

European Forum of Heritage Associations

Minutes of the 13th General Assembly

FORUM's 13th General Assembly was held from November 7th to November 9th 2003 in Tarquinia, Italy, hosted by the Italian Association CIRA – Centro Internazionale Ricerche Archeologiche Ludovico Magrini. The Association, which submitted a request to join Forum during Hasselt meeting last June, and which was accepted in Forum during the Assembly, is dedicated to the memory of Ludovico Magrini.

Thanks to his ideas, his activities and his efforts, more than 30 years ago some volunteers began their activities in the field of heritage. Ludovico had the courage of introducing volunteers in a world which was populated only by professionals; he had intuitions about international co-operation long before Europe and European Union began to operate. Ludovico was the organiser of the first international meetings of heritage volunteers: a group of people, coming from different European countries, who wanted to work together, to share projects, to exchange participants. It was the beginning of Forum.

This is the reason why the meeting was dedicated to the memory of Ludovico Magrini, born in Tarquinia, in the 11th anniversary of his death.

Opening procedures

The General Secretariat evaluated the quorum. There were delegates present from:

- Jeugd, Cultuur en Wetenschap (Belgium), represented by Forum President Tony Waegeman;
- Archeolo j (Belgium), represented by Forum Treasurer Catherine Breyer;
- REMPART (France), represented by Antoine Monpert;
- Archeoclub d'Italia, represented by Gerolamo Fazzini (Venice seat) and by Pasqualino ... (Martinsicuro seat);
- Centro Polesano Studi Storici Archeologici Etnografici (Italy), represented by Forum General Secretary Adriana Martini;
- Gruppi Archeologici d'Italia, represented by Matteo Borrini;
- Gruppi Archeologici del Veneto (Italy), represented by Forum Deputy General Secretary Giorgio Mastella.

There were delegates from the Associations which submitted their membership request in Hasselt:

- Teresa Magrini for C.I.R.A.;
- Roberto Cavallini for Aurelia

Maya Vaptzarova, representative of the Vaptzarov Foundation, who came personally in Hasselt to present her Association, was not in Tarquinia because she was a candidate in the local elections which had to take place in Bulgaria in the same days of the General Assembly. She wrote a letter to the Assembly in order to explain her impossibility of coming to Italy and her willingness to co-operate with Forum. She also invited all Forum Associations in Bulgaria, offering to organise next General Assembly. The issue was discussed during the last session, when the Assembly decides indicative dates and places for the following meeting.

Some associations sent a delegation:

- ANGO (FINLAND): Lena Hakulin sent her delegation to Adriana Martini;

- Arbeitskreis Denkmalpflege e. V. (Germany): Berth Ludwig sent his delegation to Adriana Martini;
- NJBG (The Netherlands): Mira Spijker sent her delegation to Giorgio Mastella;
- Arqueojovem (PORTUGAL): Luis Oosterbeek sent his delegation to Tony Waegeman;
- CESMAP (Italy): Dario Seglie sent his delegation was sent to Adriana Martini

Some Associations were absent:

- Archaia (Czech Republic);
- Council For British Archaeology (United Kingdom)
- Centro de Archeologia de Almada

Summing up:

7 Associations present with delegates
5 Associations present with delegation
3 Associations absent

With 12 Associations out of 15 the quorum was reached.

Counting the 3 new Association which asked to enter Forum, 2 delegates and one delegation add. The total is then:

9 Associations present with delegates
6 Associations present with delegation
3 Associations absent

Total: 15/18.

This year the Associação Portuguesa de Arqueologia Industrial was officially considered out of Forum, since it is the third year we have no news and no inscription fee from the Association.

The situation of another Association, Sammerslutningen af Danske Amatørarkeologer, has been considered in a different way. There were a lot of contacts between Forum Board members (General Secretary and President) and the representatives of the Association, and it was clear that they intended to continue the co-operation despite a difficult moment. They had no chance to send somebody to Tarquinia, nor to have a person following Forum matters.

Due also to the old friendship with Lucy Bergström and his husband Eigil Nikolajsen, members of Forum since the very beginning, the Assembly accepted – in agreement with the representatives as well – to consider the Association temporarily “sleeping”.

Contacts will be kept, they will go on receiving communications and they will be invited to all the meetings and the initiatives. As soon as there will be someone able to follow again international matters in the Association, we will be glad to welcome them again in the network.

New memberships

Concerning new memberships, the Association REMPART proposed to prepare an official inscription request, where to specify what are the prerequisites and the documents Forum needs to accept a new Association in the network. The Assembly agreed with the proposal.

The representatives of the three new Associations described briefly the activities they carry on; Adriana Martini did it on behalf of Maya Vaptzarova.

The main feature of CIRA – as explained by Teresa Magrini – is to be the research study which monitors possibilities, opportunities and working conditions for volunteers in the field of heritage. Forum will always be informed on the requests and the problems of volunteers in the different nations of Europe.

Aurelia works “with volunteers for volunteers”: its structure allows other Associations of volunteers to carry on their projects finding spaces, opportunities, contacts and logistic support. Aurelia works not only with heritage associations, but with other cultural groups dealing with theatre or music.

Vaptzarov Foundation links the activities in the field of heritage with the social commitment. Archaeological studies and didactical activities are seen also as a way of helping abandoned children or people with learning problems. This feature is not very common in Forum Associations and the Foundation intends to share its know how and its activities in order to spread this working method.

Financial matters and future activities

Forum Treasurer Catherine Breyer presented the budget.

The money of the European Union gave us a lot of possibilities and had a very significant meaning as well: Forum was recognised by the European structure.

Unfortunately, if Forum does not have a paid person working permanently in the structure, it will be impossible to get other grants with the new rules. This problem aroused a discussion about the possibilities of the network and its future development.

The need of a more time-available structure to follow the matters of the Secretariat was then compared to the actual answer of the Associations. Last year, for instance, President sent by paper mail a big dossier to all the Associations concerning European Projects and had NO reply at all. The question was then: do Forum need a more effective structure when the reply is absent? Is it worth to try?

Concerning the budget there was a proposal of Archeoclub, which suggested to invest our surplus in the co-financing of an European project or to use the amount to pay a young person with experience in the field of European projects.

Another proposal of Aurelia was that Forum could act as a sort of “Scientific Committee”, supporting other Associations in their projects. This activity of expertise will not be a paid activity, as Forum is not intended to be a consulting firm, but the success of the activities carried on by a single Association with the aid and the co-operation of Forum could be shared among the whole network.

Forum projects 2003

The participants at the Assembly presented the results of their summer camps in 2003 and already some initiatives for 2004. It was an important moment where everyone could see, in the end, which were the results of all the organization efforts carried on by each Association.

There was the proposal to invite all the Association to participate to next events like this with a written text, possibly in more languages, in order for Forum to distribute it among the network. It could be a very interesting way of spreading the information and to share knowledge.

President and Board Elections

The General Assembly was called to elect the President for the years 2003, 2004, 2005, since the mandate of Tony Waegeman was at its end. Before the Assembly the General Secretary contacted all the Associations to ask for candidatures.

During these contacts no candidates emerged, even if there were some proposals indicating Adriana Martini as possible candidate. At the moment of the elections she accepted the candidature and the Assembly elected her as new President with the totality of the votes.

There were then the elections of the Board, which resulted to be the following:

Tony Waegeman – JCW – Belgium Flanders – Vice President
Antoine Monpert – REMPART – France – General Secretary
Catherine Breyer – Archeolo-J – Belgium Wallonia – Treasurer
Maya Vaptzarova – Vaptzarov Foundation – Bulgaria
Roberto Cavallini – Aurelia – Italy
Giorgio Mastella – GADV – Italy

The new President Adriana Martini, in its first speech as President, ensured continuity with the long and constant work of Tony Waegeman, with the intent of promoting the evolution of the network with new initiatives and with a much more intense work, with the co-operation of all the members of the new Board and of all the new Associations.

Next appointments

Gerolamo Fazzini invited all the members of Board Associations in Venice for February. This appointment will have some important meanings:

- presenting 2004 activities in advance, with the possibility of sharing them from the very beginning with the rest of the network;
- visiting the island of Lazzaretto Nuovo, where Archeoclub of Venice works since many years sharing the efforts with a lot of Forum volunteers;
- expanding the meeting calendar, not only with General Assemblies, but also with other appointments opened to all the Associations;
- Carnival party (it's February, it's in Venice...)

The General Secretariat will contact all the Associations in co-operation with Archeoclub in order to arrange the event.

Maya Vaptzarova, in her letter where she explains the reason for not coming to Tarquinia, invites Forum in Bulgaria for the next General Assembly. The Assembly accepted the proposal and the President Adriana Martini will contact Maya in order to define more details and to inform Secretariat; afterwards the Secretariat will inform all the Associations and will make the convocations.

UISPP Congress

During the Assembly Adriana Martini read a letter of Luis Oosterbeek of the Association Arqueojovem. Luis is one of the organizers of the next worldwide meeting of UISPP, the International Union of Pre-historical and Proto-historical Sciences.

There could be the possibility of repeating the experience of Forlì 1996, where the previous edition of the congress was carried on also with the aid of 120 Forum volunteers from all around Europe. They worked as translators, as press office, as staff members for organisation and in a lot of other ways, but at the same time they had the chance of meeting all the most important experts in the field of pre-history, creating useful contacts and finding extraordinary working experiences in their country and abroad.

Adriana Martini will go on keeping contacts with Luis Oosterbeek, since the Assembly expressed its highest interest in this initiative.

Official meeting in Tarquinia Town Hall

Forum delegates took part to a meeting in Tarquinia town hall. There was the vice-major of the city and the responsible for culture.

Adriana Martini, Tony Waegeman and Teresa Magrini spoke about Forum, about its long story and all the initiatives which were taken during the years, remembering the importance of the ideas and the first activities carried on by Ludovico.

The major of Martinsicuro, a town in Abruzzo, in the Adriatic coast of Italy, came to present a project carried on in her city. She explained how the cooperation between institutions, volunteers and professionals can be fruitful. The meeting was then a chance to propose some activities in Tarquinia as well, so Ludovico's city begins to enjoy again the results of Ludovico's efforts, following the example of Martinsicuro.

End of the Assembly

Before the end of the works, all the participants expressed their gratitude to Teresa Magrini, of C.I.R.A. for the hospitality, for the organisation and especially for giving everyone the chance of visiting one of the most important archaeological findings in Tarquinia. The painted tomb of "Demoni azzurri" (blue demons) was discovered in the late 1980's and it is currently closed to the public: few people had the chance of visiting it, and Forum delegates are now among them.

Before the conclusion, all the delegates took part to a religious ceremony to commemorate Ludovico Magrini.