

**Activity Report for ICOM Europe 2007-2008  
By Udo Goesswald, Chairman**

**1. Communicating Europe in its Museums**

**One of the essential goals of ICOM Europe, as it is spelled out in its mission statement, is to foster the debate about how Europe's changing cultural identity is being reflected in its museums. With the first edition of the ICOM Europe brochure "Views and Activities" under the heading "The New Face of Europe in its Museums" the chairman has - so to speak - suggested a path of discussion that has been very well received. Meanwhile four thousand copies have been disseminated, most of them at the General Conference in Vienna, but also at various conferences that ICOM Europe participated in: the conference "Best in Heritage" in Dubrovnik, the EXPONATEC in Cologne, the conference "Towards the future of museums" in Warsaw, the opening of the French "Year of Intercultural Dialogue" at the UNESCO in Paris, the conference on the "Return of Cultural Objects to their Countries of Origin" in Athens and at the annual conference of young museum professionals in Frankfurt.**

**Besides these visible activities reference to European topics is most likely to be inherent to any communication by the Chairman and the Board, when planning joint activities with ICOM members and National Committees. The communication with the Chair of ICOM SEE, Mila Popovic-Zivancevic, continued and included an invitation to a meeting in Podgorace in Serbia that the Chair could not attend. The friendly invitation by the Chair of ICOM Poland, Dorata Folgata, and the Mazowikian Region to its national museum conference "Towards the future of Museums" was very much appreciated. ICOM Germany's Chair York Langenstein gave the Chairman the floor at its National Meeting in Munich to outline ICOM Europe's planned activities. The spreading of information about the "Night of Museums" in Europe to all National Committees was most appreciated by the organizers and also supplemented by an official press release of ICOM Europe. The Chairman also received invitations to present ICOM Europe by ICOMOS in Hanshou, China, and by ASPAC in Seoul, Korea, that he could not accept due to lack of time and very short-term notification. Due to the intensive support of ICOM Europe the Children's Museum Association "HANDSonEUROPE" was finally accepted as affiliated member of ICOM.**

**In order to continue with the well accepted communication strategy the Board has decided that the second edition of "Views and Activities" should be published soon. Negotiations with the Museum of Europe in Brussels will hopefully lead to a sponsorship of this publication.**

## **2. Museums for Cultural Understanding**

**Unfortunately the plans to continue cooperation with ICOM Arab have been put on ice for the time being. The planned meeting of the Boards and a workshop about creating exhibitions in Morocco had to be cancelled, because of developments and problems within the National Committee of ICOM Morocco. Plans to shift the meeting to Aswan, Egypt, did not yet lead to a concrete perspective. Of great importance, though, was the lecture given by the Chair of ICOM Arab, Chedlia Annabi, at the Dubrovnik Global Heritage Forum about “Stolen Cultural Property from the Arab Region” that ICOM Europe had organized in Dubrovnik. At the same event Bernice Murphy, Chair of the ICOM Ethics Committee, from Australia talked about repatriation of cultural goods in her country. The discussion was recorded and is part of the DVD-documentation of the conference “Best in Heritage”.**

**The focus on south-eastern Europe was continued with preparations for the ICOM Europe Tour 2008. The Chair visited Skopje in FYR Macedonia and was hosted and welcomed by the Chair of its National Committee, Zaharinka Baceva. In the region of Macedonia in northern Greece, the Chair visited museums in Vergina and Thessaloniki, which will both be venues on the tour. Further contacts have been made to museums in Albania and Turkey. We hope this meeting will contribute to raising more topics for discussion and finalize the itinerary. Initiatives were started to find sponsoring and support for the tour. So far the German Foreign Ministry has agreed to pay for the bus from Tirana to Thessaloniki. An application was also sent the European Cultural Foundation in Amsterdam, which has not been decided on, yet. The Board welcomes any further help by all European National Committees.**

## **3. Museum Training and Workshops**

**We were very glad to hear that the Baltic Summerschool of Museology is continuing its activities successfully and is receiving more support from the involved governments in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. With the third workshop of European institutions on Museum Training at the University of Arts in Berlin that ICOM Europe is a partner of a fruitful dialogue of – for the moment – the German speaking countries Germany, Austria and Switzerland plus the Netherlands has continued. It is obvious that for students and teachers the European network is of growing importance. There are plans to expand the exchange with institutions in the United States, the UK, Scandinavia and Australia.**

**ICOM Europe has also continued its contact with Chinese museums, especially in the region of Henan. Together with the Academy for Cultural Professions in Wolfenbüttel, Germany, ICOM Europe is in the middle of negotiations to create a 10-day workshop for young Chinese professionals in cooperation with German museums in 2009.**

**First contacts have also been made to the British Council in London that is organizing seminars in the Gulf region and wants to cooperate with us.**

#### **4. Special European Issues**

**The hosting and organization of a debate on “Reclaiming Cultural Property” at the Dubrovnik Global Heritage Forum in cooperation with the European Heritage Organization and the conference “Best in Heritage” was one of the major activities in late 2007. It was designed to spread information about this difficult topic that is of high importance for European museums. The participants of the session have already been named above. These activities led to an invitation by the Greek Ministry of Culture and UNESCO to the Chair to a conference in Athens on the return of cultural goods to their countries of origin in April 2008. In close cooperation with Bernice Murphy the Chair wrote up and presented a statement for ICOM and represented the President.**

**With the conference “Migration in Museums – Narratives of Diversity in Europe” that will take place in October 2008 in Berlin ICOM Europe is partner of the European Network of Migration and presenting an issue that our agenda has given special consideration. The call for participation has been circulated through H-Museum Net. Throughout 2007 the application was written and a concept for the conference was developed. Fortunately it gained funding by the prestigious Hauptstadtkulturfonds of the city of Berlin and will take place in Berlin museums that have intensively dealt with the issue. Merete Ipsen, Chair of ICOM Denmark, and Michael Ryan, Chair of ICOM Ireland and Isabelle Benoit, Board Member of ICOM Europe from Brussels, were chosen to be among the specially invited ICOM members.**

**Presented at the General Meeting of ICOM Europe in the Jewish Museum, Paris, June 1, 2008.**