

Report of the 40th ERA Members' Meeting, 3 October 2009 on La Palma, Canary Islands (E)

Present: 66 participants in total;
delegates with voting rights + 2 representatives of the affiliated associations (Federation Royale Marocaine de Ski et Montagne, Casablanca; Association pour le Développement et l'Environnement aux Montagnes du Nord, Chefchaonen) – see the Attendance list (attached to the Report)

Beginning: 09.00 Hrs.

End: 13.30 Hrs.

ITEM 1

Welcome:

President J. Havelka opened the 40th ERA Members' Meeting in the Teneguía Princess Hotel on La Palma and welcomed all the delegates present in the room.

In accordance with the Constitution, J. Havelka stated that out of 55 member organizations (and 3 affiliated associations), 35 organizations with voting rights (and 2 advisory votes of the affiliated associations) were represented in the room, which made the 40th ERA Members' Meeting eligible for decision making.

He also said that the Presidium proposed changes to the Agenda of the Members' Meeting. There were new items added: No. 9, 11, 21 and 22. The change to the Agenda was approved unanimously by the delegates. The updated Agenda is attached to this Report.

ITEM 2

Adoption of the Report of the Members' Meeting of 27 September, 2008 in Blansko, Czech Republic:

The Report of the Members' Meeting of 27 September, 2008, in Blansko, CZ, was approved unanimously without any comments.

ITEM 3

Annual Report of the President:

President J. Havelka said that the delegates had received a copy of the Report of the President in advance. In his Report, the President commented on the main events aimed at promoting the ERA during the course of his 12-year period of office. He focused primarily on the pan-European events of the EURORANDO 2001 and 2006, and on preparations for the event, EURORANDO 2011.

J. Havelka pointed to the importance of the magazine Rambling&Transport, as well as establishment of the ERA website, which presented the activities of the ERA to the public.

He did however criticise the bad communications at the level of the secretariats of the member organizations. He had often faced the situation when materials that the ERA sent to member organizations ended up in their secretariats but were not handed over to those responsible for cooperation with the ERA. This is because the secretariats of member organizations often do not know enough about the work of the ERA so they do not know what to do with the materials they receive.

Another important item in the President's Report was activities with young people. He was aware that working with young ramblers exists in a number of the member organizations. He would therefore appreciate it if we could find out from questionnaires (already on the ERA website) what the real situation of walking with young people is in individual European countries and he hoped that the new management of the ERA could fulfil one of the aims of the ERA Constitution and renew the work of the Youth Commission.

He also praised the work of volunteers which is very important for the activities of member clubs: if we professionalized most of our activities, we would lose our unique identity.

J. Havelka's predecessors had already pointed out that walking is one of the best ways to international understanding and he agreed with them and hoped this would remain true in the future.

In conclusion, J. Havelka thanked the Deutscher Wanderverband (VDGWV) which took over the financial and non-financial support of the ERA Secretariat after Secretary General M. Raabe had passed away. He also thanked the VDGWV General Secretaries, W. Mohr and W. Sittig. Since 2002, Jana Harnochová has been working as the General Secretary in Prague. Even so, the VDGWV had made a significant contribution to the work of the independent ERA Secretariat. Last but not least, J. Havelka thanked his colleagues from the Presidium and he remembered in particular two members who had passed away, namely Vittorio Alinovi and Eberhard Schüle.

To conclude, he summarized the following main tasks for the ERA in the future:

1. stabilisation and further development of the E-Paths
2. revival of the activity of the Youth Commission and coordination of work in this field
3. permanent protection of the right to freedom of access to the countryside in Europe, at least at the same level as now
4. the financial stabilisation of the ERA
5. intensifying the promotion of the ERA to the public, with the objective of getting support from the EU for future projects
6. ensuring that ERA events continue to be organized on two levels:
 - a. events organized by the member organizations, with pan-European themes and in an agreed time schedule
 - b. events organized by the ERA, together with selected member organization
7. improvements in the internal communications of, and awareness in the ERA

ITEM 4

Reports of the Chairmen of the Commissions:

The Chairman of the Footpath Commission, U. Vidovič, summarized the most important items on the agenda of the Commission meeting. After 7 months of preparation, the ERA delegates had received a new map of the E-Paths which had been adjusted to show the current state of the waymarked paths. He thanked the FEDME, J. Feliu and M. Grandjean, for their cooperation in preparing the map.

He introduced to those present the sign which had been approved for waymarking the E-Paths throughout Europe: a blue background with the yellow EU Star circle and in it, the E-path number and the ERA website on the plate. A unified style of waymarking had been under discussion since last year. The waymark had been approved unanimously at the meeting of the Footpath Commission the day before, 2 October, 2009.

Members of the Footpath Commission also approved the extension of the E4 and E7 across Serbia. Part of the footpath in Romania, where there is no walking organization as a partner in waymarking, would therefore be replaced by these sections in Serbia.

The Chairman of the Walking Commission M. Grandjean said there were 25 member organizations represented at the meeting of the Commission on 2 October, 2009. The meeting discussed several important topics:

Walking with the Handicapped – a working group was established under the direction of J. Hirschinger. Based on the responses it got from more than 100 questionnaires, the group prepared a summary of activities with the handicapped in the member countries. This is available on the ERA website. Provided the group obtains financial support, it will organize a seminar on walking and health in 2010, where representatives of the handicapped walkers, as well as other organizations, will be invited.

Training of walks leaders – a working group was established under direction of A. Ducornet, which sent out questionnaires on this topic to individual member organizations. However, the group only collected 9 responses, which is too little for sensible conclusions to be made. M. Grandjean asked the delegates again to make sure that their organizations fill in the questionnaires and return them to the ERA Secretariat.

EURORANDO 2011 – this topic was to be discussed later on as a special item of the Agenda so no further comment was necessary.

Map of the E-Paths – members of the Commission were pleased to receive the new map of the E-Paths.

Right for free access to countryside – a working group should start operation by the next Members' Meeting in Foligno, in 2010, and it will pick up on the documents from the seminar in Malaga in June 2008. The Ramblers Association of Malta might be interested in organizing another seminar on this topic in November 2010.

Youth Commission – as J. Havelka had already stated in his Report, the activity of this Commission is missing in the ERA. M. Grandjean asked the delegates to make sure their organizations fill in the questionnaires already distributed and return them to the ERA Secretariat. Based on these responses, the ERA Presidium will discuss a renewal of working with young walkers.

40th Anniversary of the ERA – J. Hirschinger had summarized and created (especially from documents of H. Yseboodt) a brochure describing the 40-year history of the ERA. It is available on a CD in German and French for the delegates. An English version is under preparation.

E4 on Cyprus – M. Kazepi reported that financial possibilities existed which would enable the establishment of the E4 on Cyprus. This was seen as a source of inspiration for the other member organizations.

President J. Havelka then announced there were 40 ERA organizations with voting rights represented in the room and 2 affiliated associations with advisory votes.

The Annual Report of the President and the Reports of the Commission Chairmen were approved unanimously by the delegates without any comments.

ITEM 5

Finances 2008:

Treasurer L. Nielsen stated that both the Financial Report and the Finances 2008 had been made available for the delegates in advance on the ERA website.

The contribution from the ERA Foundation for 2008 an amount of EUR 2,000, was transferred in 2009, which is why it is included in the Finances 2009. Also, the budget contains an amount of EUR 2,129 EUR, coming from 2001, which was a contribution from Gaz de France for the preparation of the magazine “Rambling&Transport”. As the conference fees for the Members’ Meeting in Blansko in September 2009 were first sent to the ERA account in Kassel, and then transferred to the account of the KČT in Prague, they have to be stated in the Finances 2008. It is only a through item because the revenues and expenditures for the conference are alike, and at the same time they are not included in the ERA Budget. L. Nielsen said that the costs of the spring Presidium Meeting 2008 in La Palma exceeded the budget by a large amount. It made her, as Treasurer, take measures to try and decrease the costs of these meetings in the coming years. On the other hand, she assessed positively the low travel costs of the ERA President, which were low largely due to contributions from organizations that covered the President’s travel costs his attendance at their events. Costs for the salary of the Secretary General were also lower, because one salary was covered by the KČT, for which she had worked for one month preparing the conference in Blansko.

To conclude, the Treasurer said that the Finances 2008 corresponded to the budget submitted for the same period.

ITEM 6

Auditor’s Report:

Auditor R. Strobel met with J. Harnochová and L. Nielsen on 22 August, 2009, to carry out a check of the ERA finances for 2008. He said that the accounting result for the period 1 January – 31 December, 2008 agreed with the items submitted, which agreed with the figures stated in the book of accounts.

His comments on the budget were given to the Treasurer L. Nielsen and the Secretary General J. Harnochová. The Auditor recommended that the Presidium decrease their expenses which are disproportionate to the total budget of the ERA and replace the personal meetings with videoconferences. He also said that the current financing does not comply with the fulfilling of Paragraph 4 of the ERA Constitution, namely the Youth Commission. The Auditor suggested that sponsors should be approached in order to improve the ERA budget and finance ERA activities in future. Such sponsors could be promoted on the ERA website.

ITEM 7

Approval of the Presidium’s activities:

The Auditor, R. Strobel, proposed that the activities of Presidium for the period 1 January, 2008 – 31 December, 2008 be approved.

The Members’ Meeting gave this approval by 38 votes with 2 abstentions.

J. Havelka thanked the meeting and the Presidium Members for their cooperation.

ITEM 8

Applications for Membership:

Schwarzwaldverein e.V. – the club’s representative G. Schön gave a brief introduction to this German walking club: it is the oldest walking club in Germany and was founded in 1846. The club cooperates closely with the FCV and SAV. Volunteers maintain 23 thousand kilometres of waymarked paths, including a section of the E1. The club has a large young ramblers organization and it seeks to develop this in cooperation with other similar organizations. In addition to walking, it also deals with the culture and history of the area in which it operates. The Schwarzwaldverein’s membership was approved unanimously and with acclaim. G. Schön immediately paid EUR 500, the membership fee for 2009, so in accordance with Item 9 of the Agenda, the club has a voting right as an ERA member.

Planinarski Savez Bosnia i Hercegovina – its President M. Huseinović had sent a request for membership to the ERA Secretariat. At the Members’ Meeting, it was represented by B. Micic from the Planinarski savez Srbije. The Planinarski Savez Bosnia i Hercegovina currently has 85 clubs with 4,500 members. They have waymarked 10,000 km of footpaths in their area, and new footpaths are being established. They are members of the UIAA and the Union of Balkan Mountain Clubs.

Their membership was approved unanimously and with acclaim.

B. Micic immediately paid EUR 500 for the association, the membership fee for 2009, so as to have a voting right as an ERA member in accordance with Item 9 of the Agenda.

B. Micic also said that as from 2010, the walking club from Monte Negro would also like to become a member.

Österreichischer Alpenverein (OeAV) – Sektion Weitwanderer – The Chairman, Friz Käfer, had sent an application for membership to the ERA Secretariat. At the Members’ Meeting, the club was represented by U. Vidovič from the Planinska Zveza Slovenije. The Section Weitwanderer was established by the OeAV in 1979 and currently now it approx. 1,000 members. Several walking guides have been created with contributions from this Section, describing the E-Paths which cross Austria, namely the E4, E5, E6, E8 and E10. The Section waymarks 320 km of footpaths in its area.

Their membership was accepted unanimously and with acclaim.

As a result, two memberships having paid the membership fee for 2009, there were then 42 delegates with voting rights present and 2 affiliated associations with advisory votes.

ITEM 9

Election of the Election Commission:

The Presidium proposed H. Reinelt (MSSGV) as the Chairman of the Election Commission and this was approved. H. Reinelt proposed the following as members of the Election Commission:

E. Bozzano Prato (FIE)

M. Herchl (KST)

The proposed candidates H. Reinelt and E. Bozzano Prato were elected unanimously, M. Herchl was approved unanimously with 41 votes (he himself refrained from voting).

ITEM 10

Election of the President, 2nd Vice-President, Treasurer; 1st Assessor (not filled):

H. Reinelt chaired the election of one half of the Presidium, whose members had held the following positions during the past four years:

President	Jan Havelka	KČT
2 nd Vice-President	Jean Hirschinger	FFRandonnée
Treasurer	Lis Nielsen	Dansk Vandrelaug
1 st Assessor	Hubert Yseboodt	Grote Routepaden

H. Reinelt also said that there were 42 delegates with voting rights present in the room, and he asked the meeting for further nominations for the positions elected. He informed those present that to save finances, the position of the 1st Assessor would not be filled.

Election of the President:

On behalf of the Presidium, H. Reinelt introduced Lis Nielsen (Dansk Vandrelaug) as a candidate for the position of the President. A secret ballot followed.

Election of the 2nd Vice-President:

On behalf of the Presidium, H. Reinelt introduced two candidates for the position of the 2nd Vice-President: Armand Ducornet (FFRandonnée) and Jean Simon (Fédération du Club Vosgien). A secret ballot followed.

Election of the Treasurer:

On behalf of the Presidium, H. Reinelt introduced Alison Mitchell (Ramblers GB) as a candidate for the position of the Treasurer. A secret ballot followed.

ITEM 11

Results of the elections:

H. Reinelt presented the results of the secret ballots for the positions in the Presidium:

Election of the President:

In the ballot, Lis Nielsen got 39 valid votes with 1 against and 2 abstentions. L. Nielsen accepted the result of the election.

Election of the 2nd Vice-President:

In the ballot, Armand Ducornet got 23 valid votes. Jean Simon got 18 valid votes. 1 vote was invalid. A. Ducornet accepted the result of the election.

Election of the Treasurer:

In the ballot, Alison Mitchell got 37 valid votes with 3 against, 1 abstention and 1 vote was invalid. A. Mitchell accepted the result of the election.

H. Reinelt then proclaimed the elections finished, and he thanked the delegates of the Members' Meeting for undertaking the elections so quickly. He congratulated the newly elected Presidium Members and passed the chairmanship of the meeting to the newly elected President L. Nielsen. L. Nielsen thanked the delegates for electing her and passed her chairmanship role back to J. Havelka, saying that, as he had prepared the Agenda, he should finish chairing the Members' Meeting.

ITEM 14

Budget 2009, Budget 2010:

The Treasurer L. Nielsen had presented the budgets for 2009 and 2010 on the ERA website in advance. She stated that the new Presidium would meet in February 2010. Further communication among the Presidium Members and with the Secretariat would from then on be made “at a distance”, via the internet. The Secretariat of the ERA would remain in Prague and she would visit it only when absolutely necessary. If she is invited to events of the member organizations, she would ask them to cover her travel costs, as well as costs related to her stay. The Secretary General J. Harnochová would work for the ERA half time as from January 2010 and work for the KČT the other half. In 2009, the ERA saved the amount equal to 4 salaries of the Secretary General because these were paid by the project realized by the KČT.

For 2009, the Treasurer had asked for a contribution from the ERA Foundation of EUR 2,000. The Budgets 2009 and 2010 were approved unanimously.

ITEM 12

Appointment of Honorary Presidents and Members:

L. Nielsen announced proposals for honorary positions made by the Presidium Members. The proposals specified individual Presidium Members as follows:

J. Haase thanked J. Havelka for his work for the ERA during the 12 years of his Presidential position. He emphasized the events EURORANDO 2001 and 2006, the support for walking at European level which had promoted the position of the ERA and other significant walking activities. He proposed that J. Havelka be appointed an Honorary Vice-President of the ERA.

J. Hirschinger briefly summarized the work of H. Yseboodt in the ERA, in which he had been active for 32 years. He had begun as a worker for the youth hostels in Flanders, in the 90s he had held the position of ERA President for 3 years, and thereafter he was the 1st Assessor of the ERA for several years. J. Hirschinger proposed that H. Yseboodt be appointed an Honorary Vice- President of the ERA.

J. Feliu described the activities of J. Hirschinger in the ERA and in the ERA Presidium, as well as his work in cross-border cooperation between France and Spain. He proposed that J. Hirschinger to be appointed an Honorary Member of the ERA.

All proposals for honorary positions were approved unanimously and with acclaim.

ITEM 13

EURORANDO 2011:

Sandra Garcia from the Delegada Junta Andalucia promised the delegates the support of the Council and government of Andalusia in preparing the EURORANDO 2011 event. Their goal was to support walking as a sport and to promote Andalusia as an international walking destination. She cordially invited the member organizations to the final week of the events in Andalusia. Ivan Lopez Aviza from the Diputado de Deportes de Granada introduced a draft project from the cities of Granada and Almeria to the delegates, which will take part in the

organization of the event EURORANDO 2011. The Chairman of the Andalucian walking organization David Beltran Saez specified the dates and venues of the events in Andalucia:

Almeria: 08. - 12. 10. 2011 (Saturday – Wednesday)

Granada: 12. - 16. 10. 2011 (Wednesday – Sunday)

M. Grandjean reminded the delegates that they should fill in the questionnaire on the EURORANDO 2011 events and return it by the end of November 2009. The questionnaire is available on the ERA website and will enable the organizers to obtain some preliminary information on the interests and needs of the member organizations of the ERA.

ITEM 15

ERA Foundation:

The Vice-Chairman of the Foundation Council J. Havelka said that on the previous day, 2 October, 2009, there had been meetings of the Foundation Forum and the Foundation Council. The Foundation Council is elected for 4 years, so the ERA Presidium was proposing 3 candidates while members of the Foundation Forum (i.e. the founders) was proposing another two candidates so as to get the necessary number of five members. All 5 candidates must be finally approved by the Presidium. Newly appointed were: K. Schneider, L. Nielsen, H.-U. Rauchfuss, A. van Kooten Niekerk and J. Lemaitre.

The financial capital of the Foundation as of 28 September, 2009, was EUR 117,139.34. The amount is low because the minimal contributions to the Foundation account annually are not coming in. J. Havelka asked the representatives of the member organizations to organize a collection for the Foundation during their walking events. Apart from regular gifts from the Wiehengerbirgsvorband e.V., it was individuals rather than clubs who contributed to the Foundation.

Two thirds of the capital are saved as long term deposits and only one third is invested in shares which have higher interests, but money deposited in this way can be threatened by unfavourable changes in the financial market.

J. Haase suggested that a spontaneous collection for the account of the ERA Foundation should be made among the delegates of the Members' Meeting. Having contributed himself, he circulated a money box among those present.

ITEM 16

Other Proposals:

The ERA Secretariat had received no other proposals.

ITEM 17

Exclusion of member organizations:

The Eifelverein e.V. had sent a written request for the termination of their membership in the ERA as of 31 December, 2009, for financial reasons. This is therefore a withdrawal of a member organization. They had paid the membership fee 2009 so still had a voting right in the current Members' Meeting.

Israel Trails Committee – the ERA Secretariat had not had any contact with this affiliated association for the last two years and the organization had not paid any membership fees. J. Havelka said that the ERA Secretariat would send a letter to this organization, asking them to explain by the end of 2009 what their status was. If we received no reply, this affiliated association would be excluded from the ERA as of 1 January, 2010.

ITEM 18

Information and preparation of the Members' Meeting 2010 in Foligno:

E. Bozzano Prato (FIE), who represented the organizers of the 41st Conference in Foligno, in Umbria – the green heart of Italy, confirmed the dates of the conference as being **7 – 10 October, 2010**. She handed over a preliminary programme of the conference and the programme for the Pre-tour to the delegates. She asked the Presidium to discuss the programme and send her their comments. The programme would be adjusted into its final form and sent out to individual member organizations, along with an application form. As soon as possible in 2010, a website prepared by the organizers would be launched, containing all the information necessary about the conference.

ITEM 19

Venues and dates of the Members' Meetings in 2011, 2012 and 2013:

2011 – the 41st Members' Meeting will be part of the pan-European event EURORANDO 2011. In accordance with the new plan of the event organizers, the ERA Conference will be held in Almeria (E) on 10 – 12 October, 2011

2012 – a preliminary interest in organizing the Members' Meeting had been expressed by Den Norske Turistforening (N). The ERA Secretariat will inquire in writing whether the club is still interested in this.

2013 – a preliminary interest in organizing the Members' Meeting had been expressed by HF Holidays (GB). The ERA Secretariat will inquire in writing whether the club is still interested in this.

ITEM 20

Any Other Business:

U. Vidovič presented a new map of the E-Paths which shows the current state of the 12 footpaths across Europe. At its meeting of 2 October, 2009, the Footpath Commission had approved the establishment of a new European Long-Distance Footpath marked as E12. Its position was already shown on the new map. At the same time, members of the Commission had agreed that the network of the E-paths would not be extended at present. The mark "E-path" is only valid in Europe, not in Africa (the mark "A" + the number of the footpath was proposed for Africa).

U. Vidovič also informed those present that the Footpath Commission had approved a pilot project for E4, which would set out the conditions for waymarking of a footpath and ensuring the infrastructure along the whole footpath. If this pilot scheme was approved, the project would be extended to all E-paths in the future.

The President of the Federación de Montañismo, de la Región de Murcia, A. Ruiz Ortega, distributed a CD containing documents from the 1st International Mediterranean Ramblers' Meeting which was held in Murcia in June 2009. The CD includes detailed plans for the preparation of the E12 along the Mediterranean coastline.

I. Hägg informed the delegates that as from 2000, the ERA had been accepted as a non-governmental European organization by the European Council. Since that year, he had represented the ERA at the Council's meetings, together with J. Klinkert and J. Simon. He had now decided to resign and asked the Presidium to appoint a new representative. The Presidium Members appointed President L. Nielsen to this function.

J. Haase said that the spontaneous collection for the ERA Foundation among the delegates of the Members' Meeting, had amounted to more than EUR 300.

ITEM 21

Farewell Speeches of the withdrawing Presidium Members:

J. Havelka thanked his colleagues the Presidium and member organizations of ERA for their cooperation. He said in his speech that, as a pensioner with time available, he understood the importance of walking for society and this was why he had accepted the Presidency. He thanked the FFRP for the idea of organizing the first EURORANDO event, during which he had gained new strength from walking and he realized that the objective of the ERA is to spread walking into all the regions of Europe and support and encourage young walkers who are our future and our successors.

H. Yseboodt thanked the member organizations for their support during his functions in the ERA Presidium. He said the most beautiful present for him would be that, at the end of his work for the ERA, it had not been useless and the new members would continue the activities of the ERA.

J. Hirschinger thanked the delegates for the present and promised to remain faithful to the walking movement in Europe.

ITEM 22

Closing speech:

The newly appointed President L. Nielsen thanked all the delegates for voting in the elections. She also thanked all of her long-time friends from the ERA, especially F. Schlinzig who had invited her to the ERA 15 years ago. She said she was looking forward to her new work, and reminded those present of the first ERA Presidium Meeting to be held in February 2010, when preparations for the ERA Members' Meeting in Foligno will be made. The Presidium cannot work independently without cooperation with individual member organizations so she asked the delegates to inform their member organizations about the further development of the ERA, what the ERA needs from individual organizations and what it can offer them in return. These topics would be discussed in detail at the workshop in Foligno to which L. Nielsen cordially invited all delegates.

To conclude, she wished everybody a pleasant afternoon and evening as well as a good journey home.

Attachments to the Report:

- Updated Agenda
- Attendance list

J. Havelka / J. Harnochová
November 2009