

Minutes of the ERA Path Commission held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006  
on the occasion of the 37<sup>th</sup> ERA Members Meeting in Budapest / Hungary

Present were **21 participants** from **16 European countries** (A, B, CH, CZ, D, DK, E, EE, F, H, I, NL, P, PL, SK, SLO),

Guests: ERA Honorary President Hubert Yseboodt, ERA Honorary President Dr. Robert Wurst as a representant of Austria, further Dr. Lutz Heinemann (Netzwerk Weitwandern).

Start at 9:00.

Points on the Agenda:

1. Frank Schlinzig, the President of the Commission, welcomed the participants and made a short review of the previous term and paused on general problems regarding walking paths and walkers. In connection with the activity of Path Commission President, he undertook following journeys: Tallin/Estonia, Copenhagen/Denmark, Camerota/Italy, border regions D/F, Ceske Budejovice/Czech Republic, participation in the ERA event „Walking with neighbours“ on the borders D/DK. Regrettable was the recall of the European conference „Waymarking“ in Poland; the reason was the change in the event site and missing enlisting in the participation.
2. There were no comments on the minutes of the meeting in Elspeed/Netherlands.
3. EURORANDO 2006 was only shortly mentioned, as essential information will be submitted in the Report of the ERA President Jan Havelka at the Members Meeting. However, Frank Schlinzig referred to meetings that are held annually with the event „Walking with neighbours“, emphasized their significance and invited to a greater participation.
4. Regarding the fact that in the event „Walking with neighbours“ European Long Distance Footpaths were also included, some crucial remarks were negotiated. Extension of this international path-network only makes sense in case these parts of trails are also marked and recognized as E-Paths. The minutes of the 2005 meeting (Elspeed) were referred to, in which the main points were declared, and these are necessary to be revised here. Some parts of paths are still only projected, some lack the marking saying they belong to E-Paths. A typical example is the Camino (Path of St. James to Santiago de Compostela) which lacks the sign informing it belongs to the walking path E3. It is similar with E1, on the path Gotthardroute through Switzerland. The reasons for these failures were discussed. The cause lies in the development of E-Paths network, because the fathers of this idea did not want to build new trails but to interconnect the existing ones across the borders. Thus the well-known paths were integrated, such as the Western Path (Westweg) in Schwarzwald (Germany) or the North-Forrest-Edgepath (Nord-Wald-Kammweg) in Austria, Kék-Túra (Blue Path) in Hungary (which took hold of three parts of E-Paths) and the Camino, mentioned above. Frank Schlinzig thanked the Hungarian waymarkers for good marking which he noticed when walking along almost all his route, however, he also stated he found too little references to E-Paths (as well as on EB before). E-Paths fathers did not establish uniform marking (anyway, it would not be possible to implement!) but reference tables to important places should point at common European performance of the walkers. In the meantime, variously grafically processed reference signs were added to the reference tables. Generally, it is important to make clear that parts of paths belong to European Long Distance Paths. A lot of work was claimed to have to be done. The new part of E1 Path in Italy, publicly delivered south of Naples (in Camerota), was mentioned. This part of path, however, involves no fluent continuing. It could be enabled by financing the project. Afterwards, a discussion followed which uncovered problems with project financing and made clear that the EU does not assume

the costs on path facilities from the porto cash desk, although the ERA directly represents the organizations of European walkers. As a rule, pre-financing as well as voluntary activities of relevant organizations must be available.

Establishing new pilgrim paths represents eventually a competition for the ERA, too, although another intentions are also taken into account. Member organizations were appealed to take effect and avoid wrong planning. After all, we should also offer our experience.

In the discussion contributions, providing information about E-Paths on the Internet was mentioned. Also here, though, are obvious problems with updating. There is a new site to E5, available on [www.e5-homepage.de](http://www.e5-homepage.de), with an appropriate link.

5. Under the concept of I-Paths (International Long Distance Paths), Dr. Robert Wurst introduced projects of 3 new pilgrim paths which are being proposed in cooperation with walkers organizations from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria and the path I-23 is already available as a book („On the Pilgrim Path of St. Mary“ – „Auf dem Marienpilgerweg“, publishing house Tyrolia, authors Dr. Robert Wurst, Markus Schlagnitweit, ISBN 3702227296).
6. ERA Presidium submitted the list of priorities which, as for the Path Commission, consists of following issues:
  - I. European Long Distance Footpaths,
  - II. Legal protection of walking paths,
  - III. Access right.

The E-Paths topic is a lasting task, with various key points though, and thus it has an essentially special priority at the Path Commission Meeting.

The protection of walking paths and the access right are thematical areas which challenge the exchange of experience and the mutual informedness. It is certainly very useful and good to know how these topics are negotiated in other countries. The convertibility is indeed doubtful as solving legal matters is required. These issues are going to be further discussed at another meeting in Tallin.

7. At the close of the meeting, Frank Schlinzig announced his resignation of the Path Commission presidency for the year 2007 and appealed to seeking a successor. This should preferably be a Commission member who speaks three languages. Generally, a lack of interpreters was a matter of criticism which, though, still cannot be ensured due to lacking costs. Moreover, a constant translating by the Commission members at the meeting means an added annoyance which is accepted with disapproval. Besides, the topics are growing more comprehensive and miscellaneous. Frank Schlinzig apologized that he could not and cannot solve this issue completely, as the working possibilities are constrained.

A remark on the following Members Meeting and ERA Commissions Meeting in **Tallin/Estonia from 13th to 16th September 2007** followed, the host organization is Eesti Matkaliit.

By this remark, the Path Commission Meeting was put to an end at 12:00.

For the minutes

Frank Schlinzig  
06. 10. 2006