



JANUARY 2009

2009 EMF Annual Meeting: Bursa, 6-9 May. The official registration form with additional details of the meeting in Turkey is now available. If a copy is not included with this issue of the *Bulletin*, please contact the Administrator or go to the EMF website.

The 2009 Council of Europe Award is the only one which is publicised in advance of the EMF Annual Meeting in May and will be presented separately in April during the Parliamentary Assembly's Spring session in Strasbourg. The European Museum of the Year Award and its special commendations, and the Micheletti Award will be announced on Saturday 9 May in Bursa. This year the Council of Europe Award goes to the Zeeuws Museum in Middelburg, The Netherlands. Housed in a 12th-century abbey, the museum presents regional collections in unexpected visual and sensory contexts, relating the local scene to other parts of Europe and beyond. The name of the museum relates to Zeeuws, which is a regional language spoken in the Dutch province of Zeeland. The museum's focus on 'excitement, liveliness, interaction' and its appeal to a younger audience was particularly appreciated.

The prize is decided by the Committee on Culture, Science and Education of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) on the basis of a shortlist presented by the Judging Committee of the European Museum Forum. Warmest congratulations go to Valentijn Byvanck and his staff.

Council of Europe speech Since the last issue of the *Bulletin* we have received the written version of the speech given by Mr Eddie O'Hara MP at the 2008 Ceremony in

Dublin on 17 May, and it is reprinted below. Mr O'Hara is the Rapporteur on Museums, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

"It is a pleasure to be here with you in Dublin. I'm sure you all agree that this is a city and a nation with a phenomenally rich cultural heritage. Indeed so many luminaries of so-called British culture were – and still are – Irish and were born or lived in this city: Jonathan Swift, Oliver Goldsmith, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw – even the Duke of Wellington.

It gives me a particular pleasure to be in 'Dublin's fair city' as a native of a city across the Irish Sea which has so many connections and so much in common with Dublin – Liverpool, European Capital of Culture 2008, which in the National Museums in Liverpool has as fine a suite of Museums as any provincial city in Europe.

But most importantly I am here as Museums Rapporteur for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and my purpose is to mark the close connection between the Council of Europe and the European Museum of the Year Awards.

When set up in 1977 the award scheme was at the request of the Parliamentary Assembly placed under the auspices of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. In itself this perhaps meant little, as the first thing the Committee of Ministers did was to make these auspices conditional on not having to find any funding.

It did however mean that the award scheme was open to museums from all countries signatory to the European Cultural

Convention. This was particularly significant in the early years before most of central and eastern Europe was admitted to the Council of Europe. It involved some diplomatic gymnastics to enable Jersey and the Isle of Man to be included. But the important point is that this covers all member states of the Council of Europe, currently 47, plus Belarus and the Holy See.

What is remarkable is the extent to which museums from different countries are becoming involved in the awards. The geographical extent of the awards is indeed increasingly interesting: it stretches from Lisbon in the West to Krasnoyarsk in the East; from Nicosia in the South, and now to Svalbard in the north. We suspect there may be an entry next year from Vladivostok which is so far east in Europe from here that you were to set out in a westerly direction from here you'd possibly get there just as quickly.

From the outset the Parliamentary Assembly established its own Council of Europe Museum Prize. We have also funded this award and assisted in the running of the EMF committee. The Council of Europe Museum Prize is chosen from the entries for the award scheme as a whole and is given to a museum for its "notable contribution to the understanding of the European heritage". This notion is purposely flexible and open-ended. It enables the jury, and subsequently the Assembly Committee on Culture, Science and Education to identify what is the most relevant and interesting in European terms of the museums entered.

To mark the link with the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Museum Prize is presented each year in Strasbourg. This year the prize was presented on 15 April by our new President and former Chairman, Lluís Maria de Puig, to the Svalbard Museum. We hope to have a local ceremony there later this year in the winning museum, which is by the way probably as far north as you will find a museum. But it is also important that the winning museum participates in the annual EMYA ceremony, as here in Dublin this week. The awards form part of the same vintage.

And what they show is not a common European cultural character. They reveal a dazzling variety of content, message and language. For the Council of Europe Museum Prize we have in rapid succession seen museums of mental health, of art, of religion (two of these, quite different from each other), and this year a museum of the environment.

From the award winners we are seeing museums advance their role as pioneers of intercultural dialogue. This is not so much due to the wealth of their collections as to the increasingly intelligent and resourceful use made of that material by directors and designers.

What impresses me about this event, which I have had the pleasure of attending on a number of occasions, is the great buzz of interaction, and the sheer enjoyment of this by so many museologists who vary so much in their interests and expertise but who have in common three important things: their enthusiasm, their willingness to learn from and their generosity in sharing their specialist knowledge with each other.

People are the key here. I therefore salute and congratulate you, the representatives of the museums from this year's entries. But I would also wish to recognise and pay special thanks to the members of the European Museum Forum. In over 30 years they have built up a broad network of museums, some now not so new of course, and few of the original members remain. The only original survivors are Ann Nicholls on the EMF side and Christopher Grayson on the Council of Europe side. To Ann I pay tribute for the way, year after year, she conjures into being this wonderful event from an astonishingly low resource base. To Christopher, on what I think may be his last appearance at an EMYA ceremony before his retirement, I pay my own tribute for his efficiency and dependability as the linchpin between the EMF and the Council of Europe.

From the early inspiration given by Kenneth Hudson the EMF team has encouraged the development of a particularly outward looking museum philosophy. As a member of parliament, and as a former teacher who even once had my own small school

museum, I can appreciate in particular the emphasis placed on the interface between the museum and the public. That is where effective dialogue begins.

Such dialogue is central to the principles and purposes of the Council of Europe, because from this comes not just tolerance but also respect for cultural differences. Such dialogue is facilitated by the EMF through its various activities, and particularly through this annual event in which it is such a privilege and a pleasure to participate. For this I both congratulate and thank you all."

EMF's Finnish Ambassador, Maritta Pitkänen, has left her post as director of the Gösta Serlachius Museum at Mänttä after 35 years. To mark the occasion, guests were invited to a splendid farewell party which took place in Mänttä on 22 November 2008. Ann Nicholls represented EMF and reported that the day was memorable, not only for its setting, its atmosphere and the warm affection for Maritta expressed by those present, but also for the length of the speeches (in Finnish, naturally) and the impressive background of the first snow of the winter.

EMF Workshops in 2008 In addition to the Bertinoro Workshop in Italy, two other workshops took place under the EMF umbrella, one in Hungary and the other in Norway. Brief summaries of the Conclusions of each meeting are given below: full versions of the Conclusions can be found on the EMF website.

Bertinoro (Italy): 1 - 5 October 2008
Museums and Local Resources: A European Perspective

The workshop, attended by representatives from nine countries, concluded that Europe is populated by 'local museums', which does not necessarily mean that they are provincial, culturally speaking. The term 'glocal' (indicating global and local), owes its fortune more to the necessity of defining a transition process than to its intrinsic semantic values. At the same time, a large majority of European museums feels the necessity to redefine the local dimension in a broader continental and even more international changing panorama.

The value of localism is tangible and intangible: it is the story related of the people. The museum can be the catalyst to social change in a context where people often do not know the value of what they have. Local resources build up a vision. Museums are experts in dialogue and can utilise globalisation as an opportunity for communication;

Museums have limited resources and must make choices. At the same time, museums can be valuable neutral 'third spaces' which can build bridges between communities. All people are a local resource, defined thus: All inhabitants of a locality, including long-term inhabitants, recent arrivals, and defined ethnic groups. Local resources will vary from museum to museum; a starting point to utilising local resources is to undertake an internal audit to identify which resources are being used and which might be developed further.

The position and role of museums in such a context can be defined in terms of 'Heritage Hubs' which can optimise the use of local cultural, economic and environmental resources in the broadest sense of the word (from natural to cultural landscape) in the perspective of local development, which means social and economical growth as well as a progress in terms of civil society.

Budapest eCastex-EMF Regional Workshop: 14 - 16 September 2008

The workshop was organised by the eCastex consortium and the Hungarian Natural History Museum, Budapest, while EMF contacts and methodology was used in preparation and running of the programme. 24 experts from 14 countries attended the event, which was held in the European Youth Centre Budapest. Participants represented natural history and technology museums, science centres and universities (referred to as museums in the text below) alike.

Participants listened to introductory presentations about eCastex, EMF, and EXTRA - the European database of scientific travelling exhibitions. Small group and plenary discussions were held on various aspects of dealing with scientific touring exhibitions (advantages, barriers, finances, networking for producing or travelling exhibitions).

What are the barriers? Specific attention was paid to analysing and identifying problem areas in Eastern and Central Europe, since during the two-year period of eCastex project activities less response came from this area than from other parts of Europe. In a plenary session participants listed the main areas which may be responsible for this tendency. The *financial situation* of museums in general is considered a major problem, which is accompanied by the *granting philosophy* in these countries not favouring the establishment of larger travelling exhibitions. Many museums *lack* the necessary *space*. We heard a good example of a modular exhibition, where by selecting fewer modules and slightly re-arranging the story line helped the producers to show it in several museums. *Bureaucracy* and sophisticated *customs* procedures often inhibited the transfer of cultural products. There are also *mental barriers*. People often complain of *lack of time*, which also might be taken to mean a lack of interest (private or institutional), which would otherwise make efforts on this field worth making. *Lack of tradition* was also mentioned. (Participants were from public museums and institutions, which have long traditions of traditional museum work and activities. There have a few professional exhibition producing and travelling firms appeared in Eastern Europe which responded abruptly and professionally to our calls.)

Why should we? We also paid attention to the question why organising travelling exhibitions would be advantageous. Such events *attract people* to the museum and, by their unusual topics and presentation forms *broaden the audience* of the museum. The introduction of topically relevant exhibitions contribute to the *fulfilment of mission* of the museum, and in the same time raise the *culture* of the audience and working culture of the staff. New or partly new topics renew the *cultural offer* of the museum (or the settlement) and might mean new ideas in the local culture. Repeated guest exhibitions may build a *new audience* for the museum, and improve its *image* in the local population and decision makers. Not uninteresting is the question of *income* which, in several earlier cases, seems to fall behind expectations.

Introduction of travelling exhibitions meant a moderate surplus in some cases, and greater success in very few cases.

To make it together Organising joint (national or international level) travelling exhibitions deserve and in the same time develop *co-operation* skills of people involved. Such a co-operation may result in local *adaptation* of the core content of the exhibitions, highlighting excellent specimens or the selling points of the local museums. Joint efforts may *reduce the cost* of production as well as communication to the broader public (PR, marketing) of an exhibition. This is obvious on national level (same language, similar culture), but there are good examples to that also in the case of international exhibitions. Joint exhibitions bring up several *organisational* questions, problems and challenges, which request a certain level of project-work culture, cautious project planning and management. These are working tools increasingly needed in the everyday museum operations too.

Financial issues Several aspects of the financial side were brought up during the session. Organising a joint exhibition as well as showing a guest exhibition needs certain *flexibility of the organisation* and also of the *financial operations*. There is *risk* in hiring a travelling exhibition, especially if the museum has less experience in the field, and this must be analysed beforehand. In many cases *the risk is worth taking*, but the museum must have necessary backup (either own funding or sponsorships) to overcome difficulties. There are several ways how we may *reduce costs* (e.g. in joint exhibitions one museum may have the academic staff with expertise, the other the exhibition builders, and the third is good in advertising the joint product, etc.). The possibilities for *raising the income* are also numerous. Publications and new items in the museum shop, which accompany the general topic of the exhibition, may specially attract the audience. Opening times may be adjusted to the needs of the potential audience. Sponsorships may arrive, since a good advertising campaign offers extra opportunities for the sponsors to appear (and in connection with the museum which displays a new image and has a larger audience to listen to the sponsor too). To a

question about the ratio of *cost for advertising* no or very low percentages were mentioned. It is not easy to define the necessary amount, since a museum with good media connections may raise significant media coverage with no cost, but in other cases marketing costs may run up from one tenth to one third of the production costs and may result in financially very successful exhibitions, in the case of a good campaign.

EXTRA fee The question was raised (in three independent small groups) how much the participants think reasonable as an annual fee for appearing in the EXTRA database with their product. (Due to EC funding uploading is free in 2008, but a yearly fee will be introduced when ECSITE takes over the system in 2009.) Several museums have financial difficulties to an extent that limits their possibilities. At the same time they see the potential in joining the EXTRA community as well as ECSITE (which mean, besides inevitable professional contacts and education and training opportunities, lower fee for EXTRA), and understand that appearance in EXTRA may allow savings in advertisement costs.

In all three groups an amount between 0-200 Euros was named, the amount naturally changing with the size of the museums. The participants raised the following potential solutions to the problems of those museums which have difficulties in their finances which prevent them to join EXTRA from 2009 onwards:

- considering, that EXTRA is new, has been opened one year later than expected and no experience could be accumulated, one free year should be offered to smaller museums which express their need for this aid,
- the annual fee should be proportional to the number of items uploaded (the system administrator's work devoted to keep up and organise the database is proportional to the number of uploads), museums with one or few items should pay a nominal fee,
- uploading should be free until a museum sells the first item through EXTRA, i.e. gains an income which is enough to cover the cost of fee,
- a (temporary) Eastern- and Central European (former soviet influence?-TV)

fee should be calculated, which would take into consideration the above expressed difficulties and the opinion of experts from these countries,

- a European fund should help the Eastern and Central European museums until they reach the necessary level of finances, or collect substantial experience about the advantages of EXTRA. ECSITE and the EXTRA consortium should co-operate in search of such funding.

Tamás Vásárhelyi, EMF Hungarian National Correspondent

EMF Workshop held at Haugesund (Norway) - 10-13 October 2008

Heritage and Identity: The role of museums in islands and coastal maritime regions

Background to the series of workshops

The museum services provided throughout Europe's islands and coastal maritime regions provide the best possible laboratory to study the power of the role of museums to support heritage and identity within the community. The strategies for effective museum and heritage management being developed by these 'outposts' of the museum profession are increasingly being seen as of powerful relevance to many other museum operations in more central locations. This is because of their specific emphasis on the importance of developing heritage strategies which reflect the needs and aspirations of the local community, and then translate this into a wider benefit for a sophisticated international visiting public.

These important techniques and strategies have emerged because museums on Islands and in the coastal regions have had to ask themselves searching questions which many other museums find easier to ignore, such as:

- *Who is the museum for?*
- *Which community is it providing for – locals or tourists?*
- *In an increasingly globalised world, is one community more important than another in planning*
- *a museum and heritage service?*
- *Do the needs of the tourist overpower the needs of the local residents?*
- *Or are they all engaged in the same quest for information describing their own unique heritage?*

- Does the work of heritage professionals have an impact on the community's sense of identity

or nationhood?

- How 'sustainable' is heritage in a modern island or coastal community in terms of its links to

other aspects of the local society and economy?

The Norway Conference was chaired by Stephen Harrison, at that time Director of Manx National Heritage, Isle of Man. The idea of the conference was to create an opportunity to link museum people from coastal Norway with a broader European coastal and island museums network (the EMF network) and to share professional experience of networking skills and techniques across disparate territories and communities. Rogaland, on Norway's western coast, has an active interest and participation in organisations that promote the interests of coastal communities in Europe. The county city of Stavanger and the town of Haugesund provided ideal venues to extend the next phase of this international initiative by hosting a workshop-conference to develop the themes and opportunities introduced at earlier workshops in Madeira and Milos, and to further explore the potential to create a permanent professional network for the future. There were four main themes:

1. Coastal and Island Heritage – a vital part of European identity and a resource under threat from climate change.
 - Should our main duty be to simply record changes, or should we be pro-active in the community debate?
 - Are our coastal and island regions given enough protection from the normal economic and infrastructure developments of society?
 - Is the impact of tourism a strength or a weakness for our European coastal identity?
 - Are coastal and island museums more 'international' in their outlook and aspirations?

Feed-back:

The knowledge held in museums and their staff is needed by the community, but

museums have a duty to revisit and reinterpret established 'truths'. They should provoke and create debate, with the aim of making communities examine their culture, what it means to them and how much they value it. Museum experts should act as facilitators, rather than agitators.

Politicians like to promote (areas and themselves); they don't like the static/reactionary content of the idea of protection or conservation. Skills in the museum profession in island and coastal areas are particularly strong in relation to explanation and persuasion within small communities that demand 'accountability' for the investment in the museum service. Tourism needs have to be balanced with local needs.

Islands and coastal areas are eclectic places, very open to receiving new influences because of their traditional location on cultural route-ways, although museums seem slow to adapt to these changing perceptions. Do Europe's islands share a stronger bond with other islands worldwide than they do with Europe?

The suggestion was made that ICOM might devise a protocol or standard that cruise ship companies would sign, to indicate that their impact on the natural and cultural environment follows best practice. ICOM might even establish or sponsor an awards scheme that would accredit cruise ship companies/ operators as environmentally friendly operators.

Museums and other heritage sites should be proactive in the community, as the starting point for starting the debate about the future of heritage and community planning. That is particularly important given the number of school groups and children that come to museums and other heritage sites.

Infrastructure development does not necessarily promote local identity. Mediterranean islands particularly suffer from 3S tourism (sun, sea, sand - now becoming 4S tourism with the addition of sex) - a quick cash earner at the expense of local identity and heritage. Although a strong local economy is needed, isolation can breed detrimental insularity. A balance

is needed to base livelihoods on local tradition, but with contemporary values and constructive technology.

2. Local communities and their museums

- *Who do we serve and in what proportion?*
- *Local population? Tourists? Politicians?*
- *Do we have a social role beyond our professional duties?*

Feed-back:

It was suggested that local museums should be agents of lifelong learning and as such should provoke social debate and not be passive institutions – they should help to create a sense of local identity and local pride and become a mechanism for visitors to understand the community and where it has come from. In addition to serving the local population, tourists, and politicians, museums also need to consider serving the corporate world, political agendas, non-tourist visitors, science/knowledge, and society overall in the interests of long-term sustainability.

Although the statement is often made and believed that local museums do not and should not serve politicians and political agendas, the reality - especially regarding funding - is often the opposite. Given the direct nature of public and political accountability in small, relatively self-governing communities, professionals in islands and coastal areas need to be particularly skilled in this area.

A social role beyond our professional duties is essential - creating and managing local festivals, family activities, community spirit, a meeting place, a community centre.

3. Networking and co-operation between coastal and island museums.

- *Can we develop better links between us as professionals?*
- *Links with other organisations which recognise the unique qualities of islands?*
- *Links for sustainable development and at the political level?*
- *Does our museum work offer the hope of other roles within the community?*

Feed-back:

It was agreed that the pooling of resources by museums was the only way forward, particularly for the small museums, as the range of expertise necessary for the professional management of the modern museum is not always locally available. In particular it was felt that conservation and joint marketing/ promotion were areas where great progress could be made by devising good networking strategies.

For relatively isolated museum operations, which nonetheless have a very high local community and international tourism profile, a balance is needed amongst activities, rather than trying only one approach or trying to do everything in full.

Possible solutions were discussed in relation to the development of themed networks that link heritage sites across a broad territory, such as in the Isle of Man and in Iceland. Those networks could also be based on a time period or on a certain type of people/culture. The challenge is to identify similarities and differences amongst locations.

It was suggested that one direct product of the island and coastal area network might be the exchange of personnel, for example a secondment for a few months, to be 'embedded' in another museum for learning day-to-day what each other is doing. Island and coastal museums perhaps understand more clearly than 'mainland' museums that links are only of value if they produce general community benefits.

All agreed that museum professionals should have a broad role in local communities, challenging audiences to think in new ways, but not preaching. Because of the public fascination with islands and remote regions, there is a greater willingness by visitors to 'learn the lessons of history and sustainability'. Local impact of international historical themes can lead to clearer understanding of universal themes.

4. The European Dimension – Raising the Viability of Maritime Europe – linking with current EU policies and the proposed European Maritime Days.

- Are there possibilities for cross-boundary projects and if so, how can they be developed and sustained?
- How we strengthen our museum agenda at the political level?
- How can we develop the unique image of maritime Europe?
- Should we seek special designation in Europe for coastal and Island museums?

Feed-back:

It was agreed that there should be a European Maritime Day/Week to highlight the importance of this aspect of our European Heritage. It was strongly suggested that the EU might devise action plans for cultural heritage as opposed to action plans for tourism as it creates a more authentic product and is more community based. It was important to provide tourists with a genuine cultural experience and not a manufactured tourism product that has no real roots in the community whose culture they have come to experience. It was also felt that as Europe had very strong cultural links and enormous cultural impact on islands and coastal areas outside Europe, it would be very inward-looking to confine our focus to networking or co-operating with other European areas to the exclusion of other equally strong cultural links that exist with areas and communities outside Europe.

In May 2007, the EU issued a Communication on a future cultural strategy for the Union. The Commission will follow this up with a number of conferences, seminars etc. Although not specifically mentioned by the Commission, it was felt that museums, as important keepers of our cultural heritage and identity, should be heavily involved in this discussion and could help to develop a new cultural strategy in relation to museums and cultural heritage and the contribution they can make for European identity.

Conclusion: *There is a great opportunity for further co-operation through this new EMF network which is highlighting a number of important areas of expertise and professional approach which are of universal benefit to museum organisations. It is hoped that a further workshop-conference will be held in Italy in 2009.*
Stephen Harrison, EMF Trustee and EMF UK National Correspondent

Swedish museums pay fees to artists
From 2009 state-funded museums will be required to pay fees to artists based in Sweden when mounting exhibitions showing their work. Fee levels will vary, depending on museum visitor numbers and whether or not exhibitions are solo shows. The rules were drawn up by artists' organisations in collaboration with the Swedish Arts Council. Museums Journal, December 2008

Museu de la Tècnica de Manresa, Barcelona During the 19th century a few towns developed into specialised weavers of ribbons and tapes, with complex networks of domestic workshops and factory-based production. One of these is the Spanish city of Manresa, where production just about continues, but the heritage of ribbon-making is still visible everywhere. The local Technical Museum, one of the 'franchise' museums in the national Catalan Museu de la Ciència i de la Tècnica, inaugurated a new permanent exhibition in September, based on its important collection of ribbon weaving and finishing machinery.

The exhibition is structured through a chronological tour of the different areas of ribbon production. From the town's 18th-century silk-weaving tradition up until the ribbons of the 21st century, the exhibition designer has taken a scenographic approach that tries to bring the visitor into the different workspaces where the narrow fabrics were woven. So the passementerie workshop is the basement of an 18th-century house, with the reproduction of an ancient workshop from a drawing of Diderot on the wall. The attic workshops that were typical of the town until relatively recently, and the weaving shop of the factory, combine re-creations of the workspace with conventional exhibition materials: mural images give us false perspectives; wooden floors of the older productive spaces, concrete for the more modern factory spaces; lighting (lanterns for the workshops, fluorescent tubes for the factory); façades reproduced with textured printing; a big factory entrance, full-scale figures standing in front of back-lit panels and stage props complete the different resources that suggest the industrial processes and their setting.

The museum itself is under the monumental vault of the town's old water reservoir, built in 1865. Three identical brick vaults enclose a space of 24,000m and held 12,000 m3 of water. It was fed by the Sèquia, a 14th-century canal which has supplied the town with its water for six centuries. The other section of the permanent exhibition explains this great work of medieval engineering, which transformed the agricultural production of the area, as well as the urban living conditions in the town. Manresa's water comes from the Sèquia to this day. Nuria Matamala, Director. TICCIH Bulletin, No. 42, Autumn 2008.

Margarete Steiff. A Strong-Willed Woman
An attack of paralysis in childhood left Margarete Steiff (1847-1909) severely disabled, and she had to battle many odds to attain her place in life. In 1879 a pincushion in the shape of an elephant became the gifted seamstress's first chapter in a success story that continues to today. In 1902 Steiff's nephew, Richard Steiff, created the Teddy Bear 55 PB, which soon became the company's flagship product. Until her death, Margarete Steiff kept watch over production quality, and treated the staff almost like family. The exhibition (18.4 - 4.10 2009) at the Puppenhaus Museum in Basel describes her journey from the original 'Elefäntle' to a global enterprise. Steinenvorstadt 1, CH-4051 Basel. www.puppenhausmuseum.ch. Basel Museums Guide 2009.

Appointment of Enrico Lunghi as Director of Mudam Luxembourg From 5 January 2009 Enrico Lunghi will be the new Director of the Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean. He follows Marie-Claude Beaud, director since the museum's inauguration in 2006, and was previously director of the well-known art centre, Casino Luxembourg – Forum d'art contemporain. There he was responsible, among others, for the organization of Manifesta 2 in 1996 and exhibitions such as Many coloured objects placed side by side to form a row of many coloured objects (works from the collection of Anton & Annick Herbert), Light Pieces and Wim Delvoye – Cloaca 2000-2007, and many solo shows. Enrico Lunghi has been President of the International Association of

Curators of Contemporary Art (IKT) since 2005.

For two years Mudam Luxembourg has shown works from its already considerable collection in a series of temporary exhibitions. Remaining true to the pre-opening programme in place some two years before the building was finished (Be the artist's guest exhibitions in the Foyer of the Banque de Luxembourg), it has championed a strong policy of inviting artists to contribute to both the museum infrastructure and projects, offering a varied programme of international significance. Among the exhibitions were Eldorado, a utopian opening exhibition, Tomorrow Now (a show about contemporary art and science fiction), and a retrospective about the late Luxembourgish artist, Michel Majerus. Jo Kox, EMF Luxembourg National Correspondent

Europeana website overwhelmed on its first day On the first day of its launch (20 November 2008), Europe's digital library Europeana was overwhelmed by the interest shown by millions of users in this new project. On the basis of expert advice, Europeana had anticipated up to 5 million hits per hour on the site. The real interest was three times as strong, and slowed down the service so much that after having already doubled server capacity at noon, the Europeana management in The Hague (Netherlands) and the European commission had to take down the site temporarily to take the pressure off it. Some users experienced more inconvenience than others, because of a load-balancing issue (the way the traffic is handled by one server or another) between the three servers. Most interest in the site on the first day came from France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and Spain. Four per cent also came from the United States.

This difficulty was unexpected, but it was also an encouraging sign that citizens in Europe and around the world would have great interest in Europe's digital library. It also provided strong motivation for the Europeana team and the experts from the Commission working on the project to intensify their efforts and the site's technical backup even further. At the time of writing the site was still not functioning at full capacity. **Contacts: European Commission: Martin Selmayr +32 2 288.12.30; Mina Andreeva:**

Pinochet museum opens The widow of the late Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet has marked the second anniversary of his death by inaugurating a museum in the capital dedicated to his memory. "There's a sample of every gift he received for the important things he did, and not just because they liked him", Lucia Hiriart de Pinochet told reporters at the museum last week. Besides the gifts and letters from other foreign heads of state, including US presidents Nixon and Reagan, the museum displays uniforms, medals and a collection of toy soldiers that once belonged to the general, who overthrew the government of Salvador Allende in a bloody coup in 1973. Relatives of some of the 3,000 opponents of the regime who 'disappeared' during military rule have expressed their anger at the opening of the museum. *The Week*, Issue 696, 20 December 2008

UK News Opening in 2009

- Phase Two of the Darwin Centre, a new wing of the Natural History Museum in London, is due to open in September 2009. Containing an eight-storey high, cocoon-shaped store, the Centre will provide a new home for the museum's 20 million plant and insect specimens, alongside laboratories and a lecture hall. As in Darwin Centre Phase One, built to preserve animal specimens, visitors will be able to learn about the behind-the-scenes work carried out by the museum's scientists.

- The Great North Museum, Newcastle, formed by the merger of a natural history museum, and the University of Newcastle's art, classical and local archaeology, and geology collections, is due to open in the spring of 2009. Housed in the modernised and expanded Hancock Museum (of natural history), the new combined museum takes its name from the Northern city's annual half-marathon, the Great North Run, which starts nearby.

- The Ashmolean, the University of Oxford's Museum of Art and Archaeology, reopens with a new theme and with 39 new galleries

in November 2009. Objects will be displayed so that visitors can appreciate how different civilisations developed over time and their cultural interrelationships under the overarching theme of 'Crossing Cultures Crossing Time'. The fine art collection is also being rehung and a rooftop café added as part of a three-year long, £61m project.

- The Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) will open its Renaissance and Medieval Galleries in November 2009. The ten galleries, spanning the years 300 to 1600, will fill one wing of the museum of decorative art in London. Elsewhere in the V&A a gallery will open to display a changing selection from its theatre collection, homeless since the closure in 2007 of the Theatre Museum, a branch museum, in London's West End. Talks are ongoing about the plan to open a Theatre Museum in Blackpool, the seaside resort town in the North West of England.

Museum director named 'Briton of the Year'. *The Times* newspaper named Neil MacGregor, the director of the British Museum, and former director of the National Gallery, London, 'Briton of the Year', praising his ability to charm politicians at home and abroad, not least through the museum's major loan exhibitions focusing on the glory that was ancient China, (The First Emperor), Iran (Persians), Iraq (Babylon) and Rome (Hadrian). Ancient Greece and the thorny issue of who should look after the Parthenon Marbles, was conspicuously absent in *The Times'* profile.

New Hadrian's Wall museum A new museum of Hadrian's Wall is planned, and a site has been purchased in Cumbria alongside the Roman fortifications, a World Heritage Site, which stretches from coast to coast across the North of England. The £11.5m project is due to open in 2012, subject to successful fundraising.

Museum of Kent Life taken over The operation of the Museum of Kent Life, the open-air museum near Maidstone in the south-east of England, has been taken over by Continuum, a heritage attractions company. Continuum has taken on a 25-year lease, and plans to invest in the museum's catering and shop, and to add a

children's play area to make it more family-friendly. The company also manages The Canterbury Tales, also in Kent, and Oxford Castle. The Museum of Kent Life, which opened in 1983, had been run by a non-for-profit trust. Nigel Chew was its director for 13 years, until 2006.

Peer review of national museums The National Portrait Gallery, London, Tyne and Wear Museums (based in Newcastle) and the Natural History Museum, London, underwent a peer review at the end of 2008. They took part in what is a pilot project to change the way the performance of England's national museums is monitored, moving away from 'top-down targets' set by central government. The panel of reviewers, who include other museum directors, checks the findings of the museums' own self-assessments and then submit a report to civil servants and ministers.

New Imperial War Museum Director-General Diane Lees, former Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum's Museum of Childhood, took up the post of Director-General of the Imperial War Museum in London on 1 October 2008, with overall responsibility for the Museum's five branches and collections archives. She replaces Sir Robert Crawford CBE, who retired on 30 September, a position he had held since 1995.

Royal Mail museum on the move The British Postal Museum and Archive, now based in a Royal Mail postal sorting office in central London, plans to move to Swindon in the West of England by 2012, converting part of a former railway works. Other parts of the vast Victorian railway complex are already occupied by Steam, the Museum of the Great Western Railway (Specially Commended in 2002 EMYA), the National Trust and the National Monuments Records Office.

Bletchley Park repair work Funding has been secured to carry out urgent repairs to Bletchley Park, the country house surrounded by temporary huts in the Midlands of England where code breakers deciphered enemy messages during the Second World War. Additional funding is being sought to fully restore the site, which occupies an important place in computing

as well as military history, and secure its future.

Museum fit for Scotland's most famous poet Plans for a Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Scotland, due to open in 2010, moved a step closer to happening now that the National Trust for Scotland has taken over the management of the cottage where the famous poet was born. The Trust has raised three quarters of the money needed to build the £21m education and visitor centre alongside a house museum. The small trust that used to run the Burns museum has also transferred its collection of letters, books and artefacts to the National Trust for Scotland, which has appointed a curator and conservator.

Titanic-theme attraction for Belfast A Titanic Centre, part of a planned £97m Titanic-themed tourist attraction within the redeveloped shipyards where the famous White Star liner and its sister ships were built, has received the support of Northern Ireland's first minister. The Titanic Centre is due to open in 2012 to mark the centenary of the ill-fated ship's sinking on its maiden voyage across the Atlantic. **Javier Pes, EMF UK National Correspondent**

Can the building of museums help to save the Norwegian construction business? For several years museums in Norway have been told to wait with their building plans until the enormous boom in the building business was over. Now 40-50 museums have major plans for extensions or new buildings. 30 of these are on the national budget for 2009, either on the list for those who have already secured national funding or who are on the waiting list. Because of the present international financial crisis unemployment in the construction business has increased by 73% in Norway compared to the level in October 2007. For architectural firms there has been an almost complete stop in new projects.

The national government is now asking museums and regional authorities to prepare detailed plans for deserving projects. To counter the sharp decline in the private sector, public building will be escalated in the coming year. The Minister of Culture says that it is not possible to say

which projects will be given priority but that this will be decided in connection with the unemployment rate in the areas concerned. Some projects are beginning the planning process, others are ready to start building. The projects are distributed all over the country.

The proposed total contribution from central government for 'national culture buildings' in 2009 is 141.7 million NOK. Many of the projects given national funding receive this over a number of years, so that a project with total costs of, for example, 40 million NOK perhaps gets only eight million from the 2009 budget. In addition, museums will get an increase in national funding of 120 million NOK and 27.7 million extra will go to art and architecture. These are the amounts mentioned in the budget presented in October 2008. A new 'crisis package' will be launched in January. As the Secretary General of the Norwegian Museum Association, Tron Wigeland Nilsen, says, billions are of course needed to carry out all the proposed museum projects, which range from the new National (Art) Museum in Oslo down to many small cultural centres in the districts. And Nilsen reminds us that these projects do not mean more museums, but better museums.

The Edvard Munch Museum and other cultural institutions to be moved to the Opera House area Norwegian architecture has not had the same international fame as that of other Nordic countries like Denmark and Finland. This is changing. The fantastic new Norwegian Opera House which opened in 2008 is unbelievably beautiful. Its beauty has been extolled by the public and by architects all over the world. It was designed by Snøhætta Architects, who have also designed the new library in Alexandria, Egypt and part of the Ground Zero complex in New York, as well as several Norwegian museums.

Excited by the huge opera success, Oslo City Council voted in September 2008 to move the museum devoted to Norway's most famous artist, Edvard Munch, and also the prestigious Stenersen Art Museum and the largest library in the city to the same area as the Opera House. This area, Bjørvika, is part of the harbour of Oslo nearest the main railway station, where the

super-fast airport train stops, and is at present transversed by multi-laned highways, which are now being moved into tunnels. In the harbour near Bjørvika the large passenger ferries and ships going to Denmark dock. Up to the present this has been the 'dark side' of Oslo, a centre for drug traffic, prostitution and beggars, but it will now be an area for urban renewal.

The Munch Museum today is in the eastern part of the city, and the present building opened in 1963, 100 years after the birth of the artist. It was built in the working-class part of the city as part of an effort to distribute important cultural institutions outside the more central and wealthier areas. But this has also meant that tourists have to make an extra effort to visit the museum, by bus or tram. In the present building there is only room to show about 15% of the collection. If the present building was rebuilt the museum would have to close for two years and the rebuilding would have cost 1.4 billion NOK. The new Munch Museum could open in 2013. **Hans Christian Søbørg, EMF Norwegian National Correspondent**

Grande Forge de Buffon The restoration project of the Grande Forge de Buffon, Burgundy, France won a prize in the 2008 Europa Nostra awards. This unique ensemble of an 18th-century industrial complex includes a metallurgical factory with a foundry, a refinery and a mill, accommodation and facilities for its masters and workers, as well as a chapel and an orangery.

The water-powered forge was built between 1768 and 1772, with three parallel workshops aligned with the canal containing the blast furnace, finery forge and foundry. Production ceased in 1923. It was listed as a historic monument as early as 1943.

The site was opened for visitors in 1978 and the restoration began of the various industrial and residential parts of the complex, including reinstalling parts of the then missing machinery. **TICCIH Bulletin, No. 42, Autumn 2008**

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Under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Fabiola and under the auspices of the Council of Europe
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