft home page is attached at Appendix 2.
- Production of Project plan
- Setting up administrative processes
- Establishing communication systems

3.6. The INHERIT project will carry out a series of in depth study visits to the six partner cities looking at 7 themes. These are Strategy, Policy and Legislation, Good Practice, Governance, Quality, Methodology and Benefit realisation. The project will convene 2 symposia – Gothenburg 2005 (see below) and Verona 2007 and produce a good practice guide as well as a report on EU regional policy with regard to heritage led regeneration.

Study Visit to Gdansk, Poland 9 – 12 May 2005

3.7. A team from 6 European cities visited Gdansk (formerly Danzig) in May of this year and saw at first hand how different periods in the city's history are impacting on the cities present heritage led regeneration strategy.

- 3.8. The scale and quality of the reconstruction in the Old Town, after World War 2, largely as a 'replica' is hugely impressive - but there are now problems that need to be addressed. These include very high levels of housing in public ownership, an older population living in the old centre conflicting with the demands of tourists, a limited amount of mixed uses and particularly a lack of retailing needed to give the centre vitality and viability. In other areas, the project partners were shown how the recent history of Solidarity is influencing the redevelopment of part of the shipyards and how a large Napoleonic fort is being developed into a flagship astronomical centre.
- 3.9. EU membership is now providing access to Structural Funds for much needed infrastructure improvements. The long period of Soviet influence has resulted in other challenges, such as a lack of legislation for public/private partnerships and particularly how to encourage public participation. The strategy for the future is to extend the historic centre by regenerating adjacent historic areas through innovative initiatives including community arts projects involving young people.
- 3.10. The next study visit will be Gothenburg 12 – 14 September 2005 prior to the Gothenburg Symposium.

4 Gothenburg Symposium 14th –16th September 2005

- 4.1. The Symposium is organised jointly by EAHTR as lead partner in INHERIT and the City of Gothenburg. Its theme is 'Heritage Led Regeneration –Delivering Good Practice'.
- 4.2. The programme includes a wide range of speakers from across Europe including from the European Commission. The symposium will serve to launch the INHERIT project creating a unique opportunity for delegates from heritage and historic cities to share their experiences of heritage led regeneration.

5 EPOCH

- 5.1. EAHTR is a partner in the EPOCH project. EPOCH is an acronym for 'European Research Network of Excellence in Processing Open Cultural Heritage. 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.
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. EAHTR contributed to a 'Stakeholder Needs ' workshop in September last year, prepared a paper on the technology needs of local authorities and hosted a meeting of historic cities in Strasbourg in June of this year. This latter meeting identified a framework of needs relating to information and technology associated with: -

- Mapping (i.e. recording, managing, collecting): for instance to know the archaeology under the ground, developing, raising awareness to the citizen, politician and developer, providing information on different levels: town – district (street block) and house
- Preservation (i.e. repair, raise issue of fire): prevent fire for instance by cameras, remote areas,
- Promotion (interpretation and presentation): raise consciences, publishing, public involvement, sustainability, using technologies to understand the visitor's behavior

5.4. It has been proposed that work on EPOCH in year 2 should develop 2 or 3 case studies covering aspects of the above and proposals are being developed with Chester, Malta and Gothenburg. The extent of this work will be subject to agreement on a year 2 budget which will not be known until November 2005.

6 CULT – STRAT Specific Targeted Research Project

- 6.1. EAHTR is also an associate partner in another smaller 6th Framework project reported to members in the 2003 Annual Report. Cult – Strat stands for Assessment of Air Pollution Effects on Cultural Heritage – Management Strategies and has 9 research partners from Sweden, Norway, U.K, France, Italy, Germany, Czech Republic and Spain. This is a research project specifically targeted at research the European Commission wishes to see carried out and quite tightly specified by them.
- 6.2. The project will subcontract to EAHTR over the next two years to facilitate the participation of the end user community in the evaluation of management strategies relating to air quality and its effect on cultural heritage. The final product of the project will be a reference volume summarising all the findings for the end users, which EAHTR will also help to evaluate. EAHTR will help disseminate and implement the overall research findings of the project
- 6.3. The overall amount of funding is to be negotiated but it is envisaged that EAHTR will receive €20,000 in total. This is intended to cover the administrative and technical costs of the subcontract including additional staff time required and travel and subsistence costs - on the basis that we will respond in a flexible way to the needs of the project as it develops. We would propose to recruit a part time resource to support this work.

7 Historic Towns Visits

- 7.1. EAHTR has been encouraging further study visits between member associations as a very useful means of exchanging good practice. The EHTF had organised a visit to a range of English Historic Cities planned for September of this year for representatives of the Slovenian and Finnish Historic Towns Associations. This visit, has unfortunately had to be postponed. The relatively high costs of visiting England was a factor and it may be that a source of funding or sponsorship will need to be identified to make such visits viable in the future.

8 Membership

8.1. Interest has been expressed from the Vinodol historic towns in Croatia. One of these towns, Hreljin, has joined EAHTR in May of this year. EAHTR currently 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.

9 Web Site

9.1. The Historic Towns website was written in Oracle software, with help from Oracle several years ago. The software is no longer supported and the website is served by a server which is very out of date. Steria who provide web support services on behalf of Norwich City Council to EAHTR have indicated that the website must now be re-written using current software, and served from a Windows server.

9.2. We have therefore taken the opportunity to refine and update both the look and content of the site. An illustrative draft of the proposed 'Home' page is attached at Appendix 3. The site will continue to act as a portal to member sites as well as other heritage based organisations. One innovation being introduced this year is a photographic library where up to 1000 photographs of historic areas, buildings etc will be available for downloading organised by country and topic.

10 Financial Report

10.1. The EAHTR budget is set out at Appendices 4 and 5. Appendix 4 sets out the actual income and expenditure for 2004 and Appendix 5 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.

10.2. Careful management has maintained an acceptable, if small, overall balance at the end of 2004 although this has only been achieved through a 50% reduction in the Secretary General's time allocated directly to core activities outside of project work. The revised budget for 2005 and the projected budget for 2006 assumes that current members renew their membership and that subscriptions are paid within a reasonable timeframe.

10.3. 2004 has been a mixed year with significant increases in EAHTR's turnover as a consequence of securing substantial EU funding for project work but with reduced funding available for core activities of the association (outside of project work).

10.4. The responsibilities of company registration include the requirement that audited accounts should be submitted to Companies House, UK in October each year. They are being prepared in draft by our auditors William Fisher Ltd and the draft will be considered by a Board meeting of EAHTR Ltd prior to submission.

11 Future Priorities

- 11.1. The financial position described in the Financial Report above will determine the staff resource available and define the level of mainstream activity that can be funded during 2006 and beyond. The main focus of increasing membership should be attracting cities to join EAHTR as full members. The Council of Europe have indicated that they will help encourage member countries to promote cities and regions to join EAHTR.
- 11.2. As lead partner in the INHERIT project EAHTR has accepted a significant work programme for 2006 and 2007 with study visits, symposia and major documents to be produced on good practice and regional policy. The work programme will also include: -
- Contributing to the EPOCH project in terms of representing 'user needs' as described above. This will involve, subject to a budget being agreed, the development of case studies with Chester, Malta and Gothenburg consultation with members and other stakeholders as well as attending the projects working group meeting and Board.
 - Contributing to the Cult –Strat project in terms of user needs and dissemination of the projects research findings as set out in this report
 - Developing a work programme with the Culture Committee of the Council of Europe on the theme of Cooperation between historical towns and regions of Europe and reconciliation of the historical heritage and modern development within European cities' EAHTR would help identify an expert to prepare an initial report for consideration in Spring 2006
 - Presentation by the Secretary General on the work of EAHTR at the September session of the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Denizli, Turkey
 - Continue to organize jointly bi-annual symposia on Historic Towns following on the success of symposia previously organized in Kazan and Norwich. Preparation relating to the next joint symposia in Dubrovnik in 2006
 - Other opportunities identified included helping the work of the Parliamentary Assembly on public private partnerships in Cultural Heritage and working with the Directorate of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport on issues related to cultural identity and diversification particularly involving historic cities in contributing to the concept of European identity
- 11.3 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. 2005 has seen significant progress on leading and participating in European Projects, despite resource constraints, particularly with the successful bid for EU funding in relation to INHERIT. 2006 will hopefully see progress on cities joining EAHTR and the establishment of a medium to long term work programme in association with the Council of Europe which should in turn lead to more opportunities for EAHTR to involve and engage with its membership.

12.2. The key challenge will be to increase core funding to enable the restoration of Secretariat resources to previous levels and beyond.

12.3. As in previous years I would like to thank all of those who have participated in the activities of EAHTR in 2004 -5 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