

# **Ray Bondin**

## **CIVVIH President**

### **Report 2009-2010**

#### **Valletta, April 2010**

*A record number of participants from all over the globe have again accepted to attend the 2010 CIVVIH Annual Meeting, a sign of the importance being given to CIVVIH from experts in spite of a lack of financing for conferences in many countries. This positive interest in CIVVIH has now been consistent in the past years since we have reformed and reestablished the Committee. It also reflects the growing concerns with the changes occurring in historic cities and villages everywhere.*

CIVVIH is one of a handful of ISCs in ICOMOS that has held Annual Meetings without interruption. In fact last year we had two extra meetings besides the Annual Meeting. This was a second meeting in Athens and a meeting of the Mediterranean Sub Committee in Edirne. All meetings were very well organized and very well attended.

#### *Logistics*

The role of President of CIVVIH has become more and more a difficult one. Up to August 2007 I had substantial clerical support to be able to request assistance in certain matters but when I moved jobs I ended up having to do everything myself. I must admit, and by saying this I am not pointing fingers at anyone, that I am very disappointed with the lack of support I get within CIVVIH itself.

The President is expected to do too much. It is enough to handle all the emails I receive. It is enough to look at all request for information, complaints, issues between Members, issues concerning Paris etc. Quite frankly it is very difficult to be President and my hope is that whoever takes my place will find more support both from the Officers themselves and also clerical support in their home organization or office.

I would have liked to have been in a position to send out all documents to you at least three months ahead of the meeting but some of the documents were sent to me on Tuesday night. This is very unfair especially with those that have problems with language. It is also very unprofessional. I had hoped to present all documents together but this has proved to be impossible to do.

On the positive side certainly the organization is producing more and more documents. I am certainly glad to have achieved the position whereby all documents are available to all members and not only to Bureau members.

### *Dissemination of information*

I have continued to give out as much information as possible as I believe that all Members have a right to be part of all that is happening. This has meant however that the President has to handle all this. We were requested whether or not we are to use the ICOMOS List Serv system but the Bureau opted to keep the system we have. In all fairness this means that we have better control on what goes to who as the experience within ICOMOS is that the wrong people end up getting the wrong information and people thinking they are responding to one person and end up sending an email to the whole world!

However it is not a simple question of forwarding emails. We have two address lists because of the numbers of Members. One of the lists in the past week have had some emails refused as a virus was given onto the list, creating problems for me. Besides every time I send an email out we get a number back as wrong or refused. In some cases this happens almost always, in others it depends. I do not have the time to keep trying. Michal, who is responsible for the Address List, has made some corrections but we need to work more on this.

### *Experts and Associates*

We get a steady flow of requests for new Members. I had started the system whereby the Vice Presidents and the Secretary act as a Committee for new members. The system works only up to a point as of course everyone is very busy and not everyone is in a position to respond.

It worries me very much when it takes us months to respond to a request. At the moment I have to send out the acceptance letter to around six persons that were approved last week. We need to improve on the system.

But more than that we need to make clear indicators as to why a person can consider himself to be an Expert as it is very embarrassing when we end up telling someone he is an Associate and not an Expert. Unfortunately part of the problem is that the c v do not always give the full picture and so there is quite a discussions among the Vice Presidents.

We now must move, before the elections to be held next year, to ensure that all the persons on our address list are Members. Some are still not members and we need to resolve this problem.

I am however very, very satisfied that we keep getting an increase in members and the interest is certainly there. This is extremely positive.

### *World Heritage*

The situation remains very much the same. I had discussed the matter with Krystal Buckley and had seen Regina Durighello in Paris. The participation of CIVVIH in evaluation and monitoring missions remains very low. Unfortunately I can never really fight for our rights as some Members do not report that they have been asked to make a mission or a report.

We are consulted on the evaluation missions. It is unfortunate that this is a very secretive system with the President only. I do not feel

comfortable with nominating persons on my own. However in the end very few of those nominated are chosen and I never know why.

Sofia has replaced me as a Member on the International Executive so I hope that through here we can continue to insist on the involvement of as many CIVVIH Members as possible.

### *Languages*

My dream to have everything in English, French and Spanish remains a dream. All organizations and committees face problems with translations. I do not know what solution we can come up with on this problem.

### *Web site*

Thanks to Sofia and the Greek Committee we now have a renewed web site yet we still have to work harder on this. I hope that all the presentations we have will be on the web site soon.

I wish to see the site really take off as a source of information, but there are various amendments that we need to do. It is our window to the world. We really must thank Sofia for her efforts in this matter.

### *Regional Sub Committees*

The biggest challenges I have had to face is in trying to resolve the issue of the Ibero American Sub Committee. I really must thank Paolo Motta for all he has tried to do in this matter with our backing. This is too important a Committee to be left inactive. Alvaro is the Acting President and Paolo is coordinating on behalf of the Bureau. The matter will be discussed separately in the Committee.

The Mediterranean Sub Committee goes from strength to strength thanks mainly to Sofia and her team. The meeting we held in Edirne was an excellent one. For next year we have more than one request. This augers well for the Committee and I see a very active future for it.

We are still attempting to do a Sub Committee for Asia/Pacific. I have had a lot of contacts and discussion but no conclusions yet.

### *Collaboration with other organizations*

We continue to try and formalize more collaboration with other organizations, but we need to work harder on this.

### *Meetings*

Last year our Annual Meeting was a great success at Narni, thanks to the Mayor of this small city and our Paolo Motta who though only a Member since one year worked hard to organize the meeting.

The other two meetings, at Athens to discuss the new Document, and at Edirne for the Mediterranean Sub Committee were also excellent meetings, thanks to Sofia and her team. Nur and the Turkish team were excellent as well.

All the meetings were well organized but what is important is not only the organization but the content of these meetings which continues to be of a high level.

### *Conclusion*

*I have continued to give CIVVIH my utmost attention. As I have already stated it is not always easy to be President. On the contrary it is very difficult.*

*I do this because I believe in the organization and in ICOMOS. For me personally CIVVIH is a great responsibility, and also an expense. But it is an honour to be your President and to see such a vibrant organization. I continue to insist that we are a network of professionals and that must remain our prime aim. We must also not ignore the 'village' part of our name which unfortunately we have ignored in past years.*

*I wish to thank all those that have collaborated with me. I try to be as open and democratic as possible. I try to involve as many people as possible. I wish to make presentations in our meetings but prefer to give space to others. I wish to apologise to those that maybe I had not responded to immediately as I try to do. I do get disappointed at times with lack of reaction from certain members but I do realize as well that we have all to work for a living.*

*We have an enormous responsibility to look after historic towns and villages. If we work more closely together we can do so much more. I am ready and willing to collaborate with all who want to offer their time and thoughts.*