

Report of the 37th ERA Members' Meeting held on 30th September 2006 in Budapest, Hungary

Present: 76 participants in total;
Delegates with voting rights – see Attendance list (attachment to the Report)

Beginning: 08.30 Hrs.

End: 13.30 Hrs.

ITEM 1)

Welcome:

The President J. Havelka opened the 37th ERA Members' Meeting in Budapest and welcomed all the delegates present in the hall. He thanked the hosts, Magyar Természetbarát Szövetség, for the organisation of the previous work meetings. After that, he invited the Chairman of the Magyar Természetbarát Szövetség, Andreas Barsony, to make a short opening speech, and gave him a present.

One minute's silence in memory of the ERA Honorary President, Konrad Schubach, who had died on 28th August 2006, followed.

J. Havelka stated that, under the terms of the Constitution, there were 40 organisations, out of 52 member organisations with voting rights present in the hall.

The delegates were asked to approve some amendments to the Agenda. The Presidium had decided that all items, which are only proposals or pieces of information, would be discussed in the commissions and not in the Members' Meeting. The results would be presented by the representatives at the Members' Meeting. Consequently, items 11, 12, 15 and 16 would be withdrawn from the Agenda. They had already been discussed in the Commissions and the delegates will be given the results in the reports of the Chairmen of the Commissions.

The Agenda, together with amendments, was approved unanimously (the Agenda is an attachment to this Report).

ITEM 2)

Approval of the Report of the Members' Meeting of 24th September 2005 in Elspeet, the Netherlands:

The Report of the Members' Meeting of 24th September 2005 in Elspeet, the Netherlands, was approved unanimously.

ITEM 3)

The President's Annual Report:

All the member organizations had been sent the written Report of the President. The President J. Havelka did not want to review the whole Report, so he only added items that had ensued from the Presidium's Meeting.

Two years ago, in Brilon, the delegates agreed that the EURORANDO event would be held every 5 years. For more information, see Top 13. J. Havelka had devoted 80 % of his time to the EURORANDO 2006 event, the Report showed how many journeys he had made in connection with the promotion of this event.

In the spring, the President had participated in the working group meeting in Paris, on the subject of training for walking group leadership and safety. The results had been presented by A. Ducornet in the Walking Commission. The Presidium agreed on creating a working group which would further develop this topic and bring new impetus to it. A decision had been made that no other commission would be created: there are only three commissions according to the ERA Constitution – Footpaths, Walking, and Youth Commission.

In September 2006, a conference on the theme „Walking and Youth“ was held in České Budějovice, which resulted in a useful exchange of information concerned with organizing joint walking camps and programmes for youth education. Such cooperation might in future result in the re-creation of the Youth Commission.

In the existing commissions, new stimuli and ideas, also from other countries whose experience might be useful, should be further discussed. 3-5 people could then evolve these ideas via e-mail, with no additional financial means needed. The ERA cannot cover such activities for financial reasons. The Walking Commission had approved two working groups after yesterday's meeting – training for group leadership and safety and walking with the handicapped.

The conference on „Waymarking in Poland“ which was to be held in May 2006, had been cancelled by the organizers because of the low number of participants registered for the event. Every second weekend in September, European Walking Days will be held under the ERA aegis. Last year, J. Havelka presented the results of this event at the meeting of the representatives of European sports associations in Brussels. The meeting was organized by the EU Commissioner J. Figel'. The ERA is not a sports association, however, it is a part of this section in the EU and so we have to maintain contact. Unfortunately, for the presentation J. Havelka received too little data from the member organizations so he could not introduce the activities of individual organizations as a paneuropean activity. J. Havelka asked the delegates to cooperate more closely and to provide the information about their activities regularly. This will be processed and subsequently presented to the EU by the ERA. The financial situation will be commented on in detail by the Treasurer in items 5 and 9. Every year, the budget lacks €10,000 for the ERA activities. This problem was to be solved by the ERA Foundation. At present time, we are half way to creating the account which is to bring regular and assured revenues to the ERA budget. Collections for the ERA Foundation could be made on the occasion of specific events. Even €0,50 from each participant could help to increase the foundation capital. The reason for emphasizing this topic is that the Foundation might in future help finance events organized at European level.

The President annually receives more than 20 invitations to various walking events in Europe, some of which arrive very late. He regularly meets the German, French, Belgian, Danish, Polish and Bulgarian clubs, less often the Spanish clubs and the FIE. He rarely communicates with the Scandinavian countries and the ERA Secretariat has no responses from Greece.

Recently, Serbia expressed an interest in cooperation with the ERA but they postponed their candidature until next year, as did Macedonia.

In conclusion, the President thanked the Presidium's members as well as particular member organizations which were showing great activity during this year in cooperating on the themes mentioned above.

ITEM 4)

The Reports of Chairmen of the Commissions:

The Chairman of the **Walking Commission**, M. Grandjean, summarized the yesterday's meeting of his commission as well as the meetings of both commissions in the afternoon, and expanded on J. Havelka's speech. The Walking Commission had divided into two English speaking groups and a French speaking one. All groups discussed the following themes: internet, walking with the handicapped and WalkOnWeb, taking about 45 minutes on each. M. Grandjean was satisfied with such a form of the meeting and wants to follow this trend in future years. Within the Walking Commission, a working group on walks leader training was created, which, based on the conference in Marcoussis, was continuing its activities. The leader of the group, A. Ducornet, will introduce the results of its deliberations at the next meeting of the Commission in 2007. The conclusions arising from these activities would be introduced by M. Grandjean at the next Members' Meeting in 2007. J. Hirschinger presented a questionnaire on walking with the handicapped to the Commission. From the results he hoped to receive from individual organizations, it would be clearer how many organizations were dealing with this problem. If individual member organizations were interested, a work group dealing with this topic can be created. The Commission delegates were informed about working with the internet: what possibilities of communication there were, where to find information needed on the ERA websites, and the like. B. Paepen from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven had given a presentation showing the present state of play of the WalkOnWeb project to the delegates.

The Chairman of the **Footpaths Commission**, F. Schlinzig, stated that the main topic of discussion in this commission was „E-Paths Maintenance“. In the 35-year-cooperation within the ERA, waymarking these footpaths had not been fully completed in particular countries. The connecting links of the footpaths were not apparent enough to walkers, a common factor being the lack of a symbol showing that the path was in fact an E-Path. This lack was apparent in Switzerland where such symbols are not permitted. That is why boards with symbols informing the walker about the waymarking system was about to be changed; they needed to be installed along the frontiers between individual countries. F. Schlinzig appealed to those present to concern themselves with E-Paths maintenance more fully as not much had been done in this field lately. The ERA delegates had approved the European Code of Good Walking in previous years and this should protect not only the countryside but also the E-Paths. This Code, though, cannot be binding in general as the European countries have different laws protecting free access to countryside. These differences would become an essential part of our future discussions in the Footpaths Commission.

In conclusion, F. Schlinzig apologized that because of language barriers, he did not feel capable of managing the Footpaths Commission adequately any more as these barriers restricted communication with individual delegates. He therefore proposed that a new chairman of the Commission be elected in 2007 who would bring new efforts and concepts

to it. He would still want to stay on as a Commission Member if he could help in solving the issues mentioned.

K. Schneider led a vote of thanks to J. Havelka for his activities which are absolutely voluntary. Individual delegates and member organizations should consider the possibilities they have for realizing what they can organize and finance. From each delegates' meeting and all events and seminars, the results and conclusions ought to be made available to the ERA Secretariat. All this was necessary in order to present all the ERA's activities to the EU. He also appealed to the delegates to review the activities of the working groups whose purpose is to solve general problems and not to try to influence national practices. They should aim to produce solutions which work. Only by adopting compromises could we cooperate at a European level.

A. Ducornet stressed, on behalf of the „walks leader training“ working group, that there was no intention of trying to create unification on this topic at European level. The working group aimed to contribute by offering examples of best practice to clubs which still lack a system of leadership training and clarify the legal position of walks leaders.

J. Lemaitre shared F. Schlinzig's opinion on the cooperation and mutual exchange of experience and information that might help other member organizations. He gave the example of France which has a problem with quad cycles misusing waymarked footpaths. He hoped that as a result of discussions with other organizations he might find a suitable solution, successfully used by someone else, for his own country. M. Parment thanked F. Schlinzig for cooperation in the Commission which, because of sensitive issues, is often very demanding. He himself supported cooperation among the clubs, leading to the promotion of the E-Paths. D. Gaspar encouraged a more distinctive promotion of the title „E-Paths“ with which the public were not familiar when compared, say, with the Path of St. James of Compostella. Walkers were not sufficiently motivated to walk along the E- Paths.

The President J. Havelka understood that people interested in cooperating in a working group needed to learn from the experiences of other member organizations on relevant issues. He therefore proposed leaving the discussion of the issue of whether to create a working group or not for the following year, when the first results from the newly created groups would be available. He added that their organizing had not hindered the main tasks of the ERA. Working groups will prepare their results in all three languages and will present them in the Walking Commission in Laulasmaa in 2007. He asked those present to discuss the issue of simultaneous interpreting, in the Footpaths Commission. This would bring an increase in financial and room demands to the organization of ERA conferences. He proposed increasing the conference fee, or ensuring a sponsor for interpreting. Due to restricted space for the Footpaths Commission meetings, the interpreters could translate consecutively if necessary.

ITEM 5)

Finances 2005:

L. Nielsen stated that the delegates had received the results of the financial activities for the year 2005 as well as the financial report. The item “internet” is very low compared to the draft budget. The webmaster Marcus C. Hansen had created the ERA websites for free. The total results of Finances 2005 were too optimistic which is why, in the next financial period, it was going to be necessary to search for other revenues that would cover the costs emerging

from implementation of particular ERA objectives. L. Nielsen asked the delegates to approve the Finances 2005 as proposed.

ITEM 6)

Auditor's annual report:

H. Reinelt acted as substitute for the auditor H. Grasmück based on a warrant of attorney. The auditor found that the accounting results of the period 1st January 2005 – 31st December 2005 corresponded to the figures shown in the account sheets and stated that the ERA capital had decreased to €17,750.01 and that the deficit in capital shown had agreed with the amount of € -10,535.93.

ITEM 7)

Approval of the Presidium's activities:

The auditor H. Grasmück and his deputy H. Reinelt proposed that the Presidium was given approval for the accounting period 1st January 2005 – 31st December 2005.

The Members' Meeting gave this approval to the Presidium unanimously.

H. Grasmück has been operating in the field of ERA finances for years. Next year, there will be regular elections for the position of ERA Auditor. H. Grasmück has asked to be relieved of his duties this year already and recommended H. Reinelt as his successor.

The new auditor was approved unanimously by the Members' Meeting.

The President J. Havelka congratulated H. Reinelt on his election. He would then thank H. Grasmück in writing for his longtime activities in the ERA.

ITEM 8)

Election of 1st Vice-President

The VDGWV announced that E. Schüle stood down as ERA 1st Vice-President because of ill health. The post of the 1st Vice-President was to be elected, according to the ERA Constitution, in 2007. Because of this, a by-elections for this post was necessary.

An Election Committee had to be appointed. The Presidium had recommended H. Reinelt as a Chairman. E. Bozzano and A. van Koothen Niekerk had been proposed to become the Members of the Election Committee. The Members' Meeting approved the Election Committee unanimously.

A colleague of the resigning E. Schüle from the Sauerländischer Gebirgsverein, Jörg Haase, had been nominated by the VDGWV to his post. At present, no other candidate was known to the ERA Presidium. J. Haase is the 1st Vice-President of the SGV and has been participating in the ERA Members' Meetings since 1973. He had been working as a journalist and had always been interested in the idea of joint Europe. Now 63 years old, he is retired so can devote himself fully to working in the ERA Presidium.

The elections were open, J. Haase won 31 valid votes (9 delegates abstained from voting).

ITEM 9)

The 2006 Budget + the 2007 Budget

2006

The Treasurer L. Nielsen said the delegates had received the draft budgets for the years 2006 and 2007.

As the delegates had not received the budget of the EURORANDO 2006 event, she needed to make some figures from the ERA 2006 Budget clear. The EURORANDO 2006 event brought almost €20,000 to the ERA Budget – the largest item being 7 monthly wages of J. Špreňarová, paid from the budget of this event. L. Nielsen claimed she could increase the budget by the items of the EURORANDO 2006 event, though she recommended keeping the amounts statement in the original form so that the finances of the EURORANDO 2006 event are stated separately, and therefore clearer.

2007

L. Nielsen referred to the lower costs of the ERA Secretariat regarding the item „post and office supplies“ due to using the internet for communication. The ERA could not yet operate self-sufficiently from the interests earned from the ERA Foundation capital. We need to put more financial means into the foundation capital so as to draw interest from the Foundation amounting €7-8 thousand a year. L. Nielsen also pointed out that increasing the ERA member fees has become a necessity. Some member organizations contribute more already for which the Treasurer was grateful but this does not cover all the ERA's expenses.

The Budgets was adopted unanimously.

ITEM 10)

ERA Foundation:

The President of the Foundation Council, Karl Schneider, reported on the Meetings of the Foundation Council as well as the Foundation Forum.

The Foundation Council approved the Annual Balance Sheet for the year 2005. The amount of capital to 31st December 2005 was €95,916.04. Up to 20th September 2006, the foundation capital had amounted to €100,380.04. As the ERA Presidium had not claimed the interest up to the end of 2006, this, amounting €3,000 would be added to the foundation capital. In the opinion of both bodies the call for gaining additional capital for the Foundation needed to be renewed. All Members should contribute to that either by donations or letters sent to possible Foundation's donors. Money raised from events such as raffles in favour of the Foundation could also contribute to increasing the foundation capital. The Members would be given a handout with examples. With the current amount of interest and without significant increase in the foundation capital, the ERA would not manage to work as it does now.

J. Havelka said that the Presidium after discussion had agreed on increasing the membership fees. This issue was to be included in the agenda at the Members' Meeting in Laulasmaa. Before the spring Presidium's Meeting 2007, we would review our financial situation and the situation of the Foundation and, from this, the Presidium would decide by how much the fees needed to be increased. Preliminary proposals suggested about €100 a year. We lack the financial resources amounting up to €10,000 needed to cover the expenditures proposed in the ERA budget for the next accounting year. Also, we have to take into account that the current Secretariat in Prague is cheap but financial trends indicate that wage demands, rental, etc., are

rising. In three years, a new President will be elected, who may change the Secretariat's location. A location in Western Europe would increase its overheads considerably. In 2006, the ERA aims to manage with current financial resources for three years but then we would need to cover the ERA expenses from other sources.

ITEM 13)

Evaluation of the EURORANDO 2006 event:

The delegates had received a written report. The report so far lacked the budget and its results, as the close of the event account would not be until October 2006. In November 2006, the ERA Secretariat would submit the results to the member organizations. A significant part of this report would be compiled as guidelines for the organizers in 2011.

J. Havelka gave the members several figures: 1,787 participants spent more than 4 days at the event, 915 came for 2-3 days, another 1,490 people came for Saturday – a total, counting both domestic and foreign participants of 4,192. Further statistics from the Report of the EURORANDO 2006 event: are; a total of 3,730 participants in the parade through the town, 1,930 participants in Friday's concert, 86 delegates at the Conference, Fairy Wood: 1,500 participants + 260 foreign participants visiting the event. Five folklore groups from abroad, 13 from particular regions of the Czech Republic, in total 446 members of folklore groups.

J. Havelka, as the main organiser of the event, had expected more participants. A very low number of participants had arrived from the neighbouring countries as well as from the home KČT. The organizers had prepared more than 3,000 beds in hotels, 2,000 in dormitories and 400 mattresses in the gym which had ensured sufficient accommodation.

Estimated total costs were €320,000 (out of that 65 % from the EU and the Czech state sources, 20 % from the sources of sponsors, 5 % from the South Bohemian Region, 2 % from the town of České Budějovice and 8 % from the resources of the KČT). The financial preparation as well as account of the project was what takes the most time. The KČT will receive financial support from the EU 6 months after the termination of the event, which means the organizers were forced to apply for a bank credit. The whole project is much cheaper than EURORANDO 2001 but it was still a large amount of money. The event had promoted both the KČT and the ERA. More than 20,000 Euros will be transferred from the EURORANDO 2006 budget into the ERA budget for the year 2006, a similar amount will also be transferred into the KČT budget. The KČT also obtained a significant financial contribution for the Walking Museum whose opening was a part of the EURORANDO 2006 project. J. Havelka noted that the best part was the cooperation with the representatives of the Region (South Bohemian Region) as they supported the project right from its start. The results of the event will be published in the Rambling&Transport magazine, in a limited edition for the purpose of representatives and meetings. Another presentation will be provided on the internet (available for everybody) and in the form of a DVD.

J.-C. Burel returned to the issue of the financial situation of the ERA, which is insufficient for the work of the organization in future. That is why he feared that it might not be possible to organize the EURORANDO 2011 event, or if the decision on increasing the financial contributions must be made as soon as possible. J. Havelka announced that voting on increasing the contributions was not possible as this item had not been included in the Agenda. However, increasing the contributions optionally for the year 2007 was possible. The EURORANDO event would never be simple for any organizer: it differs from country to country and the five-year gap between each of the events also had to be taken into account.

The President asked then if there was any possible organizer of the EURORANDO 2011 event.

J. Feliu, acting as a substitute for the Federación Andaluza de Montañismo (FAM), informed those present that this organization would stand as a candidate for organizing the EURORANDO 2011 event. For geographical reasons, they were considering organizing the event in Southern Europe – very desirable after the events in Central and Western Europe. J. Havelka was grateful for the proposal as this meant for the organizers of the EURORANDO 2006 event, a reward for their work and affirming our wish to maintain this tradition. He assured the FAM that he would provide them with all the information needed for the organizing the event.

ITEM 14)

European Walking Days in 2007 and other years

The members of the Walking Commission had agreed the European Walking Days would be held every second weekend in September. Up to the present, these Days have always been focused on a certain theme. The original theme, „Walking with neighbours“, had brought so many possibilities that the organizers in particular countries could keep this theme so the general motto „Walking with neighbours“ should remain for the year 2007. The delegates were asked to notify the organizers in their own clubs of this decision. J. Havelka also requested that the results of every event of that kind should be sent to the Secretariat in Prague. The instructions would be available on the internet. The 2nd Vice-President, J. Hirschinger, claimed that it was difficult to slot a new event on a European topic into an annual plan. The organizer of the current event could, however, use such a title for an event which was already being promoted under the European heading. This method had also been used by K. Krohn Devold, as the second Sunday in September is a traditional date of the Norwegian nationwide public march with a total number of participants reaching up to 10,000 persons.

D. Gaspar reminded those present that, because of the EURORANDO 2006's large contribution to the budget, the organizers should be concerned to get such a contribution every year when organizing events. Even €0,50 from each participant of an event would be a good contribution if we addressed the whole Europe in this way. Other contributions might be forthcoming from the internet if we put an appeal on the ERA websites.

ITEM 17)

Proposals:

The ERA Secretariat had not received any new proposals.

ITEM 18)

Approval of new organizations:

J. Feliu told the present delegates that several months ago, there had been a cooperation between the FEDME and the Association pour le Développement et l'Environnement aux Montagnes du Nord (ADEMN) in the northern part of Morocco. Both organizations working together had waymarked the long-distance path which is to be continuing into the Atlas Mountains. As a result of this highly successful cooperation, the Moroccan association ADEM

wanted to to apply for guest membership of the ERA. The FEDME supported their application. The representatives of the Moroccan association could not arrive personally because they were celebrating Ramadan. There is one guest member of the ERA in Morocco already, the FRMSM, which, according to the Constituton, has the right to express its opinion on the accession of a new organization from their mother country. As the FRMSM had agreed so the Presidium supported discussing the application.

As the 3rd Vice-President J. Feliu could not answer the question of women's rights in the Moroccan association, posed by K. Krohn Devold, the delegates of the Members' Meeting agreed to postpone the ADEMNs application for one year, when its delegates would be able to respond to the questions raised. The ADEMNs delegates will be invited as guests to Laulasmaa.

ITEM 19)

Exclusion of member organisations:

No reasons for discussing this item emerged.

ITEM 20)

Information about preparation of the Members' Meeting in 2007, in Laulasmaa, EST:

The representatives of the Eesti Matkaliit showed the delegates, using a power-point presentation, their proposals the next conference in Laulasmaa (EST). For registration of the delegates, the websites of the Eesti Matkaliit are available, the link to these websites will also be put on the ERA websites. The attention of the organisers had been drawn to the necessity of prolonging the discussion time of the Members' Meeting to 4.5 hours. The meeting of the commissions also needs to be prolonged so that the issues of each comission can be discussed properly.

ITEM 21)

Location and dates of Members' Meetings in 2008, 2009 and 2010:

2008 – The KČT will be celebrating the 120th anniversary of its foundation in 2008, which is why it wishes to organize the ERA conference. The location has not been specified yet due to the preparation of the EURORANDO 2006 event. There are two alternatives: East Bohemia, the Pardubice Region; South Moravia, the South-Moravian Region. The location will be specified at the end of 2006, the dates are known already known: **18 – 21 September 2008.**

2009 – J. Feliu confirmed organizing the Members' Meeting on the Canary Islands – Tenerife. Preliminary work is already underway and the Spanish representatives will present more details next year.

2010 – the FIE wishes to organize the ERA conference.

2011 – the Presidium presumes that the Members' Meeting needs to be connected with the EURORANDO event which is why it should take place in the same location as the EURORANDO 2011 event. However, the Members' Meeting and the main dates of the EURORANDO 2011 event must not coincide. If the representatives of Andalusia confirm the EURORANDO 2011 event, the ERA conference in 2011 will be held in the same place.

ITEM 22)

Any Other Business:

Dr. Wurst presented a book to the Honorary President of the Magyar Természetbarát Szövetség, L. Thuroczy, for his longlasting cooperation in the development of European walking. The book was accepted by the General Secretary, G. Nagy.

J. Feliu reminded those present of the seminar on the theme „Free access to the countryside“, to be held in the year 2008 in Andalusia. The representative of the regional government of Andalusia, J. Perea, was among the delegates. All the ERA organizations will be invited to the seminar, as well as governmental bodies dealing with this topic.

Henk Dikker Hupkes from the Stichting Wandelplatform LAW is leaving his post of the Secretariat Executive, so he will not represent his walking organization in the ERA any more. At the ERA meetings, he had been a regular and significant delegate of the Netherlands, and he had acted as a Chairman of the Walking Commission for several years. G. Eastwood proposed that he should be made an honorary member of the ERA. The proposer will send the proposal to the Presidium which would discuss it at the Spring Presidium's Meeting in 2007.

J. Havelka thanked all the delegates for their cooperation. He reminded the future organizers of the ERA conferences that at least 4.5 hrs for discussion at the Members' Meeting are needed, as well as enough time for the lunch and preparation for any excursions afterwards. He also stressed the important task for the next year: at the general elections in 2007, a candidate for the new President of the ERA (who is to be voted in 2009) must be known. Finally, he wished all of those present to a pleasant afternoon and evening, and a safe journey home.

Attachments to the Report:

- Agenda of the Members' Meeting
- Attendance list

J. Havelka / J. Špreňarová
November 2006