

AEHT - Newsletter

Dear AEHT Members,

This version of our newsletter demonstrates the richness of our Association, an organisation which is always active, and which through its activities makes a considerable contribution to the rapprochement between the nations of Europe and to the creation of a Europe deeply rooted in the notion of respect for others and all their differences, be they economic, social, moral or spiritual.

Christmas in Europe 2008 in Château-Chinon

The 17th edition of Christmas in Europe took place this year from December 5th to December 10th in Château-Chinon, a small town in the Morvan region of central France; it was organised by the team from the François Mitterrand vocational school.



Family picture : 18 schools and 13 countries were represented

The three main elements of Christmas in Europe are: Christmas traditions presented through the exhibition, gastronomy represented at the European buffet, and culture represented at the cultural show. These components were presented by the 18 schools from the 13 countries represented – who not only adhered strictly to the guidelines, but did so in a masterly fashion!

The team from the François Mitterrand vocational school, led by the school's director Claude Carriot and especially by Jean Michel & Edith Wautelet, with the support of the teachers and students from the 'hotel and tourism' department, offered their guests an event that combined an outstanding gastronomic quality

with a welcome that was both professional and friendly. What is more, the little town of Château-Chinon has never experienced such an influx of representatives from such a variety of countries; and during the inaugural parade, during the visit to the exhibition stands and at the European buffet, the townsfolk had the opportunity of discovering many aspects of a living, dynamic Europe. There were more than a thousand adult visitors together with around five hundred school-children: they all took real pleasure in exploring the various stands at the exhibition housed in the town's gymnasium. Thanks to these 18 exhibition stands they could indulge in a European 'immersion course', getting to know the countries of Europe from Russia to Italy and from the Czech Republic to Sweden!



The inaugural parade of the delegations on their way to the official reception

As for the participants in the 18 delegations, they too were swept off their feet by the programme that had been planned for them, and which included an excursion to Beaune, the real jewel of Burgundy's heritage.

Christmas in Europe 2008? This was truly a very fine edition of the event, a fact emphasised by Christiane Keller, the creator of the concept, whom some people affectionately call 'Mother Christmas' as well as 'Christmas Chris'!



Sophie Perret and Jean-Marc Dijou, a food service teacher in Diekirch

Christiane Keller and Dominique Faivre, a cookery teacher in Bonneville

Jean-Marc Dijou, a food service teacher at the Diekirch LTHAH and a regular at Christmas in Europe, was asked on his return for his impressions of the Château Chinon event. He said that he had very much appreciated the gastronomy part of the event. 'We enjoyed a fine feast both at lunch and at dinner: at midday there were buffets with regional delicacies and in the evening there were delicious five-course dinner that any gastronome would have adored. We were even served a 3.5 metre-long Christmas log with champagne. It's a shame that during the excursions the guests were not given more explanations about this wine-growing region, which is one of the most prestigious and produces some of the world's most legendary wines.'

A complete report on this event will shortly appear on the AEHT's website, www.aeht.eu. We should like to take this opportunity to hope that we will see you in Poznan for the 2009 edition!

Annual Conference 2008 in Kuressaare

The Kuressaare Ametikool had dared to take up the challenge of the AEHT's 20th anniversary, and had invited our member schools to the 21st Annual Conference from October 14th-19th on the remote island of Saaremaa located in the Baltic Sea. But who would have thought that the event would succeed in attracting more than 700 participants from all across Europe?



Centre of Kuressaare

130 schools from 32 countries attended, representing 331 students and 334 teachers, directors, partners and professional partners; they had undertaken the long journey by plane or boat to meet up in this peaceful town. Some delegations had crossed the entire continent to be there: the Azores delegation had travelled 3,500 kms while the Colombian delegation had covered more than 10,000 kms!



The Colombian delegation fraternising with the Zell am Ziller group

On October 15th, in the Sports Centre, the legendary hero Suur Töll (Phil Lennart) and his wife Piret (Carmen Rannula) led us through the programme of the opening ceremony, calling up one by one the delegations who were all dressed up to march by behind their national flag. What a magnificent spectacle!



The local heroes who were our masters of ceremony during the opening and closing ceremonies

Toomas Kasemaa, the Governor of Saaremaa County, Urve Tiidus, Mayor of Kuressaare and Louis Robert, AEHT President, all addressed the assembly with words of welcome and emphasised the high quality of teaching at the Ametikool, as well as the very thorough preparation that had gone into organising this the highlight of our events calendar.



Urve Tiidus, Mayor of Kuressaare



Toomas Kasemaa, Governor of Saaremaa County

This is a useful opportunity to remind you of the painstaking work that is involved in organising the Annual Conference: it is vital that all the information requested on the registration form, as well as all payments due, reach the organisers at least a month before the start of this event. Even now there are schools which have still not paid their registration fees. This is completely unacceptable given the financial problems which it causes for the organisers. In addition some schools failed to inform the organisers of their arrival and departure times, turning the management of the transfers into a real headache! Please help us to make this Annual Conference as pleasant an event as possible, in the interest of all concerned!

After the welcoming speeches came a dramatised historical review played by students wearing costumes, starting with pre-historic times and inevitably including the soviet era. The ceremony was rounded off with a display of modern dance performed with great panache.



A journey through the history of Estonia



Soviet occupation 1944 - 1991

One of the more important aspects of the Annual Conference – if not THE most important – is the series

of competitions which are open to the students. This year the programme included eight competitions, some of which could be followed live by members of the public: pastry, tourism, culinary arts, bar, food service, rooms division, front office and management.



Pastry competition



Culinary arts competition

It is worth remembering that a set of precise guidelines has been drawn up by a special competitions committee in order to avoid all kinds of disagreements on various matters and on failure to comply with instructions. In order to avoid their students being eliminated for failing to comply with the required criteria (four students were thus disqualified in Kuressaare) their teachers are requested to follow the competition rules to the letter. Above all they should check their candidates' knowledge of English or French before they register them for the competitions. It is unacceptable that students' chances of success may be reduced because they are unable to communicate with their team-mates.



Culinary arts competition



Housekeeping & room-service contest

Each year during the Annual Conference the AEHT holds its Executive Board meeting and General Assembly, and the minutes of these meetings may be consulted on our website. However, two points deserve particular mention: the first concerns the retirement of our faithful colleague Alfonso Benvenuto and the resulting two vacancies, that of his post of national representative for Italy and that of Vice-President of the AEHT. According to the statutes the first post is automatically filled by his successor at the school in charge of AEHT representation at a national level. The new representative is therefore Maria Rosella

Bitti, director of the IPSSARCT A. Panzini in Senigallia (I). Elections had to be held for the post of Vice-President responsible for higher and continuing education; the elections resulted in the appointment of Annie Collinet, director of the F. Bise Hotel School in Bonneville (F) as Alfonso's successor. We wish both of them great success in their new posts.



Alfonso Benvenuto appointed Honorary AEHT President



Annie Collinet, director of the Bonneville school, was elected AEHT Vice-President

The second important matter for these meetings was the 2009 calendar of events. Yet again this year we have received a large number of proposals and we had trouble making decisions when it came to deciding which activities would receive subsidies. The organisers have recently been informed of our decision

AEHT Events Billed for 2009

FEBRUARY	2009
February 21 st -22 nd	Golden Trophy of Brescian Gastronomy, Colorno, Italy
MARCH	
March 3 rd -4 th	Francoli Cup 2009, Stresa, Lake Maggiore (I)
March 12 th -15 th	International Festival of Gastronomy: Sports and Health (Topic: Motor sports), Faro (P)
March 22 nd -25 th	5 th International 'Antonio Nebbia' Hot Dishes Competition, Cingoli (I)
March 25 th -29 th	Atlantic Tea Festival, Ponta Delgada, São Miguel Island, Azores (P)
Date to be confirmed	Franz-Joseph's Table, tradition & innovation in Central European gastronomy from the 19 th to the 21 st century, Budapest (HU)

APRIL	
April 1 st	G&T Cup Bartenders' competition, Bled (SLO)
April 21 st -24 th	'Bartolomeo Scappi' International Competition 2009, Castel San Pietro Terme (I)
End of April	'Dining with the ancient Romans', their gastronomy, culture, history, art and music, Oristano, Sardinia (I)
MAY	
1 st week in May	'Gioacchino Rossini Gourmet' Culinary competition, Loreto (I)
Early May	'GASTRO 2009' Gastronomy Competition, Komiža Island (HR)
May 7 th -10 th	5 th competition for Hotel Receptionists and 3 rd City tourism competition (Topic: mountains), Giulianova (I)
JUNE	
June 17 th -21 st	Mediterranean Cuisine with summer flavour, Funchal, Madeira (P)
OCTOBER	
October	Baltic Sea Gastronomy Seminar, Warsaw (PL)
October	Seminar on 'Mushrooms in traditional Polish cuisine', Świdnica (PL)
October – November	Eurocup 2009 - Junior bartenders competition (16 th ed.), Prešov (SK)
NOVEMBER	
November 17 th -21 st	22 nd AEHT Annual Conference, Dubrovnik (HR)
DECEMBER	
December 2 nd -7 th	18 th Christmas in Europe, Poznan (PL)

The documents for the Francoli Cup and for the Atlantic Tea Festival are already available at www.aeht.eu. For the other events the programme, the rules and the application forms will be published in due course. Our member schools invest much work in organising these events, so we would ask you to publicise them among the teachers and students in your schools in order to increase the number of participants.

Here are some useful tips: to find the cheapest air fares for a given destination, visit www.nomando.com. To find out which budget airlines fly to a given destination, use the www.flylc.com search engine.

Let us return to the Annual Conference and in particular to the evening of October 16th, when participants had the opportunity to attend a breathtaking hand bell concert in Kuressaare's little St Lawrence church, performed by the Arsise noorte kellade Ansambel, made up of 14 young musicians.



Arsise noorte kellade Ansambel

Conducted by its founder Aivar Mäe, the ensemble performed a whole amazing repertoire of Estonian and classical pieces such as Tchaikovsky, Bach, Albinoni and Johann Strauss. An enthusiastic standing ovation rewarded this extraordinary performance and the 'British' humour of the conductor and presenter of the evening's event.

In Kuressaare, **Restolingua** has just joined the club of AEHT professional partners. This company has the sole distribution and development rights to a system which creates, translates and prints professional menus online. The vast Restolingua database, containing more than 22,000 terms in eight languages, including Japanese and soon Chinese, allows the user to create and translate any menu simply by defining the composition of each dish in one of the system's languages.



Signing of an agreement with Paul R.A.J. Van den Heuvel of Restolingua

Restolingua is currently seeking schools prepared to coordinate the work of translating these expressions into all the languages of AEHT member countries which are not yet part of the database, and to add expressions relating to their specialities and to regional dishes and ingredients. Schools will receive €0.5 for each expression translated. This rate includes a payment for national coordination as well as for the translation itself. Furthermore the menus can be published not only in several languages but also using several national currencies. Once translated the menus are saved onto the Restolingua server, enabling them to be accessed and printed out from any computer in the world which has an internet connection.

At the Annual Conference Paul R.A.J. Van den Heuvel together with his wife and operations manager Arike Vermazen held a workshop on this subject and gave a brief presentation to both the Executive Board and the General Assembly on the operation of their website www.restolingua.com. They emphasised that the site is intended not only for restaurant professionals across the world but also for hotel schools who could thus introduce students to a tool that would be useful in their future professional careers.

Until the end of the year there is no charge for accessing the website, but from 2009 payment will be required. The cost of accessing the system and the Restolingua dictionary will be €500 excluding VAT per school per year for AEHT member schools, as to say 5 EUR excluding VAT for an average of 100 users (as against €365 excluding VAT for 'ordinary' subscribers and €300 for subscribers 'recommended' by AEHT members). However the school may identify a local sponsor willing to cover this cost, and in return the logo of the sponsor(s) will appear on the screen each time a student or a teacher at the school in question logs on. For each new subscriber both the school and the AEHT will be paid commission of 15% of the subscription fee. Member schools are requested to warn their students and teachers that anyone revealing their access code to a third party will be liable to prosecution. A summary of the agreement signed with Restolingua will shortly be published at www.aeht.eu.

Friday October 17th was given over to competitions, visits and seminars. The programme included a guided tour of the town and of the bishops' castle, a tour of the Saaremaa golf course (both magnificent and recently built) as well as a workshop on 'the mysteries of online learning', a handmade soap workshop, a workshop on the Estonian language and

a workshop on bread, a symbol of Saaremaa, and a presentation of the treatments available in the spa.



The Bishops' Castle that belonged to the Teutonic Knights – the only such castle to remain perfectly preserved in the Baltic States.

The high point of Friday evening was an exquisite traditional Estonian dinner and, during the feast, the acting out of an Estonian wedding with contributions from several traditional drama and music groups. What a joy it was to see these young – and some not so young – people interpreting these traditional dances together!



Estonian wedding

On Saturday morning an endless stream of coaches took the participants off on a voyage of discovery of the island of Saaremaa, which had a number of treasures to yield up to us. In each bus students from the Ametikool gave a commentary on the tourist attractions we were visiting; among them were:

- One of the nine craters made between 4000 and 7000 years ago by the Kaali meteorite. With its lake that is 110 metres in diameter and 22 metres deep, it is thought to be one of Europe's largest craters.
- Karja church, the country's most beautiful, and Karmaa church, one of the oldest, begun in 1260. The entrance porch of the Karmaa church contains

what is thought to be the oldest inscription in the Estonian language.

- The Angla windmills.
- The Panga cliffs: the footpath which runs along the cliff top is about 20 metres above sea level.



The Church of St Peter and St Paul in Karja

Angla windmills

Kaali crater

Participants lunched in typical regional restaurants. I personally much enjoyed our visit to Jurna where we partook of a delicious meal, a kind of sauerkraut with sausage, one of the stalwarts of the Estonian winter diet.

On Saturday evening came the prize-giving ceremony. Every year the announcement of the results is feverishly awaited as if it were the results of the Olympic Games. Every time, it is refreshing to hear an expression of joy coming jointly from several countries at once when the winning team is announced. It is at moments such as these that we appreciate the fraternal spirit which prevails in our Association.



The Irish delegation won all the medals in the pastry competition, a gold medal in the food service competition, a silver medal for culinary arts and a special prize for the best bar technique: good reasons for going back home very happy.



Austria's performances are just as remarkable: they won gold medals in culinary arts, bar and food service, and silver and bronze in tourism



Johann Mauracher (A03), a hotelier's son, with his team-mate Joris De Boer (NL16) won the culinary arts competition. Here he is pictured deep in conversation with his charming compatriots

As these pictures speak for themselves, we'll let you savour some photographs of the winners on the podium:



Winners of the food service competition



Winners of the tourisme competition

After the prize-giving ceremony the evening's entertainment continued with a sumptuous gala dinner. As we sipped our sparkling chardonnay aperitif, the service brigade of students filed in, dressed in black and white uniforms, to loud applause from the guests. The atmosphere was as joyful as you would expect at such an event, and when the first participants had to resign themselves to leaving the Sports Centre because their transfers to Tallinn airport were waiting, the moment had come to say 'goodbye' and see you next year in Dubrovnik!



The flag is officially handed over to Antun Perusina from the Dubrovnik school which will organise the Annual Conference in 2009

Elections in 2009

The next Executive Board elections will take place in the spring of 2009. One representative will be elected for each country, and the mandate of the new members will run from the date of the Dubrovnik Annual Conference in November 2009 to the date of the Conference to take place in the autumn of 2012.



The outgoing Executive Board at its meeting in Kuressaare

It is the responsibility of each current national representative to arrange elections in his or her country in accordance with article 10 of the house rules. To help with this task the AEHT Head Office will send out in March 2009 an information pack containing model documents and a set of labels with the addresses of each national membership. The call for candidates and the election itself must take place in March/April 2009. Any director of a member school is entitled to be a candidate. If a run-off is needed, a second round must be organised in May 2009. The result must be notified by May 30th 2009 at the latest to the AEHT Head Office, which will send out to all AEHT members the list of the future representatives on the Executive Board. At the same time the Head Office will publish information about the Presidium posts to be filled from November 2009 and will send out a call for candidates to the newly elected national representatives. In order to ensure the smooth running of meetings and events, it is desirable for candidates to have a good knowledge of at least one of the AEHT's two official languages. The names of the candidates must reach the Head Office by September 10th at the latest, and will be sent out at the end of September to the new Executive Board which will elect the new Presidium in Dubrovnik. In autumn 2009 an extraordinary General Assembly will have to be convened to decide on the length of the mandate for the newly elected members of the Executive Board and of the Presidium: will the length of the mandate remain three years, or will it be extended by a year in order to allow more time for the officers to complete their projects during a period of office which is currently felt to be too short?

Seminar on White Truffles from Istria

The 'Antona Stifanica' Hotel and Tourism School ran a seminar on October 2nd-4th 2008 on the subject of 'White truffles between tradition and contemporary culinary arts' in Poreč, a town founded two thousand years ago on the west coast of the Istrian Peninsula in north-western Croatia, with the distinction of being a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Poreč



The Antona Stifanica Hotel and Tourism School

The seminar began with a presentation by Denis IVOSEVIC on the history and evolution of the Istrian truffle, given in the host school's lecture hall. Ten years ago the local population was not aware of the real value of this noble fungus which was sold on to the Italians, and truffle hunting was unregulated. Over the following years international truffle experts were invited to Istria, and teams were sent for training to Italy and France, and famous chefs were invited to Istria to teach local restaurateurs how to use truffles in gastronomy – with the result that a local truffle industry quickly developed.

Then came a presentation concentrating on the properties and uses of the Istrian truffle given by Vlasta RADOIČIĆ, General Secretary of Bio-Istria, an association set up to encourage organic farming and to conserve the Mirna River and its rich and fertile valley.



Tuber Magnato Pico



Participants au séminaire

During the reign of Maria-Theresa in the 18th century Istrian truffles were already appreciated for their aphrodisiac properties and for their ability to improve the quality of life, to make you happy and to extend

your longevity. Nowadays other medicinal properties are attributed to the Istrian truffle:

- Lowering the cholesterol level;
- Improving the cardio-vascular system;
- Providing a rich source of vitamin B2 in the form of riboflavin and beta-glucan;
- Containing a high level of mineral trace elements.

After this lecture it was time for lunch and for the first practical white truffle test – a meal washed down with delicious white wines from the region. The afternoon was spent visiting Poreč, and the following day there was an external ‘workshop’ which began with a visit to ‘Tartufi ZIGANTE’, the only company in Istria authorised to buy the gathered truffles and to process them into various gastronomic products. After a visit to Motovun, probably Istria’s most beautiful medieval site, lunch was served at the Kaštel hotel, housed in a 17th century palace. There the participants sampled authentic Istrian dishes, accompanied by truffles from the forests of Motovun and the best wines of the region.



Truffle hunter



15th century city gate

The afternoon programme included a truffle hunt for the white truffle or *Tuber Magnato Pico*, in a thick oak forest near the Mirna River. Harvesting truffles is no easy matter. On average a truffle hunter finds 1.5 kgs of white truffles each season. It is an interesting fact that the ‘Tartufi ZIGANTE’ company buys 90% of all Croatian white truffles (around 700 kgs per year) while their total truffle production, including both white and black truffles, is 3,500 kgs per year. The seminar finished in the Zigante shop in Livade, where participants could buy articles that would convince their colleagues back home that the seminar had been a success. A more detailed report, containing Louis Robert’s impressions of the seminar, may be read on our website at www.aeht.eu.

THIS AND THAT

News from AEHT members

In view of the scale of the cooperation project and its importance for the personal and professional development of the SENA participants, we have decided to devote a large section of the ‘This and That’ column of this Newsletter to the European study visit carried out by 16 Colombian students from the SENA. But first of all I’d like to report on my interview with Marco Esposto, director of the Casa della Divisa, one of our most faithful professional partners.

1. Casa della Divisa – a family tradition dating back several decades

The Casa della Divisa celebrates its tenth anniversary on December 17th 2008, but this company, supplying professional uniforms which can also be personalised, is built on a solid family tradition. In 1950 Marco Esposto’s uncle was already designing uniforms for public services (local authorities, hospitals, etc). In 1961 his parents (his mother was a seamstress, his father a trader) decided to open a retail business to sell these articles. Thanks to his parents’ experience and to his collaborators’ knowledge of the field over more than 30 years, Marco Esposto has been able to source his uniforms from the best manufacturers, almost all of them based in Italy.

Nowadays the Casa della Divisa is a well-established brand. The value for money, the design and level of service have for a long time been winning over professionals, schools and individuals. There is an excellent reason why the company now counts famous names among its clients, such as the car-maker Ferrari, the RAI and Gambero Rosso television channels, the Forni Moretti and Vissler manufacturers, young European restaurateurs as well as famous chefs such as Gualtiero Marchesi, Fabio Campoli and Paolo Rossetti, a chef who works with Sirman (an Italian importer of microwave ovens for professional kitchen facilities). Moreover the Casa della Divisa was the first shop in Italy to address the needs of famous chefs. Today a large number of schools use its services. This adventure began 18 years ago when Marco Esposto together with former director Alfonso Benvenuto and his teachers at the IPSSARCT A. Panzini in Senigallia developed professional uniforms which were specially designed

to be robust and suitable for students to wear when working in the kitchen. The jackets worn by students in the kitchen also bear the student's name and the name of the school, and this distinguishing feature contributed to the school's reputation abroad. Eight years later the collars of these jackets were made in the European colours to symbolise the school's European involvement. In 2004 the Casa della Divisa also made a commitment to Europe by becoming a privileged professional partner of the AEHT.



Marco Esposto, director of the Casa della Divisa



Paola Antoni, a highly valued collaborator

AEHT members from outside Italy are offered the same prices as those in Italy, except for the delivery charges which can be very low by surface mail. On the company's website at <http://www.casadelladivisa.it/> you can find the complete range of products available, which can of course be adapted to the needs of each school (colour, logo, names, etc). A set of samples including all the sizes of the uniforms selected by a school is sent to the school to make it easier to try them on and to place the order. The website also includes a programme enabling schools and individuals to place their orders easily. As soon as the company receives the order and payment (via bank transfer) the student receives his or her bundle and can exchange (as long as the original packaging is kept) any article which is unsuitable. Also, in the course of the year, when students need to add to their uniform (to carry out a placement for example) they retain the privilege of buying articles at a low price by e-mailing or faxing their order.

2. SENA Students spend time in Europe

The St-Quentin-en-Yvelines Hotel and Tourism Professions School in Guyancourt pulled out all the stops to provide a rich and varied experience for the 16 SENA students during their eight-week stay in France; not only were they able to attend tailor-made classes at the school, they also took part in site visits and outings which few French students are fortunate enough to enjoy.

As the organisers said, the AEHT has given a fantastic European dimension to this project and enabled 12 of the students to extend their stay in Europe by a week by undertaking a study visit to another AEHT school elsewhere in Europe; four of the Colombian students stayed in Paris, because they had attended the Annual Conference in Kuressaare.

Reporting certain aspects of their study visits gives us the opportunity to take part in a little tour of Europe and to share with you some local riches and cultures of the host regions. Perhaps this will inspire you to want to share yours with the SENA's next delegation.

The programme almost fell through because of a strike by Air France pilots. The Coimbra flight alone was cancelled three times and it was finally only on Sunday night that the flight took off. On their arrival the 12 students settled into their respective host towns – where several of them lived with families.

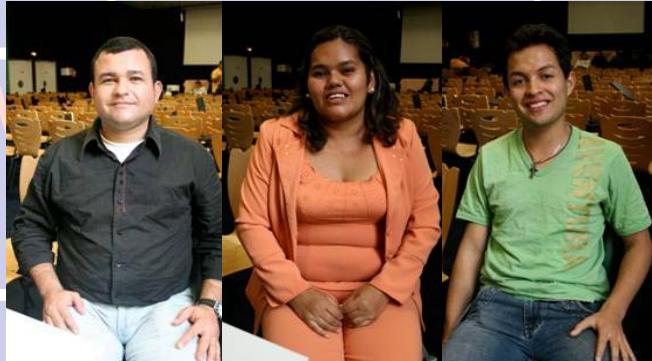
In Coimbra, Arelis Londoño Sepulveda and Dawin de Jesus Torres, both culinary arts students (one from Bogotá, the other from Cartagena de Indias) began their week with a guided tour of the school and of Coimbra old town. On Tuesday they took part in activities in the kitchen and the following day they visited the industrial Vasco da Gama pastry factory; they spent lunch-time and dinner-time in the kitchens at the Hotel Quinta das Lágrimas, Coimbra's most renowned five-star hotel.

On Thursday they worked with tourism students during a day devoted to Colombia: it started with a presentation of Colombia and was followed by a Colombia-style lunch organised by the two guests. Friday was spent visiting the Aliança wine cellars in the Região Demarcada dos Vinhos da Bairrada, and other cellars and vineyards of the region, as well as the Palace Hotel da Curia, an enchanting hotel located in a national park, the Mata Nacional do Buçaco not far from Coimbra.



Culinary arts classes in Coimbra

In Copenhagen Nancy Carvajal, Adolfo Torres Gómez and Edgar Julián Rojas, culinary arts students from Pitalito, Medellín and Bogotá respectively, settled into the school's hall of residence in the company of a young Swede who also spoke Spanish, having been on a placement in Costa Rica.



Adolfo Torres

Nancy Carvajal

Julian Rojas

Their stay began with a guided tour of Copenhagen and its tourist attractions such as the little mermaid and the Tivoli gardens, a pleasure garden opened in 1843 and well known throughout the world. They lunched in the Tivoli Gardens; then on Monday they attended culinary arts classes delivered in English at one of the two campuses of the Copenhagen hotel school, in Niels Hemmingsens Gade. Their programme also included a tour of the Danish company, Carlsberg, one of the world's largest brewing firms.

Wednesday was mainly spent attending culinary arts classes. On Thursday our Colombian guests took the Øresund bridge/tunnel to cross into Sweden and to

visit Malmö, the Swedish city which is closest to Copenhagen. At 7845 metres long the Øresund bridge, completed in 2000, is the world's longest suspension bridge. After running for 4,055 metres across the artificial island of Peberholm, which was specially built for the bridge, the motorway and the railway line disappear into a 3,510 metre-long tunnel as far as the Danish island of Amager where Copenhagen's Kastrup international airport is located.

On Friday morning the students discovered the school's second campus where most of its kitchens are located – the building at Flæsketorvet 60. Next they visited the market just next door, where all of Copenhagen's restaurateurs as well as the host school buy all their foodstuffs. Moreover the school's director, Søren Kühlwein Kristiansen, is a member of the market's board of directors. On their way back they called in at the City Hall where by chance an exhibition on vocational training options happened to be running that week. The three Colombians found this most interesting and spent a good hour at the exhibition before returning to Niels Hemmingsens Gade.

On Saturday afternoon they left very pleased with their stay in Copenhagen; it was snowing, something very strange for Colombians who had never seen white flakes falling from the sky.

The Senigallia school hosted the youngest members of the group: Ernesto Camilo Franco, Inyer Armando Caro and Axel Rafael Yépes, all of them culinary arts students. After a restful weekend spent with their host families, they spent each morning of the week in classes in the 3rd form cookery laboratory. We've been assured that they now know how to make a real Italian pizza and an authentic bolognese sauce etc. On Tuesday they even attended a class on preparing real Italian tortellini, followed by a guided tour of Senigallia organised by a tourism class accompanied by their tourism teacher and by a French assistant.

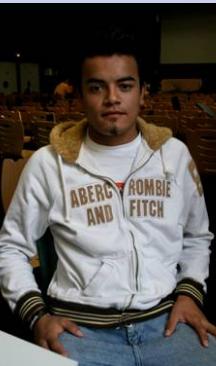


The Senigallia Rotonda

On Thursday afternoon they visited the wine cellars of Stefano Mancinelli in Morro d'Alba, where the young Colombians learned about the wine-making processes for Lacrima di Morro (red) and Verdicchio (white), for Muscat wines (white and red) as well as for certain spirits. They were all in high spirits following the tasting and apparently on the way home the reggaeton (Colombian music – a mixture of reggae, hip-hop and rap in Spanish) added a little spice to the already glowing atmosphere. As a finale to this memorable adventure, on Friday evening a group of seven achieved the remarkable feat of eating a two-metre-long pizza.



Ernesto Camilo Franco



Inyer Armando Caro



Axel Rafael Yepes

In Luxembourg, Liliana Guzmán and Luis Fernando Romero, respectively students of food service and culinary arts, spent their first evening in the company of the Honorary Consul of Colombia, Marc Schintgen, discovering Luxembourg by night, which had been transformed thanks to a festival called Trees and Light – an event which lights up the city's trees through projects by contemporary artists using ecologically produced energy. Then came a stroll along the Corniche above the old city's ramparts – a UNESCO world heritage site. In the past the Luxembourg fortress (a sort of buffer zone between the different empires) was a coveted prize and the four sovereign powers reinforced and developed the city's defensive systems in four main stages. The Spaniards (1671-1684), the French under Vauban, Louis XIV's engineer (1684-1697), the Austrians (1715-1795) and the Prussian garrison as part of the German Confederation (1815-1867) made a considerable contribution to these defences. Thanks to Célestin Kremer, guide of the Association of the Friends of the Luxembourg Fortress History, Liliana and Luis Fernando explored some of the underground galleries (holding torches and wearing rubber boots) – tunnels which are normally closed to the public. They then made their way into the main sewer which runs for 960 metres beneath the city centre. It's quite something to think that you are in the old military well

65 metres beneath the Place d'Armes, a historic square in Luxembourg!



1685 military tunnels



On the way to the 'Grund'

On Sunday morning our two guests visited the Fäeschthaff farm in Contern and admired the rearing of Limousine cattle and Holstein-Friesian dairy cows which provide the meat and milk production marketed under the 'Luxlait' quality label and the 'Cactus Rëndfleesch vum Lëtzebuerger Bauer' (Beef from Luxembourg Farmers) label. This latter guarantee is accredited by the Luxembourg government and ensures unparalleled quality and safety for meat. Then came an excursion to Trier in Germany in the company of one of Luis's childhood friends who settled in Luxembourg three years ago. The tour included a visit to Karl Marx's birthplace, to St Peter's cathedral and to the Porta Nigra, a fortified gate from the Roman period.



Visit to the Fäeschthaff farm and to the medieval castle in Vianden



Karl Marx's birthplace in Trier

Over the next two days our guests took part in a whole range of classes relevant to their training. Several times Liliana joined classes provided for the 11 Vietnamese students hosted for a year at the LTHAH as part of a programme of cooperation between the foreign ministries of Luxembourg and Vietnam. On Monday the two students got really stuck in (quite literally in the case of Luis who spent the whole day with his hands in pastry under the watchful eye of Ronny Thill) preparing food for the dinner given to celebrate the retirement of four members of the school's staff, including the AEHT's accountant Norbert Richartz.



The retirement party at the LTHAH



The LTHAH team responsible for food service at the retirement party which included N. Richartz, the AEHT's accountant

On Tuesday, under the distinguished guidance of the chef Hang Nguyen, (a former student and teacher at the LTHAH, a member of the Luxembourg national chefs' team from 2004 to 2007, silver medal winner at Expogast in Luxembourg in 2006 and winner of many other prizes) Luis prepared the meal for the Vietnamese evening given at the training restaurant at the Star Hotel. During this time Liliana attended the food service classes with practical instruction teachers Patrick Wagner and Patric Bredimus; the latter also supervised the food service throughout the evening

with that exceptional endurance for which he is famous. An example to be emulated by all students of food service.



*Vietnamese evening at the STAR Hotel
The whole team is pictured around Hang NGUYEN (wearing black) a former member of the Luxembourg national chefs team*



*Menu for the evening:
bun bo Hue soup
Pho Hanoi soup
Rice soup with chicken*

*Tilapia with pandanus leaf
Sea bass with tamarind
Steamed filet of sole*

*Grilled chicken with Kaffir leaf
Pork with caramel
Beef curry with coconut milk*

*Chef's dessert
Flambéed pancakes*

Patric Bredimus said that he was very pleased with Liliana's energy displayed during this evening, and the school's chefs generally praised Luis's interest and desire to learn.

When asked for their impressions, the two Colombians assured me that they were enormously impressed by the LTHAH's facilities and by the quality of the classes provided by its teachers. Luis said that 'work in the kitchen is very technical' and observed that 'work was carried out in groups or brigades, each of which is perfectly directed by a chef, adopts a precise function in the production chain and operates with great precision in a process where everyone has to show a lot of discipline.' Liliana added that 'work in the restaurant was very orderly and disciplined and was also carried out in brigades, thus ensuring rapid, efficient and high quality service.'



Mingling with Vietnamese girls at the LTHAH



R. Thill in the middle of a demonstration during a practical pastry class

On Wednesday morning they attended classes on butchery with Paul Hamen, on wine-studies with Jean Strubel and on food service with Gast Lux as well as on beer with Josette Decker; then in the afternoon the two students visited Villeroy & Boch, an international company in Luxembourg city, in the company of the AEHT General Secretary. Georges Schmitz guided us through the exhibition rooms where the company's collections are displayed; then we were escorted by Robert Huberty through the production plant – so that our two Colombians now know all there is to be known about the company. They learned about everything, from the company's origins and its industrial development to the highly automated cutting-edge production methods. They observed the complete manufacturing process, starting with the high-pressure moulding, then the drying, the smoothing and the enamelling through to the firing, quality control and warehousing. It is interesting to note that the porcelain spends six and a half hours in a gas oven which is 64 metres long and reaches a maximum temperature of 1230°C – during which the porcelain loses 12% of its volume.

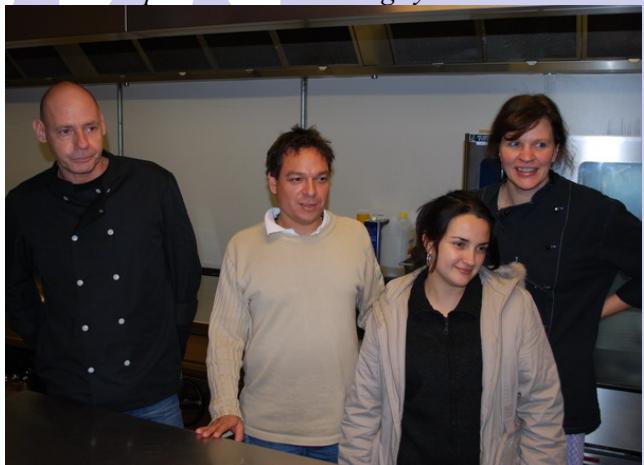
At Rollingergrund (L) the company now only produces superior quality table services for hotels and restaurants, as well as cups for most of their ranges and certain special items. Anyone wishing to acquire deeper knowledge on the subject is referred to the article on the 260th anniversary of the Villeroy & Boch company published in our May 2008 edition.

We should like to remind you that Villeroy & Boch in Luxembourg offers all AEHT school members a 50% discount on their professional tableware, on condition that they select this brand as their main tableware supplier. Please contact Mr Georges Schmitz (schmitz.georges@villeroy-boch.com).



Villeroy & Boch – partenaire professionnel de l'AEHT

On Thursday the two students paid a visit to the Neie Lycée, a public, full-time experimental school which operates on the principle of participatory learning (rather than talk-and-chalk teaching) based on cooperation between students, teachers and parents. In addition the students benefit from specific supervision – that is to say they are monitored individually by a teacher-tutor. In interdisciplinary subject areas the students build their own theme-based projects, thus enabling a more natural learning of traditional subjects. Top-up classes are provided, either to correct students' weaknesses in certain areas, or to give them extra instruction in the areas which particularly interest them. At the Neie Lycée the traditional assessment system based on marks is replaced by a system involving the assessment of the students' work by a pedagogical team appointed for the purpose. At the end of the cycle, the student's further studies and orientation are decided on the basis of a portfolio, a file which contains the students' main pieces of work together with comments and assessments from the teachers, as well as the opinion of the pedagogical team, of the students themselves and of their parents. Another feature of this school is that complementary activities such as theatre, music, gardening, needlework and particularly cooking, are used to complement this teaching system.



Thursday night's dinner at the Neie Lycée

Thus it was that after their visit of the underground galleries (see above), Liliana and Luis joined a cookery workshop run by teachers Luc Steinbach and Petra Wernsdorfer for the purpose of preparing a Colombian meal for the weekly Thursday evening dinner. At the end of the meal there was little left of the empanadas bogotanas, of the chicken with rice, pineapple and coconut milk, or of the banana tart. The strange thing was that Luis had never prepared this kind of food before. So it was a first for everyone!

On their last day at the LTHAH the students worked in the kitchen in the company of Martine Dahm and Laurent Antoine (coach of the national junior team which had won two silver medals at the Culinary Arts Olympics in October 2008 in Erfurt) or in the restaurant with Laurence Franzen, who speaks perfect Spanish having spent a year teaching at the Puebla Culinary Institute in Mexico. The day ended with a game festival for which the two students helped to prepare 71 covers. As they returned home exhausted at two in the morning in a snow storm, they were very happy to have learned so much in so little time, and to have seen for the very first time the countryside covered with a layer of snow!

Like most of the other Colombian students, Neyderman Giraldo and Gabriel Rojas suffered the effects of the Air France strike and only arrived at their destination on Sunday morning; then they had to take public transport from Prague airport to Poderbrady (50 kms away) as the girl who was supposed to meet them had given up and gone home. They spent their first evening in the company of PhDr. Eva Svobodová, director of the Poderbrady Hotel and Tourism School tucking into a typical Czech dinner of goulash and meat-balls.



Gabriel Rojas and Neyderman Giraldo hard at work

Monday's programme included a visit to the city of Prague, and on Tuesday three Spanish seminars had been organised under the guidance of the Spanish teacher, Ivana Stredova. On Wednesday they attended culinary arts classes with the host school students, and tried out their skills at fruit and vegetable sculpture – a

completely new experience for them. Thursday was D-Day, when they were busy from 6.00am in the kitchen of the training restaurant, which opened its doors at 11.00 for a day devoted to Colombian gastronomy. The menu was highly successful, given that 530 meals were served that day.



A special Colombian gastronomy day

Neyderman Giraldo and Gabriel Rojas pulled off a real coup; fortunately they could depend on help from the kitchen staff who were pleasant cooperative and curious, constantly keeping an eye on what the students were up to. In the afternoon students from the host school took them to the medieval town of Kutna Hora, a UNESCO world heritage site. It was no surprise that they needed a little rest before their departure for Paris and their return to Bogotá. They left the Czech Republic not only with some useful new professional knowledge but also with some text books in English published by the Poderbrady school and, we hope with a load of happy memories.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all the SENA students all the best with their professional careers. We may ask how we have already had an influence on some of their lives, knowing that one of the participants is already planning to open a restaurant together with the girl-friend he met in Paris, and that another candidate who had initially been an auxiliary nurse (not a stable job in Colombia) is now beginning a placement with the Mercure hotel chain; following the placement, if her employer is satisfied with her work, she will receive a fixed post with the hotel.



Thanks from the Colombian students who were so well received in Europe

The Director General of the SENA, Dario Montoya Mejia as well as the AEHT Presidium would like to extend their sincere thanks to all those who contributed in any way to the success of this cooperation project. The SENA hopes that this study visit to the AEHT's European schools is only the first step in even more ambitious exchange projects involving both students and teachers.



All that remains is for us to wish you an excellent festive season and a very Happy New Year in 2009.

Nadine SCHINTGEN
AEHT General Secretary

Texte : N. Schintgen in collaboration with J. Laengy et L. Robert

Photos: N. Schintgen, J. Laengy, L. Robert, S. Longhurst, as well as the SENA students and their host schools

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