

February 2007

## Editorial

*The New Year saw the European family enlarging to include two new members. This new accession can only accentuate the pressing need for the Union to function smoothly in a clear institutional framework allowing our common institutions to meet our needs through the establishment of a legislative instrument defining our rules of governance.*

*Romania has joined us, accompanied by Bulgaria, having done a substantial amount of homework by introducing a property return mechanism, which although imperfect has the merit of allowing people to invest and start businesses in a more serene climate. Let us hope that Poland finally creates an instrument of social peace, a country which return only the church property. However, the willingness of the current government to reflect on the matter is anything but clear.*

*There are many areas left to be tackled by the new members, as accession was only a step – albeit a decisive one – in the implementation of reform. As a European organisation, we stand by our new citizens in order to allow them to introduce the criteria of European legislation which will affect our heritage, businesses, forests and farms.*

*The farmers and foresters of these countries will have to show themselves to be flexible and creative in all the tests awaiting them between now and 2013. They will need their 7 league boots to enter the age of third generation agriculture where the variety of rural products is multiplying – food and fibres, forestry products, rural buildings, fuel and biomass, leisure, flora and fauna, biodiversity, water and protection against floods, landscape and carbon sequestration. This challenge is a positive one and will enable us to strengthen our role in the long term.*

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE

# The European Union of 27



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**O**n 1st January 2007 Bulgaria and Romania became full members of the European Union, which now has 27 member states. Their accession after seven years of preparation closes the Union's sixth enlargement. However this is not an end in itself but a stage, albeit a decisive one, part of a long process launched after the transformations of 1989.

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### CountrySide

is a publication of ELO in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

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5 Euros

The governments of the two countries are aware that despite the profound reforms carried out in the run-up to accession, they must continue their efforts in order to, inter alia, fight scourges such as organized crime and corruption, adapt their judiciaries and guarantee food safety etc. In order to attain these objectives following accession, the European Commission presented a set of transitional measures intended to facilitate the integration of these two countries. This work will be carried out over the long term, and in certain sectors the transposition period will last until 2018.

“This enlargement has strengthened peace and has brought greater prosperity to Europe. This is the right decision for Bulgaria and Romania and the right decision for Europe”, declared Jose Manuel BARROSO. In this way the President of the Commission welcomed his two new Commissioners, the Bulgarian Meglena KUNEVA (in charge of consumer protection) and the Romanian Leonard ORBAN (responsible for multilingualism), who will occupy their posts until the end of the current Commission's mandate on 31st October 2009. The European Parliament also welcomed the new members. It now has 18 Bulgarian and 35 Romanian members of parliament, which has increased the number of MEPs from 732 to 785.

Public opinion tends to associate the image of Romania with a horse-drawn cart or Dracula, and Bulgaria with the 16th Soviet Republic. The 30 million new citizens (22 million in Romania, i.e. 5% of the EU population, and 7.8 million inhabitants in Bulgaria) will have much to do to change this impression. Even if the European tourist has already begun to discover new holiday destinations – the wonderful Romanian region of Bucovina for mountain walks, the Bulgarian mountain Pirin with its immense ski slopes, or the city of Sibiu (Romania) chosen this year as the European capital of culture – the most difficult times are yet to come. Usually favourable to new members, Ireland and the United Kingdom did not open their labour markets to these two new members. Having said that, the two new countries have a labour shortage themselves, as recently announced by the Romanian Prime Minister, and are opening up to Moldavian, Ukrainian or even Chinese workers. For 6 years the two economies have grown about 6% a year, and their construction sectors are booming.

### Romania

Bucharest has shown itself to be politically stable with resolutely pro-accession governments, and these political circumstances allowed a rapid response to the EU's expectations. But civil society will be faced with many



changes if the country's level of development is to catch up. The most urgent one is the development of transport and storage infrastructure, which are necessary if farm businesses are to increase their capacity to expand. With a land area of 238,391km<sup>2</sup>, Romania is a traditionally agricultural country. With 14 million hectares, crops and animals occupy almost two thirds of its territory which is a very different figure from the rest of Europe where the average is only 40% farmland. The production capacity of cereals (maize, sunflower, wheat) and meat is high but crops are exposed to a hard climate, with vines particularly suffering.

The situation linked to environmental protection is no less complex. The powers and the role of the ministry and the national environmental agency must be more precisely defined. More specific subjects, such as the transposition and implementation of legislation on water or waste, need tackling. The Commission has expressed doubts concerning the implementation of policy on nature protection, particularly with regard to the Natura 2000 network. The criteria used for identifying sites to be included in the Natura 2000 network have not been clearly defined, so there is plenty to discuss. Nonetheless, it must be underlined that the designation of the Natura 2000 sites is an exclusively national matter.

### Bulgaria

The political situation in Bulgaria is more complex, especially after the last elections. This has led to delays in the adoption of legislative texts also intended to transpose the *acquis communautaire*: for exam-



ple, in the area of water, where Bulgaria must adjust the Framework Directive to national law. A delay also affects the implementation of the Natura 2000 network and the creation of the register for assessing the environmental impact. The same applies to air quality and waste management. There is still work to be done in these and other areas.

With a land area covering 110,910 km<sup>2</sup>, over half of which is farmland (5.6 million hectares), Bulgarian agriculture significantly

contributes to national GNP. The climate is well-adapted to cereals (wheat, maize, sunflower), animal husbandry and the wine sector, but the main problem for the development of these sectors is the lack of qualified labour.

### Epilogue

Success in the process of accession of these two countries will be of crucial importance not only for themselves. Firstly not least due to the booming domestic and intra-European demand.

Any new accession to the EU is unlikely without the adoption of a new treaty. This is one of the points on the agenda of the German Presidency, but is only expected at the earliest in 2009.

All eyes are pinned on the capacity of the two new members to adapt to this complex reality, which is nonetheless greatly envied by other countries, be they European or not.

Secondly the external reasons are the emergence of a new geopolitical situation with a growing role for the Danube as a waterway, but above all with direct access to the Black Sea, which means there is the possibility of developing new markets, in particular the European agricultural market. In the current circumstances these aspects are more than positive and will strengthen the smooth functioning of the European Union and its role as a major player in the world.

■ Emmanuelle MIKOSZ

## EUROPEAN HISTORIC HOUSES (UEHHA)

# The Kurozweki Palace: return to a familial status

**T**he small circular fortress in this region of Poland on the banks of the unpredictable Black River (Czarna) is first mentioned in 1380. This is where a battalion of the victorious army encamped before the famous victory of the JAGELLONS in 1410 over the Teutonic knights at Grünewald (or Tannenberg). A knight called POPIEL was already present. Through marriage in 1833 with the heiress of the LANCOKORNSKI and SOLTYK, Pawel POPIEL moved his family definitively into this small palace completed in 1775 by the architect Ferdinand NAX.

Dear Governor,

A message of hope for culture and heritage from José Manuel BARROSO, President of the Commission and Jan FIGEL, Commissioner for Education and Culture.

On 5th December 2006 the Commission (Directorate General Education and Culture) had organised a public hearing for all the stakeholders from the cultural sector on the Communication about the Role of Culture in Europe. Among the 400 participants from the cultural sector only three organisations from the heritage sector participated to the conference, Associazione Dimore Storiche Italiane (ADSI), Europa Nostra and the European Historic Houses (UEHHA) representing all their member associations.

It was a unique opportunity for the stakeholders to express their view on the role of culture and to raise questions to the European Commission. While Europa Nostra issued a communication about the important challenges for the culture and the heritage in the European construction, both ADSI and UEHHA raised practical questions. ADSI promoted the idea of introducing a reduced VAT rate for restoration works to historic monuments and cultural goods. UEHHA focused on the important cultural and economic role of the heritage, as an important tool for European integration on one

hand and as an essential partner for the tourism sector in Europe, which is impossible to ignore on the other hand. UEHHA stresses that it is the role of the public authorities to restore a financial balance by transferring financial flows from the commercial sector to the non profit heritage and the cultural sectors.

The President of the Commission delivered some very strong messages to the audience putting culture on top of the European agenda after 2007, although it is a subsidiary matter to the Commission. José Manuel BARROSO admits the important role of culture in the European integration, especially after France and the Netherlands rejected the European constitution. Odile QUINTIN, Director General of DG Education and Culture, who moderated the session and her team, gave an outline of the Commissions cultural policy focusing on specific themes and setting priorities like integration, education, innovation, citizenship, mobility etc...

UEHHA will now prepare several projects in line with the European cultural policy which will be submitted to you for approval. We would also welcome your reactions and ideas.

Best wishes,  
■ Ghislain d'URSEL

Although Kraków escaped the ravages of the Second World War, this was not true for Kurozweki which for many months was on the front. The POPIEL sought exile in Belgium where many old friends awaited them. As a result Stanislas POPIEL had a brilliant career as a banker in the Congo while his son Jean-Martin, born in Brussels, completed his studies and began his professional life as an engineer in the watery sunshine of Scotland. During this time the château sank into the depths of Stalinism while the inhabitants of the village came to borrow materials to improve their lives. Only the baroque chapel was partially preserved from this plundering, thanks to the good soldiers of the red army who replaced the Virgin Mary with a stock of coal.

After serving as an extremely virtual cultural centre for 'right-thinking' writers and artists, the palace dug its heels into its political convictions by collapsing. Abbot Marcin POPIEL who had remained in the country, began to restore the ruins in 1989. He died in 1991 but his spirit was so inspiring that in

EUROPEAN HISTORIC HOUSES (UEHHA)

1994 Jean-Martin managed to purchase the pile of rubble plus 8 hectares for \$60,000. To do so he sold the family home in Belgium and the vast grounds surrounding it. Most of the revenue went to compensating the state for the consolidation of the ruins due to the war and years of neglect.

Where does a Pole begin whose roots lie lost in a mound of gravel? The answer is simple: with everything without neglecting anything! He had to learn the language, galvanize forces dormant for fifty years, reconstruct, modernize, embellish and transform this void, this barrel of the Danaïdes into a cornucopia. Success has been without a doubt due to the personality of Jean-Martin POPIEL and his Norwegian wife Karen. A good engineer's pension allowed this family man to feed his eight children. But above all he possessed the intellectual ability of a technician trained in the best possible innovations. The state did not hesitate to rent 405 hectares of the old estate to such a manager and to give him a huge milk quota

of 760,000 litres. As a result the agricultural activities and the stud farm rapidly became profitable. By restoring one of the old pavilions, the POPIELS attracted rural tourism and the money thereby generated was used to import bison from ... Belgium! In their climate of origin the bison thrived. Well-situated between Warsaw and Kraków, Kurozweki aroused the curiosity and then the enchantment of a public whose low purchasing power only permitted simple pastimes. The slightest profits were poured into renovating the buildings and the international media such as Time, Newsweek and National Geographic devoted several reports to the phenomenon, which created a virtuous circle with national television channels jumping on the bandwagon and prodding the administration into being generous. In a few years Kurozweki had become a place of pilgrimage for the middle and working classes eager to enjoy the beauty of the lakes, woods and wild animals in a safari atmosphere against a dignified aristocratic backdrop of former times. International founda-

tions made donations for this or that part of the work. As for Europe, it granted subsidies for the installation of an ultramodern kitchen with all modcons. After mass tourism an even more lucrative activity arrived, that of weddings and seminars. Names as well-known as Pfizer, Allianz, Carrefour, Interbrew and Central Wings enhanced its reputation, as did meetings featuring ambassadors and other grand personalities from those circles. In a few years the small community led by an engineer was transformed into a pole of rural development. The chain reaction was to be expected, but for the whole thing to be triggered an incredible dose of optimism and hard graft was vital.

Recently Kurozweki was presented with the Europa Nostra Heritage Prize, which includes an award of Euro 10,000. The famous pan-European federation is made up of 200 non-governmental organizations and awards many medals for exemplary achievements, but the Prize is unique and is for a particular effort made on our old continent. The work of the POPIEL has produced some remarkable restoration, combined with the setting up of a special cultural centre within a farming and forestry area. This is how Europa Nostra seeks to raise the consciousness of our common civilization in an effort to build a true identity throughout Europe.

The resurrection of Kurozweki can serve as an example to encourage candidate landowners put off by the myth of Sisyphus. Part of its success may be down to its favourable location, but the rest was an act of pure faith.

■ Olivier de TRAZEGNIES



Kurozweki Palace.

**THE INSTITUTIONAL ECHO**

## ELO General Assembly and the priorities of the German Presidency

**T**he ELO General Assembly meets twice a year and this fits in perfectly with the rotating EU presidencies. These meetings therefore bring together the national decision-makers who will influence the decisions which will be taken under the leadership of their country.



Participants at the GA.

The General Assembly of the 6th and 7th November 2006 was therefore held in Berlin (Germany) and allowed the representatives of the ELO associations in the EU's 25 countries not only to take stock of the past six months and to outline the six months to come, but was also an opportunity to meet two key protagonists of Angela MERKEL's government, Secretary of State Gert LINDEMEANN and Astrid KLUG, in charge of agriculture and the environment respectively.

Gert LINDEMANN explained to the General Assembly the position of the Minister of Agriculture with regard to sensitive subjects such as the simplification process of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) announced by the Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Mariann FISCHER-BOEL and the 'health check' planned for the end of 2008/2009, intended to be a stock-taking exercise of the CAP reform in order to take appropriate measures for the next planning period. The subjects tackled therefore concerned questions linked to the

financial perspectives 2007-2013 and post 2013; the 'clean cuts' to the budget and voluntary modulation, i.e. the possibility for member states to transfer up to 20% of the sums from pillar I (agriculture) to pillar II (rural development); the question of co-funding and the financing of Natura 2000, and the consequences of the recent case law on the matter; total decoupling; the reform of the Common market Organisations (CMOs), which would merge the 21 existing CMOs into one single one; the issue of direct payment capping; the mid-term review of the eco-conditionality measures; the development of non-food production, such as the production of biomass for energy; animal welfare; and future international negotiations within the WTO.

The Secretary of State also highlighted the principle of subsidiarity, by expressing his opposition to the new Soil Directive on the grounds that soil is a 'national matter'. Astrid KLUG presented 2 of her ministry's priorities which are intrinsically linked: the fight against climate change and energy policy.

She informed the participants that she shared their vision on the instruments created by the Kyoto Protocol such as carbon credits, since climate change should not be examined from an exclusively ecological angle, but also socio-economically. She recognized that climate change has a direct impact on property and rural managers and that it is therefore crucial that all the stakeholders work together.

The other priorities of the environment ministry are rural development, and the implementation and funding of Natura 2000. In Mrs Klug's opinion the objectives of Nature 2000 must be pragmatic. The participants were also able to hear the minister's position on the question of natural resources such as water and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, but the Secretary of State did not want to communicate the position of her government on the new Soil Directive, claiming that it is 'too soon to adopt a view'. The German hosts represented by Michel Prinz von und zu SALM-SALM and the Secretary General of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Grundbesitzverbände Wolfgang von DALLWITZ also prepared a particularly interesting and entertaining programme, with in particular a working dinner in the Reichstag dome after a visit of the German parliament, and a visit to the forest estate of Nikolaus HATZFELD-WILDENBURG in the new reunified länder.

■ Cécile BONINO

## The 2006 Friends of the Countryside Annual Assembly at the pearl of the Baltic Sea

**O**n the 7th and 8th July 2006 the city of Helsinki welcomed over 180 members of Friends of the Countryside (FCS) for their General Assembly, which was held at the Marina Congress Centre and was chaired by Johan NORDENFALK.

Friday morning, 7th July, was spent on the activity report of the organization and its sister association, European Landowners' Organization – ELO – all presented by Thierry de L'ESCAILLE. In 2005 the two organizations, which together defend the interests of European landowners and rural business, developed new projects and new strategies.

Following the proposal of the FCS Board, the due to the General Assembly elected Mr Giuseppe VISCONTI as new President, to take office over office from the outgoing President NORDENFALK at the end of the event. Mr VISCONTI is admitted to the Bar of Milan and a member of the International Bar Association. He is as well a senior partner and founder of the Studio Legale Portale VISCONTI. FCS' new President is a landowner in Piedmont and Lombardy and founder of the Movimento Europeo Terra e Ambiente (Meta).

As in previous years FCS held a workshop, the subject of which was Forestry, Private Property & the rule of law in the North, during which speeches were given by representatives of private enterprise, the finance sector and European administration.

A keynote speaker was Mr Jussi PESONEN, President and CEO of UPM Kymmene Group, which owns 920 000ha in FIN and is the 3rd largest paper manufacturer in the world. He reported that challenges abound for the forest industry, but paper is essentially the only heavy industry that has uses recyclable raw material. 11% of forest in Finland is strictly protected, the highest percentage in the world. 9% of Finnish forest is owned by companies, with UPM accounting for half of this. Mr PESONEN underlined that the engagement with land and forest owners is also important in the future restructuring of the industry. Finally he argued that emissions trading alone is not a long term option for the industry.

Mr Björn WAHLROOS, president and CEO of Sampo Group, and a FCS member himself, acknowledged that as land is the foremost form of capital and is at the heart of our society, land ownership rights go hand in hand with the rule of law. The best way to protect the environment is through property rights. Landowners take care of the environment on their own behalf and for their successors. Well defined property rights provide protection for the future, and the bulwark for the rule of law. But for producing economic growth, the rights have to be well defined and provide economic leverage.



Mr Giuseppe VISCONTI.

The Anders WALL Foundation together with DG Environment and FCS presented the Anders Wall Award<sup>1</sup> to promote a positive rural environment and to recognise the important role played by private entrepreneurs. The award 2005 goes to Ing. Giuseppe NATTA, who has understood for a long time the role of environmental protection combined with entrepreneurship.

After the GA four excursions were organised to discover the cultural and historic heritage of the city and its surroundings. The day of July 8 was devoted to visiting private properties which enhance the value of the Finish countryside.

Following the success of this event, we're looking forward to the 2007 GA, which will be held in Évora - Portugal from the 14th until the 16th of June.

■ Carla GUERRA



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<sup>1</sup> For more information : [www.friendsofthecountryside.net](http://www.friendsofthecountryside.net)

## THE ENLARGED EUROPE

# The Forests of the Czech Republic: a demonstration example or a sudden breakdown?

**T**he Czech Republic has a long and much appreciated tradition in forest management. The forests cover 1/3 of the area of the Czech Republic, and range from flood plains to the mountains. The most common coniferous species are spruce (53 %) and pine (17 %); for broadleaves, it is beech and oak. Almost 60 % of the forest area is owned by the State, 23 % is privately owned, and communal forests make up 15% of the area. The small remaining percentage belongs to the regional governments, forest cooperatives or public universities. The process of the restitution has almost finished.



The SVOL stand.

### The Opinions of the “Scientists”

Despite the widely-acknowledged fact that the Czech forests are well-managed, a not very optimistic report has recently been produced. It is called “The Opinion of the scientist on the state of the Czech forests” and several Czech scientists and experts have signed up to it. The foresters, research institutes, universities, and associations and organisations of both public and private forests are naturally disappointed and this report is frequently discussed. In August 2006, a similar report finding that the Czech forests are in a bad state appeared also in European magazines.

What causes most disappointment and gives rise to offence in this report is the way in which it has been presented. The authors did not admit any discussions with the foresters and other relevant experts before the publishing of the report

in daily newspapers, magazines, TV news. The public have been confused and alarmed.

Moreover, the report casts the blame on the foresters, even when the situation in forests is not the result only of the forest based sector but is influenced by the other industries and climate change.

### Forest Management

“The Czech forests have undergone significant change over the past two centuries. The majority of natural forest ecosystems have been replaced by unstable spruce and pine monocultures, which do not fulfil the crucial environmental and social roles that natural or semi-natural forest ecosystems play within a healthy countryside and society”, says the report. Well, this is partially the truth but nobody has mentioned yet that the forest cover was only 25 % two hundreds years ago and today it has been raised up

to 33.4 %! According to the Czech statistical office, we can trace other significant changes – there was only 3 % natural regeneration in 1990, while nowadays there is more than 15 % natural regeneration. The report also expresses doubts about the change in the species makeup of the forests – does that mean that it is wrong to have doubled the rate of beech regeneration and to have reduced by half the rate of spruce regeneration in primarily broadleaved forests within the last 15 years?

“Forestry management in the majority of the Czech forests remains poor and does not reflect the urgent need to move away from the focus on timber production and towards integrating environmental and social needs into forest management.” The problem is that the report probably arose from the knowledge and emotional view of the biologists and other scientists without having a



© Pavla BORTLOVA

THE ENLARGED EUROPE

general overview about the forest management and all the practical sides of forestry. All the principles of the sustainable forest management are followed in the Czech Republic and no one can think that a complete turnaround from production to protection can be the solution.

**The Impact of EU Accession**

According to the report, many important nature-protected areas are endangered by the construction of transport infrastructure and investment plans resulting from joining EU. It is also mentioned, that some of the activities supported by EU are actually harmful to the forest, e.g. the construction, improvement and maintenance of forest roads, the application of fertilisers and calcium etc. EU accession is considered to have further negative effects on Czech forests, particularly if the big multinational timber corporations successfully influence European integrated forest policy.

But, being part of the EU means a lot of commitments for the Czech Republic. Let me mention the Forestry Strategy or the new EU Forest Action Plan. Both these forestry documents as well as the process of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of the Forests in Europe ensure that the multifunctional forest management is based on economical, environmental and social pillars. These pillars are being implemented in the national legislation, such as National Forestry Programme which is currently being updated, or the new Czech Forest Code which is soon to be discussed.

**Natura 2000**

We have to argue with those reports which state that “The prevailing attitudes to nature protection have allowed some nature-protected areas to be damaged by economic activities. Politicians underestimate this issue. The financial, per-



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sonal and organisational support of Natura 2000 is inadequate.” About 30 % of the area of Czech forests reaches the highest requirements concerning nature conservation and is protected by the various legislative measures.

Natura 2000 sites cover 13.3 % of the Czech Republic, and 66 % of these areas are situated in forests. The State owns 77 % of Natura 2000 sites, and 15 % are privately owned.

The working group on the management of Natura 2000 sites consisted of foresters from the Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection, representatives of the state forests, private forest owners (SVOL), and the representatives of ministries and other relevant authorities. The result of this successful working group is a scientific publication with recommendations on management in different natural habitats.

Another example of cooperation in nature conservation can be seen in the Life Project submitted by

the Association of Private Forest Owners and the Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection.

After the above-mentioned debates you might feel confused. There is no use in writing further about the Czech forests, forest management and foresters... The only way to comprehend is to go and check the reality. The Czech forests welcome you.

**The Association of Municipal and Private Forest Owners in the Czech Republic**

In August 2006, the international countryfair “Bread basket” took traditionally place in south Bohemia, in the town of Ceske Budejovice. The Association of Municipal and Private Forest Owners in the Czech Republic (SVOL) occupied a stand there and introduced their activities. On this occasion the first quarterly bulletin aiming to raise awareness among the public about the non-state forests and their ownership was published.

■ Pavla BORTLOVA

## YFCS

## The benefit of traineeships at international organizations through Young Friends of the Countryside

**D**uring the launch of Young Friends in March 2005 we set ourselves a series of strategic objectives. One of them was to keep our members informed about a variety of matters mentioned in our statutes.



F. VON CHRISMAR, G. SZEMEREY, G. DE L'ESCAILLE, N. DE VILLENFAGNE

Some of us are land owners or will be in the future and others have a stake in the countryside through their family business or ideals. We are all keen on receiving information and training.

Training our members does not just benefit their private interests but also our organisation. We are trying to set up an assembly of selective and efficient members. During our different activities our members have to deal with many external stakeholders from the political, rural, social or even financial worlds. It is therefore indispensable for YFCS to have representative, well-trained members. Sharing opinions with each other is a first stage but getting our views recognized outside is a much more ambitious and important goal.

To this end we offer several training opportunities to our members – they are invited to general assemblies and national seminars. They also receive Countryside magazine which covers topical issues. However there is a third way of

providing training which targets students in particular. It has already been mentioned in the first YFCS articles in 2005 and has been quite successful among our more involved members – traineeships.

As trainees young people get an opportunity to train specifically in the subjects that they are interested

in developing within Young Friends. ELO thus regularly takes on trainees wanting to perfect their training or work in a specific area of activity.

BNP Paribas Bank has also offered certain Young Friends the possibility of spending time with them. I myself benefited from this highly informative experience a year ago with a traineeship at the Advisory Desk Central, Paris. One of our members who also took this opportunity will provide more details in the following article.

■ Gabriel de L'ESCAILLE  
YFCS Chairman



YFCS participating at the GA of the UEHHA.

## Young Friends member as a trainee with BNP Paribas London

**D**uring the month of September I had the opportunity of working as a trainee for one month with BNP Paribas Private Bank in London. The traineeship was made possible by the continuous support BNP Paribas has given YFCS since it was set up. The bank gives us the keys to understanding the financial and legal processes linked to the management of a family inheritance and to running a business in a rural environment.

During the first annual YFCS assembly in Brussels last March the young people present and Youssef DIB, the BNP Paribas representative, discussed the way in which BNP Paribas could best contribute to the development of the association and its members. Several ideas were put forward:

- Offering traineeships in the bank to give young people professional experience in an area that interests them.
- The possibility of creating an annual prize awarded by the bank to a Young Friend involved in developing an innovative rural project.

At the meeting I was offered the chance of becoming a trainee and I joined the BNP Paribas London team, led by Ragi BOUSTANY. It is composed of some thirty people. During my traineeship I worked in close cooperation with the different departments in the Private Bank including:

- Asset Engineering, where I was confronted with the structure of international assets using trusts, foundations and Private Investment Companies for inheritance planning purposes, from the perspective of both civil and common law.
- Investment Advice, where I examined the Private Bank's investment policy which covers all of the products accessible to clients:



shares, bonds, funds, foreign currency, hedgefunds, derivatives and others. Moreover I discovered the benefits of real estate and art as alternative sources of investment. With the help of Bloomberg, the intranet and the know-how of the BNP Paribas London team I was able to acquire in-depth understanding of all of the investments available to the Private Bank's clientele.

- Credit analysis, which concerns the loans generally used by the

Private Bank's customers to acquire leverage over the investments.

- Ethics, about the internal procedures intended to ensure that commitments comply with local and European legislation and regulations on the fight against financial crime.
- Customer relations, where I actively assisted the managers in the 'Know your clients' procedures which consist in establishing the detailed profile of every client.
- Middle Office, where I was familiarized with the bank's software used for managing the different types of customer accounts and with the procedures for implementing transactions linked to the management of these accounts.

I greatly appreciated the friendly atmosphere within the department and the open-mindedness of every team member each with their own international background.

This professional experience was therefore highly enriching for me in that it allowed me to better understand certain theoretical concepts developed in my university course on management engineering and to discover the panoply of tools available for the preservation, diversification, profitability and transmission of an inheritance.

■ Edouard THIJSEN

**BOOK OF THE MONTH**

## Bees and eco-fraud

*Gil RIVIERE-WEKSTEIN, le Publieur books, 2006*

1995 – panic in the beehives! Beekeepers of several French regions deplore unusual deaths in the bee population. Some of them are quick to name two insecticides as being solely responsible for the devastation. This was the start of the Gaucho and Regent affairs, the ‘cursed’ insecticides. Following several specialist investigations, counter-investigations and legal procedures, in 2004 this small group of beekeepers managed to get the two offending insecticides suspended. Was the case then closed? Not exactly. After two years of investigations, in

this book the journalist Gil RIVIERE-WEKSTEIN reveals the background to this story and demonstrates how ecological arguments were used to mask economic issues and provide ammunition for trade union and political appetites across the board from the Villierist<sup>1</sup> right to the rural left. It also shows how ‘evil’ insecticides became the ideal scapegoat to hide the growing problems facing beekeeping and to call into question a modern agricultural model based on technological progress.

<sup>1</sup> Philippe Le Jolis de VILLIERS de SAINTIGNON, more commonly known as Philippe de VILLIERS, is a French politician born on 25 March 1949 in Boulogne (Vendée).



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ISBN 2-35061-008-x

## Diary Dates 2007

### 3<sup>rd</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March, Paris (Porte de Versailles)

International Agricultural Show, including new subject such as: bio- energy (one of the main topic), rural development, new technologies etc.

<http://www.salon-agriculture.com>

### 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> March, Nuremberg

‘Renewable raw materials - new prospects for rural areas’ - in anticipation of the probable rise in production and import of biomass and biofuels”, the German Presidency want to discuss the introduction of a system of certification for biomass production, based on sustainable development criteria

### 8<sup>th</sup> March, Brussels 12.30-14.30

Lunch and lecture on "The future of Europe" with Frits

BOLKESTEIN, former Dutch minister of trade and defence, European Commissioner in 2001. For further information : [contact@fahayek.org](mailto:contact@fahayek.org)

### 22<sup>nd</sup>- 23<sup>rd</sup> March, Brussels

European Water Conference, organised by the European Commission’s Environment Directorate-General, in cooperation with the Joint Research Centre, Eurostat and the European Environment Agency. The opening coincides with World Water Day. On the conference, Environment Commissioner Stavros DIMAS will present the first implementation report for the Water Framework Directive and the Water Information System for Europe (WISE) will be launched. <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/conference.html>

### 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> March, Paris

Annual Meeting of the Europe Metropolises Network, 3<sup>rd</sup> international seminar to discuss major challenges and new expectations of citizens, for the effective management of emerging problems related to ill-conceived urban development. <http://www.europe-metropoles.com>

### 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> March, Rome

Rome Youth Summit, the first ever EU youth, organised by the Youth Forum Jeunesse, European Commission and European Parliament, to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and discuss about the future of EU. [http://europa.eu/50/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/50/index_en.htm)



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### 28 March, Brussels

An Animal Protection Day, to tackle with the introduction of a label for foods produced under conditions respectful of animals

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/Meetings\\_Calendar/](http://www.eu2007.de/en/Meetings_Calendar/)