



Hyphen 49

Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux
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How are we as allotment gardeners perceived by the public and the media?

Walter Schaffner,

President of the Swiss allotment garden federation



WALTER SCHAFFNER

Many allotment gardeners are concerned by the image of the allotment garden movement as shown by the media. It is positive to note that during the last years our movement has been more and more often present in the print media and on TV. However, often we are still broadly considered as people who continue to poison the soil or do nothing else than having barbecues and celebrating.

The soils of many allotment garden sites have not been polluted by the allotment gardeners, but have been polluted by abandoned waste as have documented the most recent analyses. Many allotment gardens have in fact been created on ancient rubbish tips. This was in earlier days considered as a meaningful use of the so gained grounds. Today's allotment gardeners use few or no pesticides at all. They add only few mineral fertilisers. This result has been reached thanks to the intensive information and education organised by the federations and associations.

In most cases the local media have a positive approach to the allotment gardens and try to have direct contact with the local associations. An image often shown of us is that we are narrow-minded, eccentric and live a solitary life on our allotment garden site.

More recent productions of TV institutes show a picture of the allotment gardener that does not exactly comply with the reality. These documents often underline the excess of regulations by the associations. The latter, however, have to draw a relatively strict frame in order to comply with the legal regulations.

In order to combat this general criticism we have to open our sites and start an active information campaign. Today we can notice certain efforts to abandon the strict planting regulations and to use the notion of leisure gardens. The fact that we continuously do social work by allowing many different nations to devote themselves together and in a peaceful way to this leisure time occupation is still too often not considered.

Friendship with many nations and cultures and a peaceful living together is a quality label of our allotment gardeners.

This aspect has as well only recently been mentioned by the media. Migrants and disabled people are cared for on several allotment garden sites and can thus devote themselves to their loved leisure time occupation too. Children get a meaningful insight into nature and learn where vegetables come from, namely not only from the supermarkets or the local groceries.

We regret that something is still missing in these reports. It is our not unimportant contribution to the maintenance and stimulation of biodiversity.

It has not to be forgotten that many gardens in our important cities are used as green oases in the midst of blocks of flats. Parks are green oases too. But both are necessary.

If, for example, I talk with colleagues about this subject they then immediately say: "Ah you are an allotment gardener, which is like camping, barbecues and celebrating with friends?" Many ignore the fact that allotment

gardening is a healthy hobby and a meaningful leisure time occupation in nature, with plants, different vegetables and flowers. People very often do not consider the fact that since many years we have been trying to stimulate a gardening that is respectful of nature, organise courses for new tenants and have incorporated the ban of herbicides and pesticides in our regulations. The ground has to be safeguarded for our successors in order to guarantee the survival of our allotment garden plots.

Unfortunately, we are not a strong lobbying group like other organisations like WWF or sport clubs. How are we considered by politicians? If we are honest we are considered as minor groupings by them. However, they do not see our social function and the health aspects of our hobby. This is a serious problem. If we succeed in convincing the politicians of our concerns, then we will be considered more seriously in the future than we are today. We should not reduce our efforts to explain our work in discussions with politicians, political parties, the print media etc.

Therefore we are organising a study session on this subject in Switzerland in August 2012 and we will continue to deal with it till the congress in the Netherlands 2014 in order to gain knowledge and results for the next future.

Activity report 2011

The executive board has the pleasure to submit to you the activity report for 2011.

1) Internal activities

Since the last statutory meeting the executive board has met on 1st July, 17th August, 26th and 27th November 2011, as well as on 9th March 2012.

a) Efficiency of the work of the Office

The executive board has continued to discuss how the Office can be more visible, both to the allotment gardeners and to third parties.

It has submitted to the general assembly a catalogue of twelve points in order to increase the Office's efficiency. After discussion, this catalogue has been adopted by the general assembly. The catalogue must now be put into practice. It needs to be evaluated from time to time. It will be open-ended and can be revised if necessary.

b) Representation of the Office at the occasion of national events

In accordance with this catalogue the president C. ZIJDEVELD has represented the Office at the congress of the German federation on September 3rd, 2011.

M. WEIRICH, secretary general, has represented the Office at the congresses of the Luxembourgish and Swiss federations.

W. WOHATSCHKEK, A. FRIEDRICH, L. OSCARSON and A.

REES have represented the Office at the second congress of the Polish federation in Warsaw on 22nd September 2011.

Following the invitation of the Dutch federation N. GHESQUIERE, representative of the Flemish federation, has taken part in their congress.

c) Internet

In order to increase the Office's visibility towards the exterior, the Homepage of the Office is regularly updated, approximately every two weeks.

A new site is under construction.

A forum will be installed on our Homepage. The first subject, which will be discussed in this forum, is the sustainable use of pesticides (National application of the European directive no. 2009/128/UE of 21st October 2009) and its consequences for the allotment gardeners.

d) European Day of the Garden

It was decided that in the future the European Day of the Garden should be celebrated together with an international event (congress, seminar, study session). Therefore, the next European Day of the Garden will be celebrated in Zurich, together with the study session on Saturday 25th August, 2012.

e) Information brochure

The new information brochure of the Office has been published and has been put at the disposal of the

federations for lobbying purposes.

f) Hyphen

Thanks to the generous support of the Austrian federation two new issues of the Hyphen could be published.

A collection of the Hyphen 1 – 46 on DVD was given to the federations.

g) National activities

One could acknowledge an increase in activities in certain federations and especially an increasing number of initiatives enabling them to address new interested people and to better adapt to new requirements. Some of these projects are enumerated at the end of this report.

A documentary film (L) and a TV series (CH) have been made. These are examples of initiatives to be imitated.

h) Support of federations/ associations

Certain federations had to battle against new threats aiming at their protective legislation (England, Poland) or against the threats to close down important allotment garden sites (examples: Switzerland, Germany, Sweden).

At the request of the federations the Office has taken position in order to help the concerned allotment gardeners in Berlin, in Stockholm and in Poland.

A resolution to support the allotment gardeners in Berlin and Stockholm in order to safeguard

the threatened allotment garden sites was signed during the international congress by the representatives of the Office and the presidents of the national federations. One has to hope that this resolution will help the allotment gardeners to successfully defend the threatened gardens in Berlin and in Stockholm.

In order to support the Polish federation in safeguarding the protective legislation on allotment gardens and to be able to continue its work as NGO, an Office delegation took part – as afore mentioned – in the 2nd congress of the Polish federation.

At the request of the federation an open letter was sent to the authorities.

2) International congress

The international congress was organized in Copenhagen from 18th till 20th August 2011. The subject was: “The future of allotment gardens”. The discussions on this subject were very interesting. The conclusions of the workshops could be discussed in the plenary session in an innovative way. A round-table with the members of the executive board was organized and they answered the questions put to them by the moderator and the delegates.

During this congress the Golden Rose could be given to the town of Gradignan (F), while the diplomas on an ecological gardening were given to the associations “Freiheit” in Berlin (D), “Falun” in Falun (S) and “Zonnehoek” in Amsterdam (NL).

The diploma for social activities was given to the association “Heideland” in Braunschweig (D).

Following the loss of the Office flag after the congress in Lyon, the Austrian federation offered a

new flag to the Office during this congress in Copenhagen. The flag shows the historical design on one side and the actual logo of the Office on the other side. In this way it underlines both the attachment of the Office to its rich past and as well as its outlook towards the future. This flag of an indescribable beauty impressed all the delegates and the most cordial thanks have to be addressed once more to the Austrian federation for their very generous gesture. This flag is the symbol of our movement towards the exterior and allows to unite more than 3.000.000 allotment garden families around our common values.

At the occasion of this congress the delegates had as well the possibility to see the beautiful town of Copenhagen during a bus and boat trip. They could visit some new allotment garden sites. A warm thank you goes to the Danish federation for the organization of the 36th international congress.

The resolution presented to the congress was voted with unanimity. This resolution was for the first time completed with the position of the different federations describing how they intend to put the resolution into practice. Unfortunately - contrary to what was successfully done after the congress of Cracow - no federation has asked the Office to send the resolution directly to the national authorities.

3) International organizations

Council of Europe

The Office has taken part in the meetings organized for the INGO's.

Unfortunately, following budgetary difficulties or under the pretext of financial difficulties the Council of Europe has limited the meetings of the INGOs and is trying to diminish their influence, with is regrettable. In November 2011 a forum has

taken place on the subject “Living together, to conciliate diversity and liberty in the Europe of the XXIst century”.

In this context the national federations were requested to illustrate the social function of our movement in a small article.

Unfortunately, this request remained greatly without answers. This prevented the Office from underlining the far-ranging activities of our movement in this area and to conduct the necessary lobbying among the members of the Parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe. This is the more regrettable as these members are nobody else than the members of the national Parliaments.

European Union

As no member of the Commission could take part in our international congress the secretary general succeeded in getting a video message from Mrs V. REDING, Vice-president of the Commission, for our international congress.

Following this message a meeting with Mrs V. REDING has been asked for. Technical discussions with her advisers took place and revealed the difficulties for the Office to cooperate with the Commission.

Mr. C. TURMES, member of the European Parliament, has been contacted in order to lecture on: “Lobbying in Europe – How can NGOs make their voice heard in Brussels?” This lecture will take place during the coming general assembly in Luxemburg in March 2012.

4) Contacts with the federations that are not member in the Office.

The German federation has contacts with the Czech federation and further meetings are planned.

The German federation will help the Czech allotment gardeners in solving some of their problems, especially on how to better present themselves towards the exterior and towards the authorities.

Following to the second Polish allotment garden congress in Warsaw, new contacts have been established between the Czech allotment gardeners and the executive board of the Office in Vienna

on 26th November. At the same occasion the executive board discussed with the representatives of the Slovakian federation on how to intensify our cooperation within the Office. Both federations explained their problems. The Office proposed to help and give support to the Slovakian federation if it wished this help.

Contacts with the Japanese allotment gardeners continue. An ex-

change of views took place during the international congress in Copenhagen.

5) Information given to interested people.

The Office continues to give information on allotment gardens to students and to the press.

Luxemburg, January 2012

The executive board

Decision protocol

of the general assembly held in Luxembourg on 9th and 10th March, 2012

Were represented: the federations of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland.

Were absent: the federations of Norway and Slovakia

- 1) The agenda is completed and adopted with unanimity.
- 2) The decision protocol and the report of the general assembly held in Copenhagen are adopted with unanimity.
- 3) The activity report is adopted with unanimity.
- 4) The Internet forum is online. The first topic for discussions is online too. Further topics that can now be discussed: the problem concerning the dying of bees, the future of the French allotment gardens.
- 5) The programme for the study session and the European Day of the Garden in Zurich are adopted. Subject: How is the allotment garden movement perceived by the public? The questions will be enumerated in Zurich, the answers will be found in Berlin in 2013 and the strategy for the future will be fixed in Utrecht in 2014.
- 6) The costs of the study session are presented.
- 7) The contents of the Hyphens 50 and 51 are completed.
- 8) The treasurer J. KIEFFER presents the financial report and gives the necessary explanations.
- 9) The auditors inform that they have found no mistake. They ask the delegates to adopt the financial report and to grant discharge to the executive board.
- 10) The general assembly adopts the financial report 2011 with unanimity and grants discharge to the executive board with unanimity.
- 11) The draft budget for 2012 is adopted with unanimity after having been discussed.
- 12) The draft budget for the solidarity fund 2012 is adopted with unanimity.
- 13) The requests to grant the diploma for an ecological gardening to the association "KGV Seilbahn" in Leipzig (Germany), to the association "Tuinwijk" in Groningen (Netherlands), to the association "Piccardthof" in Groningen (Netherlands), to the association "Abstede" in Utrecht Netherlands) and to the association "De Boerderij" in Rotterdam (Netherlands) are adopted with unanimity.
- 14) The request to grant the diploma for social activities to the association "Slotenkouter" in Sint Amansberg (Belgium) is adopted with unanimity.
- 15) The request for a diploma should in future be accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. This PowerPoint will as well be presented when the diploma is granted to the association.
- 16) The written report concerning the cooperation with international organisations needs no more explaining.

C. ZIJDEVELD completes it by saying that the allotment garden movement has an important cultural heritage. Thanks to the help of a lobbying organization we might be able to establish contacts with the Commission of the European Union.
- 17) On request of the Finnish federation the problem that less people want to become member of an association and that less and less members are ready to assume a function as a board member is discussed.

The executive board will analyse this question and will report to the General Assembly.
- 18) The federations present some of their positive events.
- 19) The federations share some of the negative events in their country in 2011.
- 20) The Polish federation thanks the delegates for their participation in the Polish congress and the Office's support in fighting an amendment of the Polish allotment garden law.

- 21) The French federation wishes an amendment of the internal regulation in order that all the costs of the board members for attending an executive board meeting (travelling and hotel costs etc.) should be paid by the Office.

The executive board will discuss this problem.

The Swiss federation points out that if there will be other amendments of the internal regulation

one should add that an executive board meeting and a general assembly will also be organized at the occasion of study sessions.

There are no additional demands for clarification and amendments.

Consequently it is decided that there will be no more discussions on an adaptation of the statutes in the near future.

N.B. The next general assembly will be held in Zurich on 23rd August, 2012 at 5.15 p.m. The next statutory general assembly will be held in the City Hotel in Luxembourg on 8th and 9th March, 2013.

The Swedish allotment gardeners present themselves

Structure

16 regions, 255 associations,
25,250 members

Allotment gardens

25,000 allotment gardens with an
average size of 350 sq metres
established on leased land

Administration

voluntary work and paid employees

Ownership

90 % communal land owners,
7 % private land owners,
3 % State property



The office of Koloniträdgårdsförbundet is based in SE - 116 32 Stockholm, Åsögatan 149. The federation is divided into 16 regions spread through the whole country. Associations founded in the same town or village, or having concluded a lease with the same landlord can join in a regional association.

The organisation as a whole includes 25,000 allotment gardens. The average size of an allotment garden is 350 sq metres and the overall total of allotment gardens amounts to 1,350 ha. 99 % of the allotment gardens are connected to a water supply and 45 % have electricity. The yearly rent varies normally between 0.00 € and 1.50 € per sq metre. The annual contribution for the central federation varies between 10 € and 30 € per member.

The allotment gardens exist on leased land. 90 % are owned by the communal authorities, 7 % by private landlords and 3 % are owned by the state. At the end of the lease, the new tenant has not to pay a handover fee to his predecessor. The use of the land as an allotment garden is obligatory.

The work for the federation is done on a voluntary basis. The central federation itself has however also some paid employees as well as the people working on a voluntary basis.

As far as the building restrictions on the plot are concerned, they are based on the stipulations in the contract. The size of an allotment garden house can be between 6 and 45 sq metres. 45 % of the members use their allotment garden house for staying there in summer. 45 % of the houses have electricity and 95% are equipped with drinking water. 65 % of the sites have common toilets.

Sweden does not have a federal allotment garden law. All leisure gardens are ruled by the ordinary state laws as for example laws concerning the leases, environmental questions, the protection of plants and fiscal laws. In addition to this the culture in the garden is regulated by municipal decrees: for example on the use of the grounds, canalisation, the protection of environment and health.



The "Koloniträdgården" (allotment garden) is one of Sweden's most widely read garden magazines. It is published 4 to 5 times a year with a run of 26,000 copies. Every member gets the magazine because the cost of it is included in the annual contribution. Those who do not have an allotment garden do have the option to take out a subscription.

The Swedish federation organises several different innovative projects.



The Swiss allotment gardeners present themselves

Structure

4 languages, 2 country regions, with associations in the French and German part, 8 regional associations, 70 sections and 230 associations with 24,800 members

Allotment gardens

Size of the plots 100 sq metres, 150 sq metres, 200 sq metres, exclusively on leased land

Administration

Voluntary work, no secretariat and no official bureau with employees

Ownership

90 % communal land owners, 10 % private land owners

The Swiss allotment garden federation (SFGV FSJF) has an executive board of six members, a federal committee composed by 2 members per region and an editing commission formed by a German and French speaking writer dealing with the issue of the federation's review. The overall total area of allotment gardens is 640 ha. The allotment garden sites are connected to a water supply. In some sites electricity is available in the community building which are also equipped with toilets. Maintenance is partly done either by the commune or town (urban gardening department) or by the associations themselves. The allotment gardeners get no financial support by the State or the commune. The yearly rent differs from region to region as well as

the annual affiliation fees to be paid to the local associations. The rent varies between 75 and 120 €. The annual affiliation fee to the federation amounts to 20 Fr. - including the review of the federation.

The Swiss allotment garden federation has no federal law but has to comply with the planning laws of the cantons. This is the reason why numerous sites have a limited existence. In Switzerland there are special zones for sport and play as well as a green zone A. The green zones as well as the agricultural zones are protected and they can only be changed following a popular referendum. So allotments situated in these zones are more or less protected. The aim is to create a specific zone for allotment gardens.



The leased land has to be cultivated with garden products. The allotment plots can also be used for recreational purposes. There is no laid down minimum area that has to be used for the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. As far as the construction of the sheds is concerned there are rules fixed by the cantons, the communes or the towns. Sheds must not be equipped as a permanent residence.

There is no water and electricity supply on the plots. Solar panels are allowed. It is obligatory to collect rain water and to make compost. At the end of the lease the new tenant has to pay his predecessor a handover fee for his personal belongings varying between 2,000 and 5,000 €.

Work for the federation as well as work for the boards of the associations and sections is done on a voluntary basis.

The regional representatives work for the region and are the spokespersons for the associations and the sections as well as for the authorities.

The federation has edited a brochure called "The allotment garden in harmony with nature" and is available for all members; a new edition is in preparation. Every year an information leaflet is published for all members. In 2009 a folder was also created for all boards of the associations. This folder contains all essential information on the federation as well as model statutes etc.

The Swiss allotment garden federation is a member of the consultative board of the nature congress of Basel. It cooperates as well with associations pursuing similar aims. The federation supports the associations in their efforts to protect by long-term leases the land on which the allotment gardens

sites are created or supports them financially when defending their cause in popular votes.

We aim to enable the federation to provide courses for the members itself or in cooperation with parent associations. In some towns courses are already organised for new allotment gardeners in order to make sure that they are informed both on how to work with nature and in an ecological manner. The federation also offers courses for gardening advisers. The aim is that the individual allotment gardeners have an expert near their site, who can give them the requested advice.

There are many innovative projects with a social content. Among them are allotment garden plots for disabled persons, educational gardens in order to make young people aware of nature and the creation of plots in high density housing areas for the residents.

Diploma for an ecological gardening in the associations

Association Zonnehoek: Description

AVVN Chris ZIJDEVELD, chairman

The Dutch National Society, AVVN, would like to nominate its association "Zonnehoek" from Amsterdam for the honorary diploma for an ecological gardening. The AVVN believes Zonnehoek meets the criteria set in the "Regulation on the criteria of a diploma for an ecological gardening".

The criteria:

4.1 About fifteen years ago the AVVN has developed together with several nature conservation organizations a national quality mark for associations, which meet strict criteria on ecological gardening. Associations that meet the criteria can get a quality mark with one,

two, three or four stars (best). Zonnehoek meets these strict criteria of the AVVN and has achieved the maximum of four stars. Zonnehoek has signed a contract with the AVVN in which they declare they will comply with the strict rules of the AVVN.

The gardening at Zonnehoek is also in accordance with the Office brochure "An ecological approach to allotment cultivation".

The garden site of Zonnehoek dates from 1953, includes 70 gardens and is situated in the 19th century district of Spaarndammerbuurt in Amsterdam. Already in the 1970s and 1980s Zonnehoek committed itself for ecological gardening: no chemical pesticides were sold in the garden shop and the members were asked not to use them on the private allotment gardens. More and more gardeners are using the principles of ecological gardening on their private gardens.

In 1999 Zonnehoek started with two stars. After that, it's gone up steadily. In 2002 they received three stars and for the first time in 2005 four stars, the highest stage. In 2009, those four stars were prolonged – with the annotation that the natural gardening even improved in quality and quantity.

4.2 What is remarkable about Zonnehoek that is an integral ecological management and maintenance for the whole of the garden site and not just for parts of it.

- Zonnehoek manages the boschage





ecologically: no woodchips on the surface, but a variety partly indigenous and partly botanical flower bulbs as undergrowth.

- Shrubs and hedges are being pruned extensively so that there is more opportunity for birds nest, with more berries and flowers for insects and butterflies etc.
- Mowing is done extensively and phased. The grass is not mowed on all places every fourteen days. Several grass fields are only mowed after the flowering of the spring flowers.
- A rosary, willows and indigenous littoral plants were planted.
- A special butterfly garden was laid out on one of the corners of the garden site, near recently planted old varieties of fruit trees.

- One of the gardeners has become so excited that she has found a new hobby, keeping bees. There are currently two hives, with bee colonies.
- There are breeding kingfishers.
- Special use of natural materials, such as a gazebo of willow wood and a playground of natural materials.
- Recently in the district neighbourhood a partnership (Overbraeck) was started to protect several ecological gardens (sites) against development plans by local authorities.
- Zonnehoeck provides much written and personal information, such as courses, lectures, exhibitions and workshops to children.

At the presentation of the national quality mark the alderman of the city of Amsterdam emphasized the added value of allotment gardens in the city, a beautiful green feature which is accessible to residents and others from the neighbourhood as well as to neighbourhood schools which have the opportunity for nature excursions.

These are only a few examples of the activities of Zonnehoeck and their place in the neighbourhood.

4.3 The percentage of gardeners that effectively apply the criteria fixed under 4.1 is approximately 90%.

Nomination for the diploma concerning ecological gardening

Falan Allotment Society in Falun

It is a beautifully situated allotment area on a south bent hillside with view over a little lake. The society has 141 allotments, 128 are with small houses and 13 are only plots. It is a society with active members, arranging lots of activities, studies, feasts and so on. Since many years they have a group of members especially engaged in environmental matters. They got their first diploma from the Swedish Allotment Federation in 2008. Last year they got the bronze diploma, the second level of diploma.

The whole society practice organic gardening. The members have their own compost bins but they also have a common area for composting. The members care for the birds with nest-

ing boxes. There are beehives for the pollination and also a meadow area for the biodiversity.

The society has a very informative member's paper coming once a month during the season. There the environment group regularly informs about topics of current interest.

Falan Allotment Society is well worth the international diploma.

The board of the Swedish Allotment Federation strongly recommends Falan Allotment Society for the diploma concerning ecological gardening

Lars OSCARSON
Solveig SIDBLAD

France: Sustainable city development network: Between Kazan and Ris-Orangis, in the eyes of a gardener (2nd part)

Gil Melin,

President of the Ris-Orangis gardens, Member of the Board of the FNJFC and Director of the Bergerie Nationale de Rambouillet adult training centre

Change of reference

As a whole, these gardens, on the face of it, have a very different function from our own due to their history, size, new regulations and new function as a secondary or even primary residence. Are we not seeing here a post-modern ruralisation, a pioneer in the shrinking production and distribution network of market garden produce.

The Russian allotments of Kazan are as a whole nearly ten times bigger than the average allotments available nowadays in the Parisian region. It is therefore possible to build maisonnettes that are nothing like the modest sheds, or even tool boxes, of the French gardens. These buildings have become genuine secondary residences and, for certain people, a primary residence with a garden shed, sauna and even garage for the car.



The practices we have seen illustrate ecological garden management with

little visible input, no bitter war against weeds or pests, but the use of all kinds of liquid manure and a mixture of interesting vegetables. The gardeners still produce their own seeds; they experiment and succeed in acclimatising varied plants despite a true continental climate. Only mulching seems to be lacking in this climate, which is surely necessary. However, some gardeners only work the soil's surface, with no deep digging; composting and organic fertiliser seem to be the current practice.



I am still surprised by the size of the ornamental gardens, with a range of plants worthy of an English garden, with a mixed border and rockeries pleasantly named "alpinum". For that matter, I am going to use the term Russian garden in future to illustrate this cosmopolitan combination. An equally large surprise, which remains to be proved, is the importance of women in the organisation and the gardening.



The rules from the Soviet era which imposed planting fruit trees, mainly apple, plum and cherry, together with small fruit bushes, generated a landscape of wooded gardens, almost abounding in the density of the vegetation. This way of life contrasts with the weak presence of birds seen or heard during our visits.

Giving something a second life

Gardeners often have a recuperating trait which enables used and obsolete objects to have a second life, either functional or decorative. This phenomenon are visible in both countries: recycling baths or barrels as water tanks, using tyres as decorations or to maintain the soil, bed frames turned into doors...



This phenomenon, which could be driven by economic concerns, also has, in my opinion, a cultural foundation and certainly also a psychological element. Whatever it may be, it intervenes in the management of waste and junk that our societies have to manage. In our impartial observation, Russian allotments certainly have more tolerance than the French allotments, where those responsible have the right to intervene to ensure a harmonious landscape and avoid falling into the "drifts" that took place in The Glorious Thirty, with the emergence of shelters made from bric-a-brac. On the subject of waste and junk, it would

be necessary to deepen the comparison, together with the matter of managing household effluents, which we have not mentioned.

Ways of allocating and governing allotments

Currently in the Parisian region, heavy pressure on the demand for gardens directly influences the governing and allocation of allotments. In effect it is unacceptable to leave an allotment unused or only half cultivated, and therefore those responsible exert strong pressure on negligent gardeners, believing that their decisions are being driven and supported by those on the waiting lists. This pressure is also felt upstream by town planners who are opting more and more to create gardens by redirecting the land towards a "horticultural" use.

Allocation method

This is still a bit ambiguous in certain garden groups and works by co-optation with a relational system which is subject to objection. However, increasingly the involvement of regional authorities and new people responsible, no more influenced by the paternalist ideas, is ensuring that the current allocation criteria are known to all and founded on affiliation to the urban community, regardless of nationality or origin. Allotments are often reserved to those living in apartments, occasionally taking their tax code into consideration. In certain gardens, the waiting list is displayed for all to see; it is kept up to date with new allocations made during a presentation meeting of available allotments and taking into account legal documents.

The governing is globally based on the law of 1901, which leaves the door open to very different interpretations of the rules, regulations and finances. However, we are currently witnessing a necessary re-structuring in line with internal regulations, which brings the governance more in line with democracy and allows those responsible to protect themselves from bad eggs and court actions.

One of the pillars of the 1901 French law is to organise voluntary work, which is vital for our gardens. Nevertheless, it remains rigorous in regard to the principles of equality, probity and citizenship. True voluntary work can only be maintained if those involved take full responsibility for the tasks assigned and if they are being valued by their peers and project partners. In no way shall they receive financial retribution. This state of affairs seems to be difficult for our Russian friends to understand.

I find it interesting to deepen this call to communal action and daily organisation. I think that it is through this analysis and managing the accounts that we could bring some clarity to our Russian colleagues if they deem our model to be acceptable and adaptable.

Open space and communal areas

In Kazan, the two communal areas that we saw struck me by their rustic character, despite the fact that they are occupied full-time by employees of the group, who have an administrative and financial function by being in contact with the gardeners and, I imagine, by supervising the guardians and the electrician. Taking into account the size of the groups looking like villages with more than 400 families in one and 800 in the other, larger and more practical spaces could be foreseen. But that must satisfy the needs.

Visit to the Botanical garden with Irina Houtchina

This place has multiple purposes and includes a small museum where sev-

eral botany researchers experiment, a botanical garden conservatory and display for plant species, and an educational vegetable garden. It also develops a scientific and natural approach, and a sensory approach for school outings. It is a kind of natural house in the city.

Visit to the orphanage

The setting and probable manipulation of our visit was a big emotional shock for me. My reaction had it been good on and off camera? The goal of an exercise which could be an opening for children via the student movement, which should be supported in the search for goals, and these goals must be objective.



A look to the future

1. At the end of all of these important matters, we lived, possible next steps for the gardens of Ris-Orangis could be to take a delegation of gardeners from the Orme Pomponne association to Kazan so that they can appreciate the local reality. These cultural and technical exchanges should open up a type of partnership that is yet to be conceived. The combination of these sociological queries highlights the need for analysis to be conducted on the function of a garden group. I think that it is important that the

beginnings of the collection by the PADES be effectively pursued as a diagnostic of a given situation, and this diagnostic could revolutionise the relational and governing system at the heart of gardens.

2. The FNJCS was mobilised to receive the delegation's visit in September. I hope that this first contact can be followed up in order to establish direct links, both with the national federation and also with the international federation. The vice president of the Saint Peters-

burg allotment garden association, Vladimir Deinekin, shall be our spokesperson.

3. Botanical and educational garden Little to add in terms of technique, but an exchange with other botanical gardens and their animation practices could be enriching. In particular I think of the Marnay sur Seine botanical garden, but getting closer to the SNHF could also be interesting.

On the animation side, the Ecole et Nature or GRAINE Ile-de-France gardening associations should be contacted to encourage the exchange of educational and practical customs. The GNIS could also be contacted to send posters to classes who are getting involved in gardening.

4. University students

They will need to see some action groups in France to get their attention regarding education about the environment. The fact that Constantin speaks French well is an attribute that could be exploited together with the dynamism of Katerina and the presence of ALINA in France in the Lilloise region, which is rich in teachers in environmental matters.





Belgium: 2011-2015 strategic plan in Flanders (2nd part)

Noël Ghesquiere,
secretary of the Flemish association of allotment gardens

We listed the following political challenges for the period 2011-2015.

1. Regarding the management

- From now on it is necessary for the administrative board to work in a more prepared way, with more planning and strategy.
- We will choose local management teams with a mix of backgrounds (elderly, young people, women, immigrants, natives) and which must be better structured.

2. Organisation

- In order to communicate better with our gardeners and potential members in our field of expertise, we opted for a more interactive website and a quicker communication of information.
- We will set a firm policy regarding volunteers.
- We will carry out a full enquiry of our customers (members), create a dynamic service for them and take

action to acquire more space for allotment garden sites in Flanders.

3. Communication

- We will work to get a very favourable regulation for allotment garden sites.
- Implementation of an up-to-date communication and marketing strategy.
- Planned approach and programme of activities for the next management period. The activities are more structured and better aligned with



the four statutory functions of an association.

These challenges are turned into options and then developed into 7 strategic objectives

- 1st strategic objective: The administrative board of the “Vlaamse Volkstuin” works strategically. Once recognised as a socio-cultural association, this objective will be approached even more substantially.
- 2nd strategic objective: In 2015, 15% of our local associations will have a greater mix of backgrounds (more young people, women and, if possible, immigrants/natives).
- 3rd strategic objective: In 2015, 20% of our local associations will meet the quality criteria for a good governance.
- 4th strategic objective: From 2013, the new website will be available as

a means of communication but also as a centre of information and expertise.

- 5th strategic objective: In 2015, the number of local associations will have increased by 5%.
- 6th strategic objective: In 2015, the “Vlaamse Volkstuin” will have launched a thorough campaign to show the need for allotment garden sites.
- 7th strategic objective: In 2015, the ASBL (NPO) will have completely implemented its communication and marketing plan.

These different strategic objectives are fulfilled as operational objectives and each operational objective is further developed by concrete actions.

For each action there is a staff member, a roadmap (calendar), and we have also indicated which resources

must be anticipated or are necessary for this activity.

This must allow us to measure each year to what extent each scheduled action has been implemented and compare it against the proposed schedule. It may ultimately be desirable to adjust the resources.

Conclusion: Our association has spent a great deal of time and resource to create an ambitious work plan for the next five years. After carrying out this plan until 2015 we will have a modern administration system. To achieve this plan, the collaboration of our 2,000 managing members in local, provincial and regional associations is absolutely necessary. These 2,000 members will define to what extent this plan will succeed.

Our 25,000 families have the right to an organisation which keeps its promises in its mission.

Denmark: Has anything happened since 2000?

Mogens Ginnerup-Nielsen,
General Secretary, Danish Federation of Leisure and Allotment Gardeners



The end of the year is usually the time to evaluate what has been achieved and what should have been achieved during the year that is coming to an end.

The national as well as the international allotment garden movement has a long history however. A perspective of approximately a decade seems to be more appropriate for a brief evaluation of developments within the International Allotment Garden movement. As reference points for my evaluation I have chosen the resolutions adopted at congresses held by our international organization during that period.

The Congress in Lausanne in Switzerland in 2000 highlighted a number of important social values and aims that should be pursued by our movement. They were in particular an increased focus on the allotment garden as a window to nature for young and old, the potential of allotment gardens for integration of single parent families, foreign citizens and disabled persons into the community, and the values of the allotment garden as a means of activity and motivation for both elderly and involuntarily unemployed people.

The International Congress in Lyon in 2005 focused on the safeguarding

and redevelopment of fauna and flora through environmentally sustainable garden practices as well as the contribution of allotment gardens to the rehabilitation of urban environments.

You may say that the congresses in Lausanne and Lyon defined the desirable contributions of allotments to society as such - or to groups of people in society which until then were not considered capable of benefitting from allotment garden activities.

The International Congress in Krakow in 2008 - in view of developments not only in Poland but in several other

member states as well - turned to the more basic question of protecting the very existence of allotment gardens in our societies, protecting them from being supplanted by urban development.

The 2011 Congress in Copenhagen finally – on the basis of the priorities already established – tried to define the layout and role of future allotment gardens and the identity of tomorrow's allotment gardener. The Congress, moreover, dealt with the strong need to increasingly open our gardens to the surrounding society.

Producing the picture of the future allotment gardener revealed a number of challenges we have to deal with, e.g. how to train and motivate young people to join in the management and running of garden societies and - more generally - how to adapt garden societies to their future members' needs. The work with defining the allotment gardener of the future in particular revealed to us the close connection between general sociological trends in society, and the foreseeable developments regarding social life in our garden societies.

How far did we get then during the last decade ?

Our movement is very diversified not only regarding its legal framework but also when it comes to history, traditions, relative importance etc. The answer to the question therefore depends very much on who and where you ask. And a precise answer would require thorough investigations in all the countries represented in the Office. I will nevertheless try to answer it – but only in very broad and general terms.

The congress in Lausanne focused on integration. There is no doubt that the allocation of an allotment garden has now been generally recognized as a means of integrating people who have not been able to establish sufficient social and professional contacts with the surrounding society. We have seen impressive examples of garden

societies taking up this kind of social activity but there is no doubt that most garden societies are still reluctant to open their gates to people who differ much from the norm, be it by their social or ethnic background.

At Nordic level we recently decided to fund a research project that could shed more light on the potential value of allotment gardens when it comes to integration of immigrants. Hopefully the result of this project could inspire more of our garden societies to participate in such efforts.

The role of the allotment garden when it comes to teaching younger generations about nature is now broadly recognized. The ban on the use of pesticides and the exclusive use of natural fertilizers which is applied by many of our garden societies have at the same time marked important steps forward when it comes to a better protection of our natural environment. Introduction of prizes for organic growing by many national federations and by the International Office have been important steps in the same direction. But there is still a long way to go before all federations and societies are on board. My conclusion must therefore be, that the goals set up by the congress in Lyon have been met only to a certain extent even though we are heading in the right direction.

The protection of allotment gardens against being allocated for urban development is a standing issue for our movement. The International Office has on many occasions expressed solidarity with national garden federations defending existing allotment garden sites threatened by urban development projects. This may have had some effect in certain cases, but the general picture still is that the allotment garden has little or no weight when it comes to city development planning.

In a couple of member states we have seen successful examples of integration of allotment gardens with

public parks or office building sites. This is no doubt one way to improve the protection of the garden sites in question. And in my own country we are privileged to have national legislation which ensures an almost absolute protection of allotment garden sites against being allocated for urban or other purposes.

The general picture is gloomy, however, and apparently not about to change. The only way to counter this situation seems to be to continue to develop allotment gardens and the way they can contribute to meet the environmental and social challenges of our societies. So my conclusion must unfortunately be that we generally have not been very successful in protecting existing allotment sites.

The congress in Copenhagen in 2011 set up a number of priorities for our future work. We will have to work on them and - no doubt - a good many others in the years to come !

But I think I can conclude my analysis by saying that a lot more than one might think has happened within the allotment garden movement since 2000.....

Germany: The allotment garden movement's social responsibility (1st part)

Dr. Norbert Franke

President of the Bundesverband Deutscher Gartenfreunde e. V.

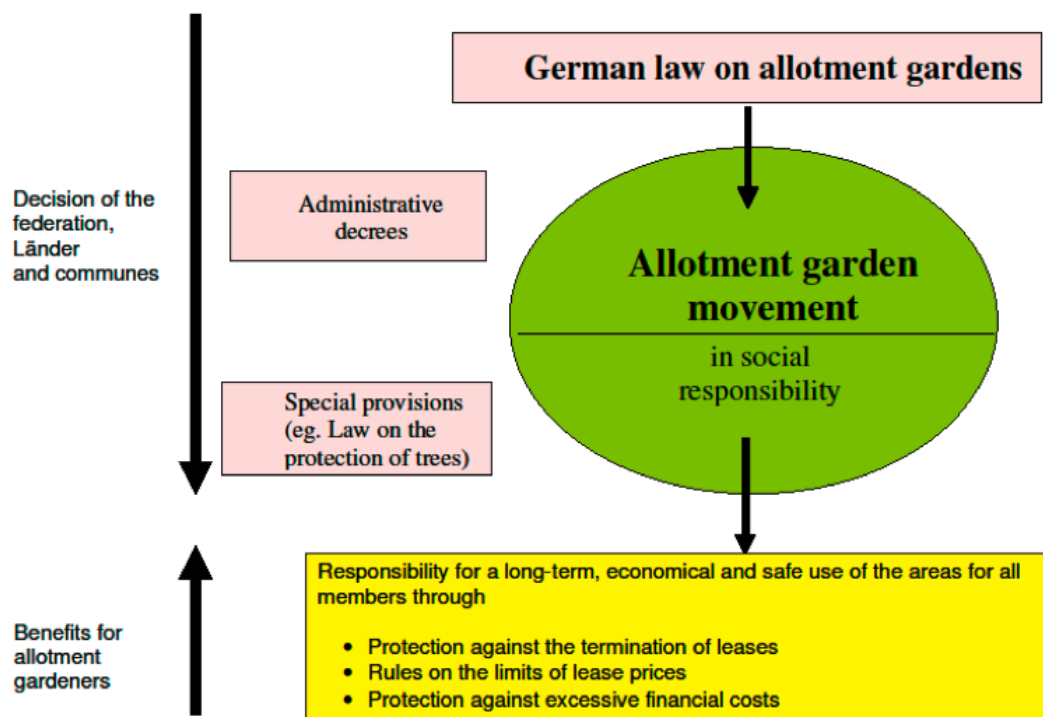
Throughout its history, the allotment garden movement has played important roles on a social and community front, roles that are becoming even more important due to increasing cuts in social networks and a lack of legal security in several areas of life. These circumstances allow the allotment garden movement to take on an important role in finding solutions to the social missions, a role which is not only reflected in the social network

of the societies and associations, but also and increasingly externally, i.e. in society. Given this situation, it seems clear that the allotment garden movement has additionally and above all a social responsibility. This is not limited to the allotment garden associations but affects large parts of society and the population.

It is often implied that allotment gardeners receive preferential treatment

from the association on an administrative and financial level. It must be said in response that the forefathers of the law on allotment gardens in Germany were not looking to give particular rights to allotment gardeners. They knew from the start that a huge social responsibility would fall on the allotment gardeners' movement and that it must therefore be protected and promoted. Protection against the termination of leases and tenants'

Goal and objective of the German law on allotment gardens



restrictions are not the main objectives of the law on German allotment gardens, but simply tools for the long-term implementation of the allotment garden movement's purposes – and this above all with the goal of being able to take on its social responsibility (see Image 1).

Dr. Daniel Gottlieb Moritz Schreber, who gave it its name, thoughts were to create gardens for the poor or make allotments available for large families. Limiting the allotment garden movement to his ideology would, only cover a very small part of its current meaning.

The collections of allotment gardens – and this covers all associations – have

a much more significant influence on social trends and changes today than in the past. In addition to the classic purposes often cited – to which you can add ecological and health purposes – the allotment garden movement takes on other roles in society which, generally speaking, go above and beyond the often narrow depiction of this "Laubenpieper" movement (see Images 2 and 3).

It is important to point out that groups of allotment gardens are not small "biotopes" for people on the margins of society, but "green oases" for all areas of society and all walks of life. In these allotment gardens, labourers and employees, judges, doctors and members of Parliament all devote

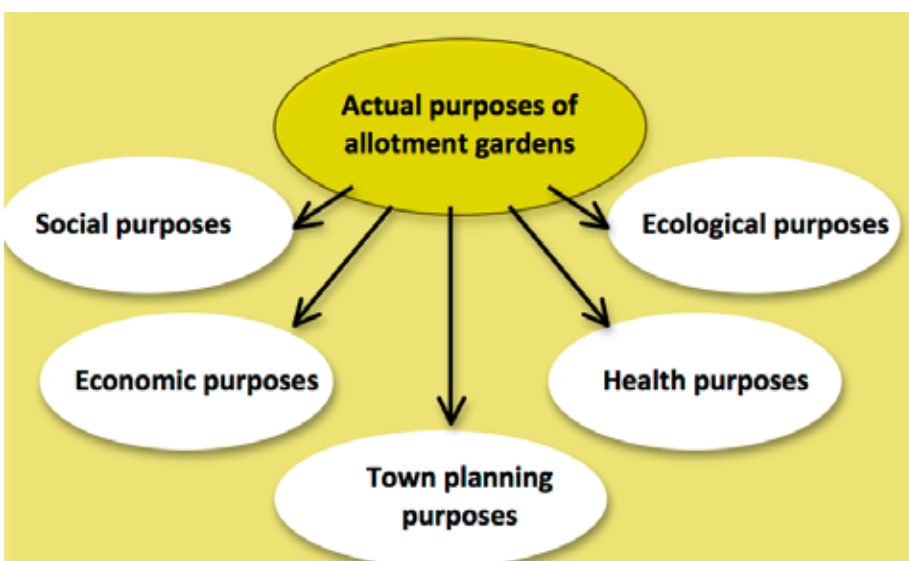
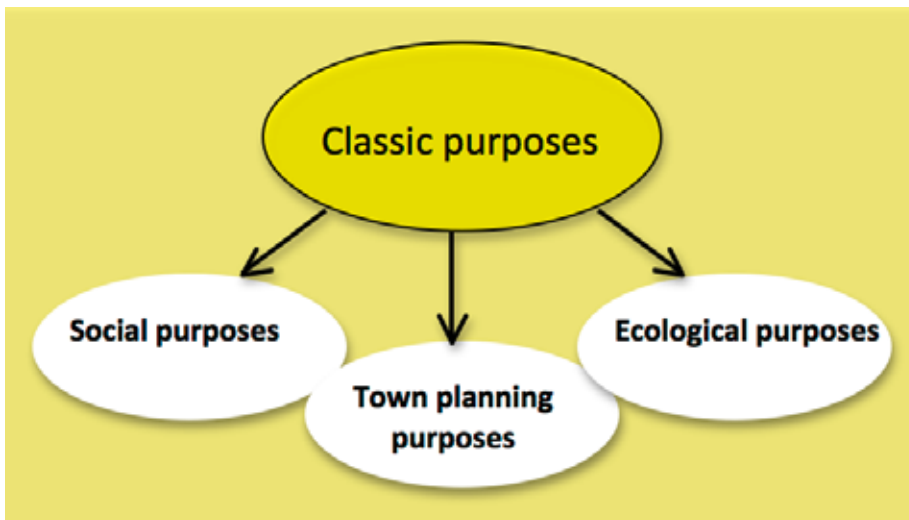
themselves to gardening in a peaceful, neighbour-like atmosphere. Social status and origin are far less important than the use made of the allotment, the gardeners' integration into the association and their actions as part of the allotment garden movement.

With regards to a legal classification, the allotment garden movement is determined entirely by the law on allotment gardens. Several administrative regulations and legal provisions have been added that don't always exclusively affect allotment gardens but do among others contain regulations on leasing plots, for example.

In principle, the allotment garden movement must carry out its relevant

purposes and tasks based on its own needs, and act so as much for its members as for society. Its economic purpose must be highlighted, as allotment gardens are not a "subsidised business" by the local authorities but contribute to community budgets through the rents and various taxes paid. Furthermore, they play a significant role with regards to health.

To be continued.





Austria: The new administrative building of the Austrian allotment gardeners

Sylvia WOHATSCHEK

After a construction period of only 15 months the Austrian central federation of allotment gardeners, the central federation of allotment gardeners Ltd, the central federation of allotment gardeners - society for project development Ltd and the federation of the Land (country) of Vienna have transferred their headquarters to Vienna 1020, Simon-Wiesenthal-Gasse 2.

The construction project was realised

and financed by the central federation of allotment gardeners Ltd. The Austrian central federation of allotment gardeners and the federation of the country of Vienna are renting their office space in this new building. At the same time of the move to the new administrative building, the publicity agency MediaZ of the central federation Ltd moved from its location in the Himbergerstraße to the second town subdivision of Vienna.

The estimated costs were 2,984.354 €. Thanks to clever improvements and economies the effective costs have been reduced by 16.2 %. Therefore the expenditure for the new administrative building of the central federation amounts to 2,572.387 € after the final calculation.

The new administrative building has a total surface of 1,200 sq metres situated on a ground floor and a first lower ground floor.



The bright and friendly reception hall offers sufficient room and comfort to our members while waiting for their matters to be dealt with.

The offices are as well equipped in such a way as to offer an agreeable and employee friendly workplace.

The move took place from 26 September till 2 October 2011. Thanks to the efficient cooperation of both the offi-

cial and the employees, the opening for member consultations could take place on 3rd October at the new location, after only one week's closing of the federation.

One of the many highlights of the new building is the conference room situated in the lower ground floor. It offers room for 35 people. As it is equipped with all the necessary facilities the formation courses for the officials, for the

technical gardening advisers and for the appraisal masters will be organised here. These formation courses are offered by the central federation in the framework of its allotment gardener's academy.

As a conclusion one can say that the services for our members could be improved in the new building and that it is a very good working environment for all our staff.



A National Meetings

a) Germany

Seminars	Subject
Society and social questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chosen projects of the allotment garden movement
Specific gardening matters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A garden close to nature and its advantages • Contributions to the protection of nature and environment
Legal questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The executif board of an association: internal and external liability
Environment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bees
Public relations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new media and the author rights, important means in the context of public relations
Events:	
20th- 29th 01.2012 Berlin: Internationale Grüne Woche (International Green Week) with the participation of the central federation and the federations of Berlin and Hessen	
10.6.2012:Berlin Day of the Garden:Subject:Small paradises	

b) Netherlands

Education meetings

Course: design your own natural garden
 Workshop: composting
 Workshop for youth: make your own nestingbox
 Workshop: how to prune a fruit tree
 Workshop for youth: bees
 Symposium: how to run your association
 Workshop: how to value garden houses, sheds, gardens etc
 Symposium: green and handicap

c) Switzerland

Study session from 23rd August till 25th August, 2012 (international meeting)

B Documents

a) Germany

Publications 2011

Weekly garden advice by dpa

Monthly garden advice on Internet

Monthly newsletter

The review: "Der Fachberater" 1.4/2011

Grüne Schriftenreihen no. 213 bis 218 in form of a CD

Brochure: For a better future- projects realised in the allotment gardens

Activity report 2007-2010 of the central federation

Financial report 2007-2010 of the central federation

Press-review 2010

b) Luxembourg

Publications 2011

Review. Garden and Home: 9 issues per year

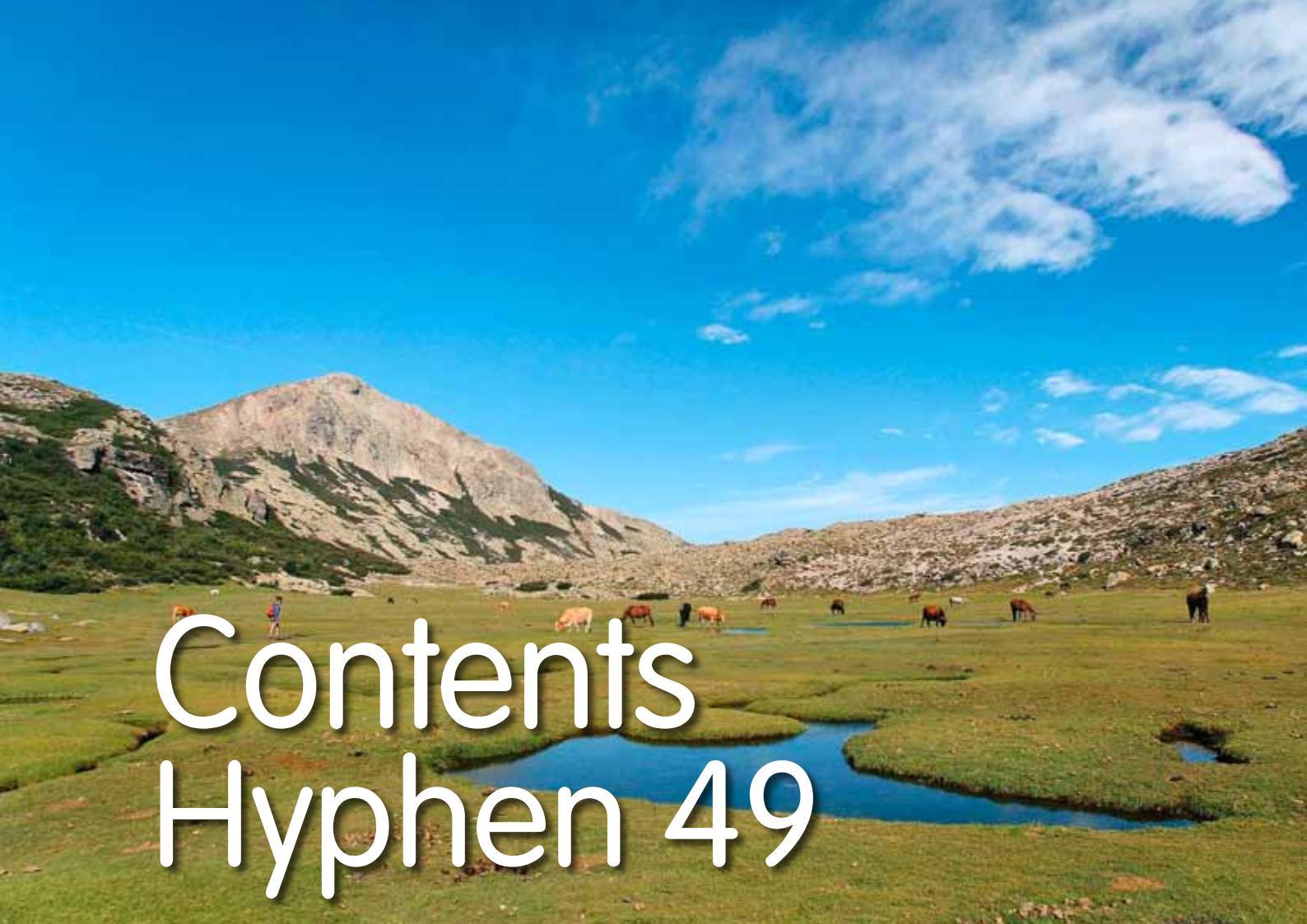
Pocket booklet 2012

c) Switzerland

Publications:

2nd edition of the brochure: The allotment cultivated in a nature friendly way

Information leaflet on wild bees and bees in the garden



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 - Transfrontier co-operation and landscapes: Walloon experiences



The experience of France's transfrontier workshops for identifying and assessing landscapes

Jean-François SEGUIN,

Chair of the Council of Europe Conference for the European Landscape Convention, Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Sea, France

We often hear it said that the European Landscape Convention is a groundbreaking instrument. Is there any truth to this claim or is it merely one of those trite statements of the kind that has become traditional at international gatherings ?

In my view, and this will come as no surprise to anyone, the European Landscape Convention genuinely breaks new ground. It has generated real, significant progress in the landscape policy implemented in France, and probably in many other countries besides. This progress has been made possible because the Convention has turned several of our habits, and even some of our firmly held beliefs, on their head. It has changed our conception of landscape in several fun-

damental ways. The innovations that the Convention brings are not actually original and the concepts behind them had been articulated before by various scientists, notably geographers and sociologists. These concepts, however, had not yet, or only barely, begun to creep into legal instruments. This incorporation of research into a legal text was in large part due to the efforts of Yves Luginbühl, one of the two authors of the non-legal version of the convention. Such understanding between researchers and administrators remains all too rare and is one of those challenges that still needs to be addressed.

The European Landscape Convention provides that "identification and assessment procedures shall be guided

by the exchanges of experience and methodology, organised between the Parties at European level pursuant to Article 8" which states that "the Parties undertake to co-operate in order to enhance the effectiveness of measures taken under other articles of this Convention, and in particularto render each other technical and scientific assistance in landscape matters through the pooling and exchange of experience, and the results of research projects".

In order to give practical effect to these provisions and, at the same time, prepare a new version of the "Méthode pour des Atlas de paysages" ("Landscape Atlases Method") used in France since 1994, in 2005 the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable

Development and Maritime Affairs began holding transfrontier workshops on the identification and assessment of landscapes:

- Transfrontier workshop with the Walloon Region,
- Transfrontier workshop with Spain,
- Transfrontier workshop with Italy,
- Transfrontier workshop with England,
- Transfrontier workshop with Catalonia.

The French "Landscape Atlases Method" is constantly being improved by these exchanges of experience and methodology, in 2005 with the Walloon Region, in 2006 with Spain, in 2007 with Italy, in 2008 with England and in 2009 with Catalonia.

The idea behind these workshops is quite simple: in principle, landscapes form a continuum that does not stop at national borders. The workshops are held in areas which, although separated by a border between states, have common geographical and landscape features. These proximities and similarities make it possible to draw valid comparisons between the methods used and the results achieved.

Work starts well before the actual workshop, with documents being assembled and sent out to participants a month in advance. The workshop itself begins in the field, where participants can compare and contrast what they discover there with the description of

the landscape provided, according to the methods used on both sides of the border. This vital "grounding" exercise continues in the classroom with an in-depth discussion and exchange of views. The workshop ends with participants formulating the conclusions together, which are displayed "live" on a screen.

In an effort to keep costs down, the workshops are run on a voluntary basis: everyone pays their own travel and subsistence costs and local resources are made available by the relevant Regional Department of the Environment in France. The number of participants is deliberately kept to around 30 to encourage everyone to take an active part in the proceedings. Most of the time, no translation is provided, with participants being asked instead to speak in their own language. This helps to avoid misunderstandings, as more often than not, the language being used as a means of communication distorts the true meaning of the vocabulary of landscape. Where necessary, however, individuals who are bilingual are invited to explain the meaning of certain words or concepts. This is very important because the landscape terms used in the different languages are littered with faux amis. As a regular at these transfrontier workshops, I have given up trying to find "literal" translations of words, preferring instead to look for equivalent terms in the different languages, cultures or scientific and technical vocabularies.

Each workshop looks at a particular aspect of the process of identifying and assessing landscapes, with the Walloons, the focus was on the synopsis, i.e. all the themes and topics to be explored, with the Spanish, it was on landscape units, structures and elements, with the Italians, consideration for local perceptions, with the English, the dynamics and with the Catalans, the use made of the Landscape Atlases. A few experts or practitioners from other European countries or related disciplines (such as landscape ecology) are always invited as well, helping to produce more considered and better-thought-out conclusions. When it comes to landscapes, you can never have too much brainpower.

As I see it, this "meeting of minds" is one of the main contributions of the European Landscape Convention. The transfrontier workshops are a good example of this not only because various parties to the Convention attend them, but also because they bring together representatives of public authorities, states, regions, provinces and municipalities, scientists, practitioners and NGOs. All of which goes to show that a lightweight structure, where each individual makes a contribution, can be an effective and useful complement to the Council of Europe Meetings of the workshops for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention.

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Transfrontier co-operation and landscapes: Walloon experiences

Gislaine Devillers, First Officer, Public Service of Wallonia, DG04

Mireille Deconinck, Officer, Public Service of Wallonia

Although a modestly sized region, Wallonia has frontiers stretching for 1,231 kilometres. France, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Germany and the Netherlands, without forgetting the Flemish region, border Wallonia, although there are no real physical barriers to mark its limits. Given this context, transfrontier co-operation becomes significant. Indeed, a large part of the Walloon population lives close to a frontier and its landscapes have no administrative limits.

The European Landscape Convention, in force in Belgium since 2005 and ratified by the Walloon region since 2001, foresees a series of particular measures including the identification and description of landscapes, mutual assistance and exchange of information, and its application in transfrontier landscapes (articles 6, 7, 8 and 9).

Subtly combining all these measures, Wallonia has undertaken a series of

actions, some completed, others still in progress.

The France-Wallonia transfrontier Workshop and landscape atlases

Since 1994 in France, the Minister of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Maritime Affairs has been developing landscape atlases. Since 2001, work of a similar nature has been envisaged in Wallonia. The Workshop organised at Montherme in September 2005 aimed to give rise to



an exchange of experiences about the task of identifying and qualifying landscapes and to reflect on operational improvement of the method.

One of the results of this exchange was the elaboration of a “reading grid of landscape atlases” presenting the constitutive elements of such a document.

Reassured by this transfrontier Workshop, the Walloon region then decided to launch itself into the production of landscape atlases and to entrust their realisation to the Permanent Conference of Territorial Development (Cpdt), with the help of a working group con-

stituted of experts in the field.

At the start of the work of the “Landscape Territories of Wallonia”, the territorial scale chosen was landscape groups. Wallonia has thirteen.

The “Landscape Atlases of Wallonia” were conceived as tools to spread knowledge, raise awareness and improve management. Amply illustrated, they are designed to be accessible to a wide public, from citizens who are simply curious or love their region to policy makers, and including members of different associations.

The first volume of this collection,

which, when finished, will cover the whole of Wallonia, was published at the beginning of 2008 and concerns the landscape group of l'Entre-Vesdre-et-Meuse, a territory bordering the Netherlands and Germany. It is possible to consult and download it on the website of the Cpdt.

The first part of the Atlas helps the reader to understand the formation of the Walloon landscapes, specifically those of l'Entre-Vesdre-et-Meuse. It provides the key principles for reading current landscapes as well as showing the pressures to which these landscapes are subjected. In the second part, the reader can discover the elements which characterise more local landscapes, as well as the issues which arise as a consequence of the observations made; issues to do with conservation, management and landscape planning.

The Interreg projects

The EU structural funds have been, for some local institutions and people interested in territorial issues, an opportunity to develop a landscape project in partnership with the administration.

The Deux Ourthes Natural Park, associated with the Hëllef fir d'Natur Foundation of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, for example, has produced a “topo guide” to transfrontier hiking entitled: “La Traversée des Pays et des Ages” (Travelling through countries and time).

The goal of this project is ambitious and has several aspects; it links the development of sustainable tourism, raising the awareness of populations about their surroundings and the enhanced value of the landscape heritage of the Ardennes.

The guide describes the exceptional views which are dotted here and there along the walk, but also the landscapes which although seeming at first glance not very spectacular, actually conceal the traces of an often unknown past. Ruins of buildings,

ancient agrarian structures, place names.....All these elements deserve as much attention as the landscapes considered “remarkable” and can improve interpretation of a landscape, understanding of its issues, determination of the pressures which affect it and its probable evolution.

These descriptions and analysis are presented through an original and attractive introductory key. In fact, whether it is a Roman road, major cadastral axes put in place in Antiquity or a postal route used at the dawn of modern times, the routes shown in “Travelling through countries and time” all have a long history.

The 48 km hike is marked out, as are routes allowing a shorter walk.

The topo guide is accompanied by a map (scale 1:25,000) showing the different routes. It also includes a series of useful addresses (accommodation, restaurants.....).

Another project financed by the Interreg IV funds has just begun. It con-

cerns the creation of a transfrontier photographic observatory of landscape.

This project began in 2007 thanks to the resolve of the French side of the Natural Regional Park of Scarpe-Escaut and the Walloon side of the Natural Park of the Plains of Escaut, brought together in the Transfrontier Natural Park of Hainaut, to commit themselves to improving knowledge of these landscapes and to following their transformations.

The observatory is destined to illustrate the territory and its future on the basis of participation by citizens. It could constitute a tool to help make decisions, in order to safeguard harmony between current landscapes and those of the future.

The project links a technical approach and a sensitive approach. Indeed, the transfrontier observatory of landscape aims to be:

- an instrument of knowledge: to understand and record the diversity of

landscapes thanks to the creation of a photographic collection;

- an instrument of analysis: to observe and evaluate the evolutions of landscapes, whether rapid or slow;
- an instrument of mobilisation: to raise awareness and involve the different actors and inhabitants in the evolution of local landscapes.

This project was inspired by other experiments run in Wallonia, France, and even other countries. It is supported by a driving committee which is transfrontier and is now in its initial phase.

It is therefore too early to learn from it; the lessons will emerge later.

Other experiments could have been discussed here but these few examples illustrate the manner in which the Walloon region respects the engagements which it has undertaken by ratifying the European Landscape Convention.

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