



## **EXARC year report 2003**

As this is our first year report (even though we started our work in 2001), a lot might still have to be explained. For an overview over EXARC's goals and history, we refer to the website [www.exarc.net](http://www.exarc.net).

In 2001, EXARC started with 12 members. This number remained the same until in 2003 it was decided to take in new members. 10 Organisations, mainly archaeological open air centres, joined us in that year. It was as well the first year we charged a – symbolic – contribution fee.

At the beginning of the year in question, we decided our organisation was ready for some change and should pursue its goals more actively. However, we did with some more change than expected: August 2003 was marked with the loss of our first president and one of our founding fathers, Tomas Johansson from Sweden. This brought our work in Autumn to a stand still, when we had to reconsider how to continue. EXARC was struggling whether to stay a network of archaeological open-air-museum working together without the desire of making profits or to become a professional organisation.

### **Finances**

The financial report is summarised in attachment (1).

### **The centres**

After a short questionnaire in 2001, we have collected at the beginning of 2004 information on the year 2003, necessary to make clear where we all stand in relation and contrast to one another. The results are summarised in attachment (2). Members receive a full version of the results of the questionnaire.

2003 has all over Europe been strongly influenced by the heat of the summer. In Germany all the open-air-museums quoted a decrease of visitors. Additionally, the competition of amusement parks and other touristy attractions increases steadily. Often the price gets more important than the contents.

### **EU**

In Autumn, three EXARC members were strategically chosen to set up a Culture 2000 project (Uhdlingen (G) [large and middle Europe], Archeon (NL) [semi large and western Europe] and Arais (LV) [small and Eastern Europe]. It is to start in July 2004 and goes by the name Delphi. EXARC needs experience in EU projects and this is a way to collect such experience. It is due to all those who cooperated on it that a correct application was sent in.

The volume of the project "Delphi" is € 300,000. Half of it has to be paid directly by Uhdlingen, Archeon and Arais, the other half will – hopefully – be the EU contribution. If the three get the approval, they will discuss the way to present the presentation of their goals together with EXARC. It would be very good if the idea of a "House of Questions" could be carried out for many countries in different languages.

### Attachment 1: financial report over 2003

The books over 2003 show the following:

Start:

	0,00		
In:	membership fees 2003:		210,00
Out:	website costs & costs for international payment	57,90	
Leaves:			152,10 +/-

In 2003, we have not effected any payments apart of those above-mentioned. The costs for stamps, administration and organisation in the Pfahlbaumuseum were free of charge for EXARC, as well as the financing of the brochures and all the other tasks. The Pfahlbaumuseum considered these expenses as the financing of a common project. However, we should think about how to use the membership fees in the future.

Gunter Schöbel, treasurer EXARC

## **Attachment 2: what happened in the centres in 2003?**

EXARC counted 22 members by the end of 2003. 17 filled out the questionnaire, which results can be compared to information dating back to 2001 and 2002.

### **Visitor numbers**

In general, the hot summer took its toll; all centres together were attracting about the same amount of visitors but no expected growth! Some show a clear decline, others a clear rise: local differences are that high, that general European trends cannot be discerned. The smaller centres however had more chance to grow. Do realise, the largest centre has up to 100 times more visitors than our "smallest" centre.

We collected data on about 1 million visitors, probably 20% of all people visiting such centres in Europe.

Generally, the division between tourists and school groups is 4:6, but especially in the medium and small centres, there is a higher participation of school groups. They form a steady but generally low source of income.

### **Entrance fees**

The average tourist entrance fee for is € 4,79 for adults, children get a discount of 1/3<sup>rd</sup>. In many cases, family tickets (2 adults & 2 children) are used as these are one of the main recreational target groups.

### **Activities and shortcomings**

Here and there, more houses were constructed: a sign of progress and trust in the future.

Besides the known Viking markets and other events, extensive presence of living history is getting more important. Some special activities to be mentioned: experiments with gunpowder, open air theatre and the "return of the Crusaders".

The centres became better known, their public relations activities had a wider reach.

Despite of some good results, most centres describe the year 2003 as "difficult". Finances are still running short with the steady costs of running of a centre rising. This time, we did not ask for the percentage of support involved in the yearly budget, but this is in most cases quite small.

### **New projects**

There are a lot of construction activities all over Europe. In some cases it are repairs after fires, in other cases (almost) complete new centres are built.

The ambition is set high in many cases, both concerned the own organisation as well as reaching out into the region and into Europe.

### **Propositions for Cooperation**

Exchange of people, both in living history, education and experiment is a constant wish. Information exchange should as well be brought to a higher level. Further ideas are incorporated in both the Delphi Project as the LiveARC project.