

## **Report of the 38<sup>th</sup> Members' Meeting of the ERA on 15 September, 2007 in Laulasmaa, Estonia**

**Present:** 81 participants;  
delegates with the voting rights: see the attendance list (it forms an attachment to this Report)

**Beginning:** 9.00 Hrs

**End:** 13.15 Hrs

### **ITEM 1)**

#### **Welcome:**

The President J. Havelka opened the 38<sup>th</sup> Members' Meeting of the ERA in the Laulasmaa resort and welcomed all delegates present in the hall. He thanked the organizers, Eesti Matkaliit, for organizing the previous working meetings. Then he welcomed the Vice-Chairman of the Estonian Olympic Committee, Mr. Jüri Tamm, who also greeted those present, briefly summarized the work of the Olympic Committee and wished the delegates a successful meeting. J. Havelka thanked J. Tamm for his support of the meeting, which had been very well prepared, the programme was interesting and the conditions for the meetings of the Commissions were outstanding.

The participants then commemorated the former 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chairman of the ERA, Eberhard Schüle, who died on 19 October, 2006, by one minute's silence.

J. Havelka stated that in accordance with the Constitution, out of the 52 member organizations, there were 41 organizations with voting rights present at the meeting.

### **ITEM 2)**

#### **Approval of the Report of the Members' Meeting of 28 September, 2006 in Budapest, Hungary:**

The Report of the Members' Meeting of 28 September, 2006 in Budapest, Hungary, was accepted unanimously with no comments.

### **ITEM 3)**

#### **Annual Report of the President:**

The President J. Havelka stated that all delegates had received his Report in writing one month in advance. He then commented on some particular issues:

Fundraising for the ERA: As stated in ITEM 1) of the Report, the ERA has gained support from the EU for the second time, which means that events had been beneficial not only from the walking standpoint but also from the financial one (EURORANDO 2001 and EURORANDO 2006). Although processing applications for financial support is time consuming, J. Havelka appealed to the member organizations to try to gain financial support in this way. It is in the ERA's interest that the member organizations processed the

applications themselves without the assistance of specialized organizations. These can indeed help process a project but the ERA has better know-how and is able to ensure the sustainability of a project in the future. A good example is the seminar in June 2008 in Malaga, supported by the local government, which would enable the ERA to take the opportunity to prepare quality documents.

Regarding the E-Paths, new projects needed to be found. The more the E-Paths are made known together with new projects, the more the E-Paths are likely to gain support. An example of this is the project aimed at the development of the infrastructure for a section of the E3 between Germany, Czech Republic and Poland.

The work group devoted to "Training for Walk Leaders" had also gained support, namely from the FFRandonnée. In 2008, the group will be able to announce the results of its work.

We also have to seek new sources of financing for the ERA Foundation, whether these come from sponsors or profits from events or from the member organizations of the ERA. There are still member organizations, which have not contributed at all so far to the ERA Foundation. To make the revenues from the ERA Foundation secure and to ensure the continuance the Secretariat's work and other ERA activities, the Foundation capital needs to be increased to a minimal amount of 200,000 EUR. Recently, there was only just over 100,000 EUR.

Cooperation with the EU: The ERA had become a permanent member at the meetings of presidents of sports organizations in Europe in 2005 and is regularly invited to the conferences in Brussels, led by the Commissioner for Education, Culture and Sports, J. Figel'. Regarding new projects or new European events, we have to specify in detail our activities and their contributions to society, to understanding between the nations and to the protection of natural and cultural sites, etc., if we want to win direct support from the EU.

In August 2007, J. Havelka and L. Nielsen had the opportunity to talk to Jo Leinen, a member of the European Parliament, who publicly promised to support our walking events, as well as the European Long-distance Footpaths.

J. Havelka summarized the other items of his Report only briefly. He thanked the Presidium Members for their cooperation and the results, which the Presidium as a team had achieved.

#### **ITEM 4)**

##### **Reports of the Commissions' Chairmen:**

The Chairman of the **Walking Commission** M. Grandjean stated that detailed results of the meeting of the Walking Commission had been presented at a joint meeting of both Commissions at the end of the meeting the previous day, 14 September, 2007. The Commission agreed that the date of the European Walking Days is still valid. K. Krohn Devodt from Den Norske Turistforening suggested that the event should not be held only for individuals and families, but also for companies. Based on preliminary discussions, a so-called Friendship Declaration will be prepared for the 39<sup>th</sup> ERA Conference. A work group was created, which would deal with access rights and further develop the results of the seminar to be held in June 2008 in Malaga. Another newly created work group will be devoted to "Walking with the Disabled". It would take up the work proposed in the Walking Commission meeting in 2006. The main topic of the Commission was information from the work group on "Training of Walks Leaders". The results would be further discussed at the spring Meeting of the Presidium and the conclusions be submitted at the Members' Meeting in September 2008. The WalkOnWeb project was technically very demanding. At present, the results of the theoretical preparation were being realized. A licence had been granted to all cooperating organizations. Clients would be able to download the data about particular parts of footpaths onto their mobile phones.

The Chairman of the **Footpath Commission** F. Schlinzig stated that most information had already been provided by M. Grandjean. He briefly summarized the issues that had been discussed: “walking with neighbours” on European Walking Days, E-Paths, their extent and finished sections. F. Schlinzig introduced his successor to the position of Chairman of the Footpath Commission and the two Vice-Chairmen:

Uroš Vidovič (Slovenia) – Chairman

Pedro Cuiça (Portugal) – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chairman

Rob Franssen (Netherlands) – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chairman

After 10 years of work, he was passing on his knowledge and especially hoped space for new ideas about the E-Paths would be found, for keeping the walking traditions of Europe going and for further cooperation among the ERA organizations. In conclusion, he thanked everyone for their support and wished his successors every success.

J. Havelka personally thanked F. Schlinzig for his work and “the longest professional service” ever undertaken for the Footpath Commission of the ERA.

The delegates had no other questions or comments to the reports of the Chairmen. The reports were approved unanimously with 41 votes.

## **ITEM 5)**

### **Finances 2006:**

First of all, the Treasurer L. Nielsen reminded the delegates that in the Report for the year 2006, an amount of 1,280 EUR was missing. This was a VDGWV contribution to marking the E4 and E5 by the Alpine waymarkers. This amount was now stated both in the revenue as well as in the expenditure of the Finances, which was why it did not make a difference to the financial results for 2006. However, it had to be stated in the table for the sake of clarification. The VDGWV contributes this amount every year. L. Nielsen further claimed that the financial results of the EURORANDO 2006 event were very good: the amount gained from the event had helped to reduce the annual deficit of the ERA and even increased the ERA’s capital. The Finances Account for 2006 showed how important it was to organize projects and events that bring financial support to the ERA budget. Contributions from sponsors are not always guaranteed.

As J. Havelka had stated, thanks to organizing European Walking Days, we can raise funds for the ERA Foundation via collections, and build up our reputation at the same time. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to report the results of such events to the media and these would then be presented on the ERA websites. L. Nielsen thanked J. Špreňarová for processing the ERA Finance Account for 2006 and for her cooperation via the internet. She asked the delegates to approve the Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2006.

## **ITEM 6)**

### **Auditor’s Annual Report:**

The Auditor H. Reinelt stated that the accounts for the period 1 January, 2006 – 31 December, 2006 was approved on 4 August, 2007. The items submitted corresponded to the figures shown in the accounts. He said that the ERA capital had risen to 30,866.90 EUR and the capital revenue corresponded to the amount of 11.655,41 EUR. He thanked the General Secretary J. Špreňarová for processing the documents.

## **ITEM 7)**

### **Approval of the Presidium's activities:**

The Auditor H. Reinelt proposed that the Presidium should be given approval for the accounting period 1 January, 2006 – 31 December, 2006.

The Members' Meeting agreed to give the Presidium approval, 35 votes in favour, 6 abstentions.

## **ITEM 8)**

### **Election of the Auditor:**

H. Reinelt was elected for one year in 2006. As there was no other candidate for the Auditor, H. Reinelt agreed with his candidature for one more year, i.e. till September 2008.

H. Reinelt was re-elected unanimously for a one-year period.

## **ITEM 9)**

### **Election of the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and Chairmen of the Walking and Footpath Commissions:**

A commission for the Presidium's elections was appointed, it consisted of a Chairman and two Members. The Presidium proposed the following persons who were unanimously approved by the Members' Meeting:

H. Reinelt (MSSGV) - Chairman

E. Prato Bozzano (FIE) - Member

J. Simon (FCV) – Member

The following Presidium's positions were proposed and were as in the previous four-year period:

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President      J. Haase (Deutscher Wanderverband)

3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President      J. Feliu (FEDME)

2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant            M. Grandjean (Schweizer Wanderwege - SAW)

The Presidium asked for other nominations. The FCV withdrew its candidature for J. Simon. The delegates were asked whether there were any nominations from the floor that had not been submitted and, if so, this should be given immediately. There were none.

Election of particular positions:

The candidate for the position of 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President was Jörg Haase (Deutscher Wanderverband). The voting was open and J. Haase was elected unanimously.

The candidate for the position of 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President was Juan Mari Feliu Dord (FEDME). The voting was open and J. Feliu was elected unanimously.

The candidate for the position of 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant was Rob Franssen (Stichting Wandelplatform - LAW) who gave a short speech regarding his qualifications for the post. Then there was an open vote and R. Franssen was elected unanimously.

According to the ERA Constitution, the Walking and Footpath Commissions submitted their proposals for the positions of Chairmen to be approved by the Members' Meeting.

The candidates proposed were:

Walking Commission – Marcel Grandjean – the candidate was elected unanimously

Footpath Commission – Uroš Vidovič – the candidate was elected unanimously

J. Havelka wished the new Presidium Members as well as the Commissions' Chairmen good luck with their work for the ERA.

#### **ITEM 10)**

##### **Election of Honorary Members:**

The ERA Secretariat had received a proposal from the Deutscher Wanderverband to appointing Karl Schneider as an Honorary Member of the ERA. As a long-time Chairman of the Deutscher Wanderverband, he had personally given moral and financial support that the Deutscher Wanderverband continue to offer the ERA. In 1995 – 2003 he was 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of the ERA, and he had initiated the establishment of the ERA Foundation, which he, as the Chairman of the Foundation Council, manages.

K. Schneider was unanimously elected as an Honorary Member.

At the Members' Meeting in 2006, G. Eastwood had proposed verbally the appointment of Henk Dikker Hupkes from Stichting Wandelplatform – LAW. The Presidium reminded him that the proposal must be delivered in writing, which he made additionally and that was why the election had been postponed to the year 2007. H. Dikker Hupkes had worked hard for the ERA as chairman of the Walking Commission and in other capacities for many years, not least in the creation of the new ERA logo.

He was elected unanimously as an Honorary Member. In his absence, he will be informed in writing by the ERA Secretariat. A. van Kooten Niekerk, the current director of Stichting Wandelplatform, on behalf of H. Dikker Hupkes thanked the members for this honour.

#### **ITEM 11)**

##### **a) Budget 2007 + Budget 2008:**

The Treasurer L. Nielsen stated that the delegates had received the budgets for 2007 and 2008 in advance. From the Financial Report 2007, worked out by J. Špreňarová for the Treasurer, it could be seen that the budget 2007 was realistic. L. Nielsen thought that the ERA would not exceed the deficit amounting to 9,410 EUR as of 31 December, 2007. Following the Presidium's decision, the revenue from the ERA Foundation from 2007 would not be used to increase the Foundation capital. She further informed the meeting that the financial budget of the ERA does not allow any bigger investments. Except for 2006, we always cover the budget loss from the ERA capital. She asked the delegates present that their organizations should also help non-financially, e.g. by translating without charge the documents intended for public distribution.

K. Schneider and J. Havelka agreed that this situation was also clear from the 2007 budget. The ERA Secretariat is important however and its work cannot be financed from the current membership fees only. Also, the revenue from the Foundation cannot cover the expenditure. In order to prevent submitting a deficit budget of the ERA in future years, the membership fees needed to be increased.

K. Schneider asked for an explanation of the financial result for 2006 in the Financial statement sheet and in the budget for 2007 and 2008. He demanded that the results should be clear and that these should include events such as the EURORANDO 2006 event and the WalkOnWeb project. It will then be obvious from these results, how much we really spend in running our organization. L. Nielsen apologized for the fact that in the Financial statement for

2006 and in the Budgets 2007 and 2008, different figures for 2006 were declared. She had made sure that the financial results for 2006 were correct. When submitting the results of the ERA to the delegates, the amounts from 2007 on would be presented in full, both as revenue and expenditure, and not only as their difference. The corrected financial results in the table of budgets for 2007 and 2008 form an attachment to this Report.

## **ITEM 12)**

### **ERA Foundation:**

The Chairman of the Foundation Council K. Schneider reported on the state of the ERA Foundation. The Foundation capital amounted 105,075.47 EUR as of 31 December, 2006. The increase since 31 December, 2005 was 9,270.79 EUR, of which 6,847.46 EUR was made up of contributions and gifts, and 2,423.33 EUR was the net interest profit. In the meantime, the Foundation capital has risen due to further contributions to 107,686.83 EUR as of 31 August, 2007. K. Schneider pointed out that apart from the ERA and VDGWV, which contributed 27,000 EUR each to the Foundation, only 6 organizations had sent any significant amounts to the account. Some private persons contributed as well, particularly members of various clubs who had supported the Foundation either personally or by organizing a collection or a raffle during their walking events and these proceeds had been dedicated to the ERA Foundation. K. Schneider appealed urgently to all present to follow this example and think of other ways in which the Foundation capital might be increased.

J. Havelka again mentioned ways in which funds for the Foundation could be raised. The Foundation capital needed to be increased so as to reach at least 200,000 EUR. Then the revenue from the ERA Foundation, together with membership fees might cover the whole basic ERA budget.

The member organizations, which have not contributed any amount to the Foundation account so far, were asked to do so in order to increase the capital, or to find individual contributors. If new donors, who provided more than 3,000 EUR, were found, a decision regarding their representation on the Foundation Forum would be made.

## **ITEM 13)**

### **Increasing the membership fees:**

As the delegates had already been informed at the Members' Meeting in 2006 in Budapest, it was necessary to increase the revenue of the ERA. The current amount does not provide sufficient to cover the operation of the ERA Secretariat in Prague, although its costs are lower than in the West European countries. J. Havelka informed those present that we had not so far received any other proposal on how to decrease these costs. As pointed out by K. Schneider, the ERA revenue is insufficient and the financial capital of the ERA keeps on decreasing each year because we cover the budget loss from the financial means available through the accounts of the ERA. To ensure the continuing good work of the ERA Secretariat, we need to pay a rental and the salary of one employee. Current financial reserves of the ERA indicate that the Secretariat can work for a maximum of two more years only. Then there would be no other means for the ERA's activities to continue.

J. Havelka explained that increasing the membership fees could be compensated for if member organizations arranged lower costs for their delegates when participating in the ERA conferences. The Presidium were trying to achieve this by asking future organizers of meetings to keep participation fees no higher than 300 EUR.

The President informed the meeting that the Presidium Members had agreed on increasing the basic membership fee by 120 EUR per year. The written proposal had been delivered to the delegates in advance. The organizations can obviously increase the fee beyond the basic amount according to their means.

K. Krohn Devodt stated that the ERA needs partners and sponsors willing to cooperate. If we present ourselves as an organization with an annual deficit budget, we will not appear trustworthy. She therefore proposed increasing the membership fee to 500 EUR per year. This proposal will be discussed by the Presidium at its spring meeting in 2008.

A. Ducornet gave an example from the FFRandonnée, which supported the ERA's activities, where the meetings of the work group "Training of Walk Leaders" were provided with 2,000 EUR. He finds this a good way to support the ERA's activities, even without the financial contribution appearing in the ERA budget. P. Cavalieros suggested that a commission should be created which would search for sponsors for the ERA.

The contribution by the FFRandonnée was welcome but it does not solve the problem of the basic ERA budget. The second proposal was feasible in the long-term but it was still crucial to increase the membership fees first so as to solve the current instability of the ERA Secretariat.

The delegates adopted the increase of the basic annual membership fee to 380 EUR unanimously with 41 votes. For the next Members' Meeting of the ERA Conference, the Secretariat will update the item "membership fees" in the budget for 2008.

#### **ITEM 14)**

##### **European Walking Days in 2007 and in the other years:**

J. Grandjean stated that the topic "European Walking Days" had already been discussed at the Walking Commission. Two tasks arose from the discussion. All delegates were asked to provide the ERA Secretariat with reports of this event in 2007 as soon as possible. Placing as many such reports as possible on the internet can help present the ERA towards public. Also, the FFRandonnée representatives submitted the so-called Friendship Declaration to the Walking Commission. This document should be presented at future European Walking Days. The proposal will be sent out to the member organizations of the ERA. At the spring Presidium's Meeting, the Members will discuss the alterations to the Declaration. Other topics for discussion will include financing the European Walking Days and preparation of common documents for organizers in the different member countries.

#### **ITEM 15)**

##### **Information on the WalkOnWeb Project:**

This item was excluded from the agenda as it had already been discussed in detail in the Walking Commission.

#### **ITEM 16)**

##### **Proposals:**

The ERA Secretariat received no proposals.

## **ITEM 17)**

### **Adoption of new member organizations:**

Boris Mičić, the delegate of the **Planinarski savez Srbije (RS)**, briefly summarized basic information about the association, founded in 1901. At present, it has 147 clubs with 14 thousand members (the membership base varies from 12 to 17 thousand members). The main activities include, apart from walking, cycling, caving and mountaineering. The club also organizes orientation competitions, waymarks footpaths including in the mountains (it is a member of the Alpine Association), issues maps and takes care of 40 huts offering 4 accommodation categories, and it has its own education system. The association cooperates with the Balkan clubs as well as with the KCT. B. Mičić stated that the E7 ends at the border with Serbia, and he would like to extend this E-Path across their territory in cooperation with the ERA.

Planinarski savez Srbije was accepted unanimously with 41 votes.

The President of the **Comité régional de Picardie (F)**, Daniel Pipart, introduced his club to the delegates. It has 3 600 members, marks 2 000 km of local footpaths and 4 000 km of long-distance footpaths (GR). Together with two French provinces as well as a neighbouring Belgian organization, they cooperate on the “Grande Thiérache” Project, which will introduce to the ERA during the European Walking Days in 2008. D. Pipart claimed that the club is interested in joining the ERA especially for the exchange of information.

Comité régional de Picardie was accepted unanimously with 41 votes.

Gérald Gagliardo, the Treasurer from the **Comité régional de Midi-Pyrénées (F)**, briefly informed the meeting about his club. It is active near the Spanish borders, and marks 26 000 km of local, long-distance and the St.-James’ footpaths. Since 1988, it has cooperated with the Spanish clubs on the long-distance path GR 10 which traverses the Pyrenees. Together with the Catalanian, Basque and Andorra clubs and in France with the clubs from Languedoc and Aquitania, they hold cross-border walking meets. G. Gagliardo proposed a sum of his club’s membership fees for the ERA amounting 500 EUR, i.e. 0,50 EUR per each member.

Comité régional de Midi-Pyrénées was accepted unanimously with 41 votes.

## **ITEM 18)**

### **Exclusion of member organizations:**

J. Havelka reminded the meeting that if a member organization does not pay annual membership fees for two years running, it is, under the Constitution, to be excluded from the ERA. At present, no organization owes more than one annual membership fee.

## **ITEM 19)**

### **Information regarding the preparation of the Members’ Meeting in 2008 in Blansko, CZ:**

The delegates received a flyer with an application form for the Meeting during the registration, together with information about the pre-tour. J. Havelka stated that the conference fee would not exceed 300 EUR per person. Such favourable fees were set thanks to good support from the South Moravian Region and the town of Blansko. It is an industrial town, which is also called the gate to the Moravian Karst where there is a network of

underground tunnels, which the delegates would also have an opportunity to visit. The Saturday afternoon and evening programmes would consist of celebrations of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of KCT. Also representatives of those walking clubs, which are partners of the KCT, but not ERA members, were being invited to the celebrations: the Deutscher- and Österreichischer Alpenverein, the Österreichischer Touristenklub and the Naturfreunde Österreich. The organizers had prepared the pre-tour so that each group could choose its own programme according to its wishes, the organizers were willing to provide recommendations based on individual queries. The pre-tour fee is lower because the event will be organized by the KCT itself, and not by any agency.

## **ITEM 20)**

### **Location and dates of the Members' Meetings in 2009, 2010 and 2011:**

U. Fraga Bilbao, the representative of a walking club in the Canary Islands, and A. Castañeda Pérez, the representative of a tourist association on La Palma, invited the present delegates to the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the ERA in the Canary Islands. A. Castañeda informed the meeting that the hotel is located in a place where there is a volcano, the date proposed is in the first half of October 2009. The island can be reached from Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Spain, or other Canary Islands, or an optimal means of transport can eventually be agreed with the organizers. At the Members' Meeting in September 2008, there will be applications available; the delegates in Laulasmaa were offered a flyer from the venue of the Meeting on La Palma by the Canary Islands' representatives.

- 2010 - E. Bozzano Prato, FIE, invited the delegates as well as the walkers to the ERA conference to Italy, further information about the venue is not available yet.
- 2011 - J. Feliu, FEDME, confirmed organizing the Members' Meeting as the EURO-RANDO 2011 event in Andalusia, Spain.
- 2012 - M. Kazepi, Cyprus Tourism Organisation, suggested that the Members' Meeting could be held on Cyprus.
- 2013 - K. Krohn Devold, Den Norske Turistforening, suggested that the Members' Meeting could be held in Norway.

## **ITEM 21)**

### **Any Other Business:**

M. Kazepi informed the delegates that the EU offers a wide range of programmes whose sources can be used by particular walking organizations for organizing events, or for providing good background for their clubs. She gave an example of the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, which thanks to the European project INTEREG IIIA Greece-Cyprus had an opportunity to present the Cyprian section of the E4 on the internet.

Before the Members' Meeting, J. Feliu, J. Perea and representatives of the Andalusian government passed documents in writing to the delegates, needed for organizing the 4<sup>th</sup> international seminar on walking and walking areas in Europe, to be held in Malaga on 5 – 7 June, 2008. The delegates were again informed about the vital items needed for the seminar and the preparation of documents. The organizers of the seminar said they were seeking responsible people to cover 7 European regions, who would produce documents for these regions with regard to geographical and walking characteristics and also analyze the

traditional law concerning walking, and the situation regarding access etc. These would not be theses but the organizers aim to find out as much information about walking in these regions as possible. At its Spring meeting, the Presidium had agreed their spring to divide Europe into 7 regions, and at the same time to appoint a person responsible from the Presidium for each one. They would become a guarantee for finding somebody in each region to do the work.

The organizers promised to clarify the information necessary for processing the documents within one month of the Members' Meeting. They will also give an example of what is needed for a selected region so that the other persons chosen for the other regions will know what is required.

The resulting documents from all 8 areas (including Spain) must be provided to the organizers by 20 April, 2008.

A. Howcroft supported the interest of the organizers in producing documents from all over Europe.

I. Hägg thanked the Estonian organizers for the preparation of the seminar on "Responsible Walking", held on 13 September, 2007. He addressed the Presidium Members as well as the future organizers, asking them if it was possible in the future to organize similar seminars on the professional level as a part of ERA meetings.

U. Vidovič thanked J. Simon from the Fédération du Club Vosgien for organizing the walking tours for several groups to Slovenia and gave him a picture, which would remind the French of staying in the town of Ptuj (SLO).

J. Havelka thanked all the delegates for their cooperation. He hoped this cooperation would continue with future projects so that the ERA's profile can be positively presented in the public domain. He also promised the close cooperation of the Presidium, especially in the seminar which would be held in June 2008 in Malaga.

To conclude, he wished all those present good weather, an enjoyable afternoon and evening and a safe journey home. He believed and hoped that walkers will not only meet at the meetings, but also on the footpaths of Europe in the coming year.

### **Attachments to the Report:**

- Agenda
- Attendance list
- Budgets 2007 and 2008

J. Havelka / J. Špreňarová  
October 2007