

EUROMED-HERITAGE IV PROGRAMME

Gaia-heritage is part of the Regional Monitoring and Support Unit (RMSU) of the European Union Euromed-Heritage IV programme where Georges Zouain acts as project manager. The RMSU consortium is composed of HYDEA, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, AESA, Culturelab, and the London Metropolitan University.

In this context, Mr. Zouain has represented the programme at several international conferences (Medins International Conference – Intangible Culture and Intercultural Dialogue (Palermo – Italy); 4th ARCADE International Seminar – “Culture and Urban Development in the North/South Perspective” (Lille-France); etc.) and has participated in the evaluation of project proposals.

The programme consists of cooperation projects aiming at reinforcing the appropriation of heritage and its role in development. It will be officially launched in March 2009 at a conference in Marrakech (Morocco) and will last 3 years.

New collaborator at Gaia-Heritage

We are pleased to announce the recruitment of Ralph Tufenkji for our Beirut office. He will be managing some of our projects. Ralph is currently graduating with a Masters degree in International Relations (Université Saint-Joseph).



2nd International Conference of the Alliance of World Heritage Cultural Landscapes (Sintra – Portugal)

From the 30th of September until the 3rd of October 2008, Georges Zouain has attended the 2nd International Conference of the Alliance of World Heritage Cultural Landscapes (Sintra – Portugal). The title of Mr. Zouain's presentation was « Le tourisme durable, ou l'économie comme moteur du développement du lieu patrimonial – le cas des paysages culturels ».

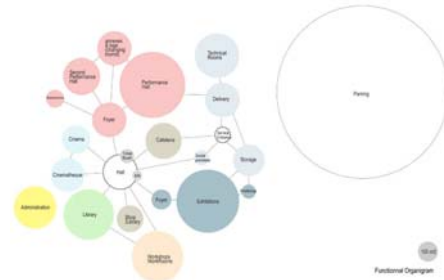
ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM IN BRASOV - Romania

The work for the creation of the Ethnographic Museum in Brasov (Romania) undertaken by GAIA-Heritage and CREATIME for the UNDP continued in 2008. The first phase consisting in putting forward the layout, the specifications of equipment, exhibitions and furniture drawings was completed and the documents delivered to UNDP.



“House of Arts and Culture” International Architecture Competition Beirut

This important project has represented our major undertaking of the year.



We have completed the works on the concept, the preparation of a scientific and architectural programme, the establishment of contracts with the International Union of Architects (UIA) and the constitution of an International Jury composed of reputed architects and art curators. On the 4th of July, we have launched the International Architecture Competition at the UIA General Assembly in Torino. At this ceremony, the Lebanese Minister of Culture gave a speech on the importance Lebanon gives to this project that will reinforce creativity in the country.

Hundreds of architects from more than 60 countries are now registered to the competition and the Jury is expected to meet in Beirut in March 2009.

For more information about the competition please refer to: www.darbayrut.org.

HISTORIC CITIES

Town of SPA (Belgium) – Water Cities Meeting

From 12 to 14 March 2008, Gaia-heritage has taken part in the Water Cities Meeting in the Town of SPA (Belgium). Participants exchanged theoretical studies and practical experience on the re-deployment of tourism in water cities. They identified management and marketing key issues to promote such cities as places of tradition and culture. Georges Zouain delivered a keynote on the theme of urban heritage and tourism.

Reykjavik city centre (Iceland)

The Archeological Heritage Agency of Iceland invited GAIA-Heritage to advice on threats by urban development projects to the historic centre of Reykjavik. Georges Zouain visited the city and the endangered historic centre from 27 to 29 March. He gave a conference at the National Museum in front of representatives from the Municipality of Reykjavik, heritage specialists and other stakeholders.



In his talk, he highlighted the economic values and returns of the built heritage and gave examples of best practices and of good relations between heritage and the economy. He concluded by a proposal for the revitalization and enhancement of the historic centre of Reykjavik. This has stimulated an in-depth debate in the media between the authorities and the civil society.

“Conservation versus Development of Historic Environment” (6-7 November 2008 - Bratislava)

The Monument Board of the Slovak Republic invited Gaia-Heritage to advice on urban development issues endangering the historic city centre of Bratislava. Georges Zouain visited Bratislava on 6 and 7 November 2008 and had discussions with the directors of the Monuments Board and other specialists.



A conference on “Conservation versus Development of Historic Environment” was organized at this occasion and Georges Zouain delivered a talk in which he presented similar cases and suggested a course of action that could be taken for Bratislava.

Publication of Gaia-Heritage Economic Analysis of the Alhambra y Generalife

Between 2001 and 2004 Gaia-Heritage undertook the first in depth economic analysis of a World Heritage site. This was done at the invitation of the authorities of the site.



This study has led to a thorough revision of the management and functioning of this World Heritage site: ticketing and times of visits, spread of visits, alternative heritage products, connection of the site with the city of Granada.

This study has now been published by the Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife and can be found in specialized bookshops.

Sevilla - “Torre Triana”

Gaia-heritage has been asked by Cajasol to provide advice for the erection of the skyscraper “Torre Triana” that it wishes to build in the island of La Cartuja. Monuments of Sevilla are World Heritage and this implies adequate conception and insertion of modern architecture in the city.

TOURISM

Halifax

The Universities of Leuven (Belgium) and Mount Saint Vincent (Halifax - Canada) have been preparing for an international cooperation to analyze tourism in WH sites and to develop a methodology. Gaia-Heritage has been invited to participate in the first meeting of this network (July 2008, Halifax). At this meeting the participants presented case studies from the Americas, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The World Heritage Tourism Research Network (WHTRN) that is being constituted will be housed in Mount Saint Vincent University and will operate through regional focal points. Discussions are now progressing for cooperation with the National Geographic Society (see information below).

National Geographic Society

Georges Zouain has participated to the National Geographic Society fifth Destination Stewardship survey conducted by the Society's Center for Sustainable Destinations in Cooperation with the George Washington University. The Survey findings are published in the November/December 2008 issue of National Geographic Traveler Magazine and will appear on the Center for Sustainable Destinations and Traveler websites (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/>)