

Members Newsletter February 2003

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Dear SIETAR Europe Members and Visitors,

We are delighted to be able to restart the SE Newsletter, now fully online with this February 2003 edition. We hope to make it a rich source of information both about SIETAR goings-on and other items of interest to the intercultural professions. Feel free to be a contributor (we are willing to publish in other languages than English as well). If there is anyone interested in sharing editorial responsibilities drop us a line at newsletter@sietar-europa.org.

Your SIETAR Europa Board of Directors

Summary of SE Board Meeting, 25-26 January 2003 in Utrecht

UPDATE - UPDATE - UPDATE

Dear members,

The SIETAR Europa Board met on the weekend. Here is our news:

1. Congress in Budapest:

Collaborating Across Borders - New Learning and New Strategies

The preparations are well on their way. Register early - the early bird price ends on February 15, 2003. [See details](#)

Please invite interested non-SIETAR members from your own networks. If you are not sure how to do this, please contact a [steering committee member](#).

The Congress will have several parts: [Online presentations](#) (we look forward to your submissions) - workshops - large group process around the Congress topic. Please ask us if you have any questions!!!

2. A New SIETAR

The rejuvenation process is on the way. There are more details in the minutes of the boards meeting with the national Presidents. Please welcome with us our new secretary, [Christine Longé](#). She is working very hard for all of us.

We are looking at a change in structure, services and at a different financial strategy.

3. Elections

The Nominations Committee has been very active, and is preparing the materials for the elections.

More candidates are still welcome! Go for it - either suggest candidates or yourself. Board work is a great learning opportunity, and a way to make new friends.

Best regards,
your SE Board Team

Francien, Oyvind, Jan, George, Klara, Sabine, Lijljana

SIETAR Presidents' and SE Board Meeting (Summary) Saturday, 25 January 2003, Utrecht (NL), Amrath Hotel 14:00 hrs. - 20:30 hrs.

STAY TUNED - SIETAR IS CHANGING - NEWS FROM AN IMPORTANT MEETING

New SE Secretary Results from Vienna New Structure and Statutes Congress

0. Welcome and Opening

Francien Wieringa welcomed those present, especially the new SE secretary, Christine Longé. Christine started with SE in October 2002.

1. Budget 2003 and Financial Themes

Klara Falk-Bano (SE Board Treasurer) presented the budget, and pointed out that the current financial situation is not sustainable in the long-term.

Frank Brück reported the results from the Vienna Congress: There were 487 participants (a very high number), which resulted in an income of EU 153,000. There are some outstanding payments of approximately EU 3,500. Expenses were roughly EU 90,000, resulting in a profit of about EU 60,000. The profits will be split according to the following formula: 40% to SIETAR Austria, 40% to SIETAR Germany, and 20% to SIETAR Europa.

In context of the discussion of the SE budget it was pointed out that it costs each SIETAR Europa Board Member approximately EU 4,000 per year, plus time and work, to be on the Board, and serve the organization. This is not conducive to a truly democratic representation of members from lower economic groups..

2. Role Structure & Communication

In conclusion, and after extensive discussions, the following points were agreed upon:

1. SIETAR Europa is in a transition phase.
2. Re-structuring the links between the SE Board and the national SIETARs is desirable. Statute changes will be prepared.
3. A more professional organization is desirable.
4. There is a desire for connection and better communication.
5. It is important to see each of us as "SIETAR Europa", rather than think in a division of "us" (national groups) and "them" (Europa)

Historically, SIETAR Europa existed first; local chapters have grown up at later points in time. Where we are now in the development of the organization, we need to be looking at a new and more efficient way of interaction between the national groups and SIETAR Europa.

There was agreement that we are in a transition phase in terms of the SIETAR Europa, and also in terms of the overall identity of the organization, from a small network of colleagues to a professional organization.

The participants jointly brainstormed what the functions of SIETAR Europa could be in the future:

Functions/Role:

- Benchmarking best practices
- Stimulate project on global or European level
- Provide/Find cooperation partners to fund projects
- Cooperation network for local research groups
- Promoting intercultural field to the future (younger members, next generations)
- Expansion and support of SIETAR, internationally and worldwide (new local SIETARs)
- External (non-local) representation (NGO, UN, EU, Council Europe...)
- Professionalism and professional standards for the intercultural field
- Offering professional services?
- Communication service infrastructure
- Meeting Point (and events)

4. Future Search Conference

Jeffrey Beeson, Entheos Group Munich introduced himself and explained how he became involved in the process with SIETAR.

Those present then shared their expectations for the Congress. As a result, the following clusters of expectations/needs emerged:

- Process (is it the right process? right time? will it deliver? etc.)

- Professional Community (professionalization)
- Projects (practical projects, specific ideas etc.)
- Methods (collaborative learning, large group processes etc.)
- Financial (financial success, many participants)
- New Ideas/Change (change process, vitality, empowered and active members etc.)
- Intensified Networking (more community, deeper networking etc.)

The Congress can deliver on all these items but the success depends crucially on intensive communication with the members and everybody's commitment to the recruitment of external stakeholders.

All those present agreed to support the Congress and the future search approach, and emphasized that the conversation had contributed to their feeling of confidence, optimism and trust.

5. Fee Structure

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was not discussed in depth. There was agreement that, in the future, there should be a homogenous fee structure for all national groups.

Michael Thiel announced that SIETAR Germany will only be able to pay 12.5% of their fees to SIETAR Europa and has therefore cancelled its agreement with SE (December 2002) which foresees the payment of 25%. This measure has been taken in order to avoid budget deficits at SD for which he and Anette Hammerschmidt are personally accountable and liable.

6. Next Steps

Action Item: Proposals for Statute Changes

Francien Wieringa and George Simons of the SIETAR Europa Board and Michael Thiel of SIETAR Deutschland will meet in Mandelieu la Napoule prior to March 10, 2003, to write the drafts for the proposed changes in our Terms of Reference, so that these proposals can be communicated to the membership 2 months prior to the General Assembly, and then voted on during the GA in Budapest.

Present:

Francien Wieringa, SE Board
 Christine Longé, Secretary for SIETAR Europa
 Pavel Valentinovic, Young SIETAR, Congress Steering Committee, and SIETAR in formation from Poland
 Karla Eubel-Kaspar, SIETAR Germany
 George Simons, SE Board
 Klara Falk-Bano, SE Board, Congress Steering Committee
 Jan Verhoeven, SE Board, Congress Steering Committee
 Annette Hammerschmidt, SIETAR Germany
 Michael Thiele, SIETAR Germany
 Sabine Amend, SE Board
 Oyvind Aadland, SE Board
 Phillip O'Connor, SIETAR UK - late arrival
 André Cresson, SIETAR France
 Dr. Frank Brück, SIETAR Austria
 Liljiana Deru-Simic, SE Board
 Kitlin SIETAR Netherland - arrived at 14:10
 Jeffrey Beeson, Entheos Group - from 15:30

Budapest Congress...will you be there?

As of February 1 more than forty people have taken advantage of the earlybird registration fees to sign up for the innovative SE Congress in May.

We repeat the invitation to you to attend and to invite your stakeholders to join you in this important meeting that will influence the future of our profession and our organization. Earlybird registration has been extended to February 15 to enable those who only recently got news of the Congress to register advantageously.

For full details and registration, please go to the [Congress pages](#) of this site.

Reviews

Title: **MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN TECHNICAL PROFESSIONS**

Author: Lionel Laroche, Ph.D., P. Eng.

Publisher: Butterworth-Heinemann/Elsevier Science (Academic Press),
Oxford, UK or Burlington, MA, USA (www.elsevier.com)

Details: 2003, ISBN 0-7506-7581-0; pp. 238, Softcover,

General managers and customers often complain about communications when they interact with engineers and technical personnel. These cross-cultural communication problems can become acute with users try to comprehend instructions from technical support services or manuals. The dominance of high technology in the global marketplace seems to exacerbate the situation. The world's workforce has become more multinational, and those with technical competence are much in demand, regardless of place of origin. However, for those who use English as a second or third language, there can be difficulties in oral or written exchanges. Finally, a Canadian engineer who is also an intercultural communications expert has written a book that is sure to improve matters, if only those in varied fields of technology will read and learn from it!

MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN TECHNICAL PROFESSIONS has six easy-to-read chapters for increasing productivity among multicultural professionals, teams, and departments in all aspects of 21st Century technology. Dr. Lionel Laroche opens with a very comprehensive explanation of culture and the impact of such differences on both interpersonal and organizational relations. The author then examines the management of technical personnel, especially in terms of teams, technical communications, and career development. In his final chapter, Laroche projects into the future, offering astute insights on globalization and meeting its cross-cultural challenges. In addition, the writer provides five helpful appendices dealing with diversity and the HR trainer; North American demographics; technical education; technical professional associations; and a useful glossary of idioms and sports phrases used by North Americans. For all managers, especially those in technical positions, this is a pragmatic handbook. But for foreign visitors and workers in the United States and Canada, or outsiders who have to do business with North Americans, this is an essential guide for higher performance. And the analysis comes from a graduate of Ecole Polytechnique de Paris and the California Institute of Technology who has himself worked, consulted, and published effectively 40 countries

This is the fourteenth offering in the successful MANAGING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES SERIES, now published by Butterworth-Heinemann/Elsevier Science (www.bh.com/management). Recent Series releases of relevance were EURO DIVERSITY, UNITING NORTH AMERICAN BUSINESSES, GLOBAL STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUCCEEDING IN BUSINESS IN CENTRAL AND ESTERN EUROPE and INTERCULTURAL SERVICES. These

and other titles are spinoffs from the classic, parent volume, *MANAGING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES*, now going into a 6th edition and used in over 200 universities worldwide.

Reviewer: Philip R. Harris Ph.D., management psychologist and author; member of the European Business Review Editorial Advisory Board.

Title: **LIVE & WORK IN SCOTLAND**

Author: Nicola Taylor

Publisher: "The Live and Work" series of Vacation Work Publications,

Details: 2001. 255 pages, ISBN 1-85458-252-6

Nicola Taylor might have subtitled her book, "More than most Scots know about Scotland." Before you judge this unfair to the Scots, think for a moment about the know-how you have about how to find information in your own environment. The traveler and the expatriate may have similar intuitive skills in their native land, but most of this disappears once one has crossed the frontier to find work or a new home, hence the value of an explicit compendium of such good information that is hard to find.

One cannot help but be impressed by the range, quantity and quality of the data squeezed between the covers of this 255 page vademecum for those preparing to "Live & Work in Scotland." It is "hard data," the who, where, how, when, and how much of life in the Highlands and Lowlands, the city and the country, covering every step from making the decision to go to Scotland and departure preparation, through home finding and homemaking, daily life, employment, and even to retirement and death.

The book offers little "soft data", e.g., about the personal impact of moving to Scotland, the cultural values and communication styles of one's new Scottish neighbors and colleagues. This needs to be inferred from the author's advice how to use the information the book provides. The only exception to this is found in final section of the book. There, five short personal case histories are presented in interview form. This invite the reader to experience glimpses of the transition to living and working in Scotland through the eyes of others who have weathered the surprises and the disappointments as well as enjoyed the successes and satisfaction of acculturating to a new environment. Indeed, though this "soft" information is as essential as the hard data, the author has rightfully not cluttered this data trove with asides. These guides are elsewhere.

The book contains an adequate table of contents, but is not indexed, a disappointment to those who often find themselves saying, "Yes, I saw information about that somewhere, but, just where was that...?"

For those unfamiliar with the Vacation Work Publications, it is worth a look at their website at www.vacationwork.co.uk to discover a wide range of similar publications. Their products and their success are testimony to the fact that by and large, despite CD ROM and online learning, books are still portable, handy and attractive sources of information and learning. You may be abroad for quite a while and still benefit from such information sources, particularly as the the events of expatriate life unfold into new areas and challenges.

Book available from: Vacation Work Publications, 9 Park End St, Oxford, OX1 1HJ, England, Tel. +44 0 1865-241978 sales@vacationwork.co.uk

Reviewed: Dr. George F. Simons at www.diversophy.com. Dr. Simons is the author and editor of the DIVERSOPHY® series of intercultural training games and a consultant who

prepares individuals and teams for working interculturally both online and through expatriation. He is editor and an author of EuroDiversity: A Business Guide to Managing Difference (Butterworth-Heinemann, 2002)

Update on SIETAR Europa's online services

While all the SIETAR sites are linked to each other, it will be helpful to know where you are going for services and information, so here is an update of what SIETAR Europa is offering online.

- Currently as you read this, you are on the public website of SIETAR Europa at www.sietar-europa.org. The information on this site is open to anyone surfing the web, members and visitors alike. The monthly newsletter appears here. [The SIETAR Documentation Centre](#) is also a part of the public site though it has a separate navigation system.
- The SIETAR Europa Workspace is a "members only" site located on the servers of Management Center Europe at <http://quickplace.mce.be/sietar-eu>. This site, though it operates more slowly, is a place where you can begin conversations and exchange information securely with other members. In order to access this site you need an ID and a password. All registered SIETAR Europa members whose email addresses were in our files were issued an ID and password in June. Each new member is given a password upon enrolling. If you have not received or have misplaced your password for this site, please request a new one from the [office](#).
- We welcome assistance and volunteers who would like to contribute time to the websites, the documentation centre and the newsletter. Contact the [webmaster](#) if you are interested.