

Transcript:

Workshop 2005:

“European Identities: Shifting Borders, Changing Identities” (Working Title)

**ICOM Ukraine, ICOM Belarus, ICOM Litauen,
ICOM Europe (Patron)**

Planning Meeting on 09.04.2005, Trakai Historical Museum, Lithuania, 10.00h

Participants:

Alexander Kalbaska, ICOM Belarus (Chair)

Virgilius Poviliūnas, ICOM Lithuania (Chair)

Zenoviyk Mazuryk, ICOM Ukraine (Conference Coordinator for Ukraine)

Hans-Martin Hinz, ICOM Europe (Chair)

Katja Rossocha, ICOM Europe (ICOM Manager)

Project:

After the successful workshop series “Museums in Post-Communist Times,” which took place in Tver/Russia, Minsk/Belarus, and Berlin/Germany during 2003 and 2004, ICOM Belarus and ICOM Germany proposed more events of this kind. In addition, the current Board of ICOM Europe has identified Eastern Europe as a “focal point” for activities in its first years of existence. Since the definition of the EU’s new borders (May 2004), ICOM Europe hopes to contribute to international cooperation through work in the museum sector; it aims to prevent new exclusions and to define Europe as a whole entity.

A particularity of the region is the frequent change in identity, because often countries have belonged to various sovereign states during a short period of time. The core issue posed at a joint conference in fall 2005 will be about how museums treat identity and a sense of changing national belonging in a strongly internationalising European environment. The concrete project involves a Workshop series in the countries of Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine, during which the effects of changing identities and their consequences in the museum world will be examined. The series, entitled “Shifting Borders – Changing Identities” will introduce and analyse conditions, problems, and results of this new orientation in museum work.

A first meeting of the organisers was held in L’viv/Ukraine in October 2004. Colleagues from Belarus, Germany, and Ukraine were present; however those from Lithuania could not attend due to visa problems. The remaining conference locations – Vilnius/Lithuania and Brest/Belarus – must still be visited. That way, the various organisers from different countries will have the opportunity to get to know the situation of each location and can agree to a balanced seminar.

In Trakai Hans-Martin Hinz greeted participants from Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. He particularly thanked the President of ICOM Lithuania Virgilius Poviliūnas as host for his hospitality and the smooth coordination of the meeting in Lithuania. The transcript of the last meeting in L’viv was distributed in German and English, as were letters to the cultural ministers of Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine, respectively, written by Mr. Hinz in his role as President of ICOM Europe and patron to the meeting. Finally, a reply by the Belarussian Vice Minister for Culture was handed out, in which he announced his participation and support of the conference in Brest.

Mr. Hinz confirmed that there had been attention to the proposed seminar (captured on the homepages of ICOM World in Paris, as well as ICOM Europe, ICOM Germany and in the calendar section of the last ICOM News). ICOM Germany, Netherlands and Turkey have already expressed interest in participating.

For the discussion on that day, Mr. Hinz saw three main themes as fundamental:

- 1) Discussion about the content of the Workshop in each of the three cities
- 2) Organisation
- 3) Finances

Mr. Hinz also reminded everyone of the changes to the itinerary: the Workshop would begin in Vilnius, continue in Brest, and finish in L'viv, in order to avoid overlapping with a trade fair in L'viv.

There remained the question about bus rental – should the bus be rented in Ukraine or in Lithuania? A Ukrainian bus company had been asked for estimates. The decision was made to request one additional estimate in April from a company in Lithuania and in Ukraine, respectively (Mr. Poviliúnas, Mr. Mazuryk). The bus should be a modern touring vehicle with a 40-person capacity. Mr. Hinz announced that the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin had agreed to finance the bus up to a fixed amount. Mr. Mazuryk explained that he had talked to a bus company and would receive a price quote for a bus with 50-person capacity with two drivers who could alternate, fuel prices included. The route was still in question: perhaps it would be better to drive through Poland. It was agreed that in the coming two weeks the group would consider an “all-inclusive” offer, namely one with payment of driver, kilometer amount, additional trips within each city, lodging, amount of visa for the drivers, etc.

The Coordinator of the conference, Alexander Kalbaska, took the podium: “Let’s start to discuss the content!” The basis of the Workshop series should be that Chairs from each of the respective countries – Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine – should organize their own segments of the conference program. Kalbaska suggested that there should be three main themes in each city – themes tailored to the situation of the individual location. The opening lecture on the first day would speak to the framework of the entire conference and each subsequent lecture would offer greater detail. Mr. Hinz offered to give a first short speech on the first evening in Vilnius as patron of the Workshop series. This was gratefully approved by his colleagues.

The framework appears as follows:

In Vilnius (Lithuania); 17.-19. September 2005:

- Opening lecture for the entire Workshop
- European identity or European diversity?
- Development of international cooperation
- Cooperation between archives, libraries and museums

In Brest (Belarus); 19.-21. September 2005:

- Opening lecture (?)
- Identity crisis or search for diversity?
- Problems in the border city of Brest
- And – connected to this – war conflicts: how are wars researched and communicated in museums?

In L'viv (Ukraine), 21.-24. September 2005

- Opening lecture (?)
- Recent local and cultural developments in L'viv: the role of museums in national identity and the preservation of identity
- City on the boundaries of eras and cultures: intercultural cooperation
- History and cultural history of neighboring states as seen through museums

Mr. Kalbaska talked further about the state of plans in Belarus: the authors and lecturers would be chosen according to the financial planning of ICOM. Currently, there would be 10 participants; however, they were waiting for a decision about financial support – with increased support, they could accept additional participants. Mr. Kalbaska said that they would meet with the directorship of the museum in Brest after May 9 (the museum would be in a planning stage until then).

Mr. Mazyruk reported from Ukraine that they had already compiled the lectures and proceeded to read the titles (which fit excellently into the program). He suggested he would send them to his colleagues on email. He further conveyed that Mr. Voznitsky would speak about national identity and he himself would cover changes in museums. He also had turned to the government in Kiev for financial support of the conference; however, since the Workshop would deal with problems specific to L'viv, he had not yet received an answer. Mr. Mazyruk now would be looking to the connection between ethnographic museums between Ukraine and Poland, in order to analyse and exchange information about their shared cultural patrimony.

Mr. Poviliūnas described the state of planning for the portion organized by ICOM Lithuania until now: on April 13 there would be a board meeting in which the content would be determined. In the next month, the results would be forwarded to other participants. He would discuss finances with the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture about underwriting the conference. He imagined that the conference would spend one day in Vilnius and one in Trakai. On the first evening there would be a medieval banquet at the Water Palace of the Historical Museum Trakai. This would also be the location for the Workshop since the room had enough seating for 70 to 80 participants.

Mr. Hinz suggested that everyone jointly choose a keynote speaker for the scholarly introduction to the topic. He recalled a conversation he had had the day before with Professor Vladimir Dounaev, the Director of the Exile University of the European Humanities University (EHU) in Minsk. Prof. Dounaev had called attention to the newly instituted course "Border Studies," which seemed to get at the core themes of the Workshop. Mr. Hinz urged everyone toward a speedy decision on this matter.

Furthermore, he asked whether lecturers would also ride in the bus. Mr. Mazyruk explained that most lecturers were not yet certain whether they would be able to follow the conference to all its locations. Mr. Poviliūnas asked whether there would be a participation fee – at least for those who were not speaking or were not members of ICOM or were not from the countries involved, for example participants from Poland or Romania. Mr. Hinz commented that participants already would be paying a great deal: arrival and departure, a week of hotels, etc. Therefore, it would be wise not to charge an additional fee. Mr. Poviliūnas replied that 40 participants would be ideal for the capacity of the museums and for the booking of hotels, since many tourists still visit Lithuania and especially Vilnius in the month of September.

The composition of the bus was still in question. Mr. Hinz calculated: 6 to 8 speakers from each of the three countries (=24 people) – should they also take the bus? Probably not. In any case, representatives from ICOM Belarus, ICOM Lithuania, ICOM Ukraine, ICOM Germany, and ICOM Europe should have seats on the bus, as should interested participants and a journalist. Would there be additional people? It was agreed that the committees would think about this question and make a list before the next meeting. At least in every location, it would be possible for those interested to participate in the program of lectures.

The respective ICOM Presidents should moderate the Workshop discussions at each location. Welcoming remarks by the patron of the event could also be given in each city. Mr. Hinz recommended that Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Culture be invited. In addition, a journalist had approached Mr. Hinz at another conference in Berlin and expressed his interest in the Workshop series. All were in agreement that Mr. Hinz should initiate contact with this journalist.

Mr. Mazyruk and Mr. Poviliúnas stated their desire to organize a large press conference in L'viv and Vilnius, respectively.

Everyone asserted that they would try to find additional sponsors, for example for the hotels. In Ukraine, they were still looking. Mr. Poviliúnas also wanted to look for further sponsors, for coffee breaks, etc. The same was true for Belarus – Mr. Kalbaska would try to secure a more reasonably-priced hotel (ca. US \$20) after May 9.

The language of the conference would be Russian, which would mean that only the representatives of ICOM Europe and Germany would require translators. During lectures, they would sit together in a specific area and receive quiet simultaneous translation. This would not be necessary on the bus.

In the end, Mr. Kalbaska read out the planned itinerary:

- Sat., 17.9. Afternoon: opening at the Trakai Palace
Evening: medieval banquet
- Sun., 18.9. From 10h on: lectures and museum visits in Vilnius
- Mon., 19.9. Morning and noon: lectures and museum visits in Vilnius
Afternoon and evening: continuation to Brest (4-6 hours, depending how difficult the border crossing is)
Evening: arrival in Brest
- Tues., 20.9. (Opening?)
All day: lectures and museum visits
- Wed., 21.9. Morning and noon: lectures and museum visits in Brest
Afternoon: continuation to L'viv
Evening: arrival in L'viv
- Thurs., 22.9. All day: lectures and museum visits in L'viv
- Fri., 23.9. All day: lectures and museum visits in L'viv
- Sat., 24.9. Visit to palaces and castles in the environs of L'viv
- Sun., 25.9. Departure

End of the meeting circa 13.15h, after which participants visited the museum and water palace in Trakai.

Berlin, May 12 2005
Katja Rossocha