

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2012

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3RD WORKSHOP „ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO KNOW OUR NEIGHBOURS“

This 3rd workshop of the SCULTBORD project, a Grundtvig programme, aims to enable more people to undertake learning experiences, notably in other European countries. In our first Newsflash we informed you about the Grundtvig programme (http://www.aebr.eu/files/publications/SCULTBORD_Newsflash_1st_Edition.pdf).



http://www.aebr.eu/files/publications/SCULTBORD_Newsflash_1st_Edition.pdf).

The first session of the workshop was held at the Regional Parliament of Extremadura in order to show the mechanisms that regional Institutions of Extremadura put in practice to spread the Portuguese culture in this Spanish region. Some of these examples you can find on the next pages of this newsletter.



Photo: Junta de Extremadura

In total six speakers had presented different examples of spreading culture on border regions. The participants of the workshop were invited to two roundtables in which best practices of encouraging adults especially to come to know their neighbours have been presented by experiences.

These practices aim to bring people closer together and to discuss cultural barriers as language and different administration systems.

For a deeper insight to these practices you will find some presentations in this newsletter.

A better knowledge of the neighbouring country, its language and its culture will improve the relations not only at a social or cultural level but it will also help to improve the economical development.

„ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO KNOW OUR NEIGHBOURS“ WORKSHOP 27 OCTOBER 2011

Welcome speech by the President

The president of the Parliament of Extremadura, **Mr. Fernando Manzano**, welcomed the participants.

He explained the interest of the Institution in the project and promised to communicate the conclusions of the workshop to all groups represented in the Parliament.



Photo: Junta de Extremadura

Roundtable 1



Photo: Junta de Extremadura

Ms. Maria Isabel Nieto, Technical Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Regional Government of Extremadura, opened the first roundtable. She addressed the issue of adult learning as an important component of lifelong learning. Public administrations as helpdesks are really useful to fulfil this step. Professors and students need to be encouraged by political institutions.

Ms. Montana Hernández Martínez, head of the Cross-border Initiative Office, informed about the creation of the office and of the results reached by working with neighbours.

In 1993 the Cross-border Initiatives office was created as first step to approach to the frontier between Spain and Portugal. In 2003 euroace was created. This was the beginning of cooperation between the regions Alentejo, Centro and Extremadura. (<http://www.euro-ace.eu/>)

Since then, the border between these regions has been seen as a door of integration at the European level. The promotion of cooperation, projects and relations between Extremadura and Portugal as well as the organisation and calls for courses, e. g. excellent Portuguese language courses in Extremadura, with a very high participation and a lot of demand. Many handicaps like the language, political systems and different administrative systems led to a lack of confidence and there was a lot of bureaucracy related to INTERREG.

Nowadays a lot of publications are the main results of all efforts in cross border cooperation.

Some functions of the Cross-border Initiatives Office:

- Stimulation of all types of relations and cooperation projects between Extremadura and Portugal, advising and putting those involved from both sides of the border into contact
- Special support for and promotion of exchanges between Spanish and Portuguese schools, encouraging a harmonious coexistence among young people from a very young age (essential for knowledge, understanding and mutual respect)
- Edition and diffusion of publications on issues that effect relations between Extremadura and Portugal

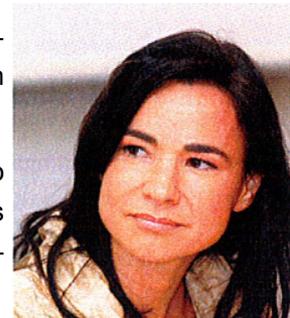


Photo: Junta de Extremadura



Lígia Borges, professor of Portuguese at the Official School of Languages in Montijo, is working as cultural and language representative of Portugal for Extremadura.

She was explaining to the participants her experiences and the proceedings from the 1980's on of adult education in Extremadura .

First of all, a degree for Portuguese teachers had to be created and they had to be taught to fulfil the condition to give Portuguese courses.

Photo: Junta de Extremadura

Nowadays, you can find a public school for adults, called „Escuelas oficiales de idiomas“. Around 500 students are visiting these schools and the quantity grows steadily. This growth could be found back at the Official School for Languages with interest in formal education. There are nine of these public schools in the region of Extremadura, where Portuguese is the second language in number of students, more than other languages as French, German or Italian. Only the motivation of the adult students changed from former times to now: in the beginning they were interested in learning the language for their leisure; afterwards, the interest was based on business reasons e.g. a plus for someone's carriers and not to lose the job.

At the end, Mrs. Borges talked about the cultural differences between Portugal and Spain. There are many misunderstandings due to false friends and other aspects of formality and habits in spite of similar languages.

„Learn Portuguese—it will open many doors for you“

Mr. Javier Figueiredo Capuz, is working since 2005 at the Cross-border Initiative Office of the Regional Government of Extremadura.

He was speaking about the „Agora—the Peninsular Debate“ history, which started in the year 2000 organized and financed by the Cross border Initiative Office. Main point was to identify the region of Extremadura as an annual meeting place. A meeting point to discuss misunderstandings, stereotypes and psychological barriers separating the Spanish and Portuguese people for years.



Photo: Junta de Extremadura

The general scheme is structured in four parts: **Academy, Arena, Scene and Chronicle**.

Ágora Academy is a programme consisting of specialized courses. These courses are aimed to experts and professionals to deal with points of interest or of current importance for both countries. No registration fee is requested and two specialists, one Spanish and one Portuguese, are in charge of the organisation of each course and they select the speakers and the participants.

Ágora Arena is a debate, conference or a roundtable open to a general public dealing with highly topical or controversial subjects.

Ágora Scene is standing for cultural, artistic or leisure activities offered in parallel to the courses, in public areas of the host city, like exhibitions, music and performing arts, etc. The Portuguese week at book shops and Portuguese gastronomy are some of the numerous events which took place in Cáceres, Badajoz and Mérida during Ágora. All the Portuguese flavour is spread over the Spanish cities to make it interesting by involving and sharing their knowledge with the neighbours. A framework of Spanish - Portuguese relations is build.

<http://www.agoraextremadura.es/>

All these actions are sponsored by the two public banks, Caja de Extremadura and Caja de Badajoz.

The Cross-border Initiatives Office edits an annual **Chronicle** in which specialists on the issues deal with the production of a light summary of the content of the courses and other themes related to Ágora, while reflecting the atmosphere of the events.

Roundtable 2

Ms. Marta Maia, a Portuguese citizen, worked for eight months at the Cross-border Initiatives Office of the Regional Government of Extremadura within her Master's thesis. She shared her experiences of studying and working in several European countries. In the beginning she had a lot of prejudices because of the history and experiences in the past. After learning and contacting more Spanish people, she realized that it is not that bad as she imagined from former memories. Nowadays, Ms. Maia is working with and for foreigners to promote closer contacts, the only way to break stereotypes.



Photo: Junta de Extremadura



Photo: Junta de Extremadura

Ms. Pruden Gutiérrez, teacher of Didactics at the University of Extremadura, treated the theme: "Coming back to school: Senior University".

The Senior University, called „ Universidad de los Mayores de Extremadura“ has been created in 1998. Main purposes of this university are giving a second opportunity and getting involved in social needs.

A society for all ages and an education of all for all are the motto of this project. In the last years a social demand on higher education was requested.

The main aims of this Senior University are to satisfy the wish of learning and the increase of knowledge. This happens by undertaking activities like visiting theatres etc., but also the wide spreading of sources for talking, cohesion, solidarity and democracy.

The overall result of these activities are responsible people in a new generation. Seniors citizens are not any more so dependant on any help, and they can find themselves integrated with the rest of the nowadays population without any shortcomings.



Participants of the workshop in front of the Regional Parliament of Extremadura, Mérida (ES)

Photo: Junta de Extremadura

Visit of the old town of Cáceres



Photo: picture result, Google

In the afternoon the participants of the workshop visited the old town of Cáceres.

The monumental city of Cáceres has always been the pride of Extremadura and a main jewel in the rich historic and cultural heritage of Spain. A city that amazes and surprises the visitors, and arouses the curiosity of anyone sensitized to art, history and culture.

Cáceres is the third most important monumental city in Europe and counts to a UNESCO World Heritage site. Its architectural heritage is almost intact and therefore Cáceres' economy rises with regard to the high number of tourists.

Cáceres was in the middle of a wide borderland between Christian and Muslim Kingdoms during the Middle Ages.

The city's history of battles between Moors and Christians is reflected in its architecture, which is a blend of Roman, Islamic, Northern Gothic and Italian Renaissance styles. Of the around 30 towers from the Muslim period, the Torre del Bujaco is the most famous and best preserved monument of Cáceres.

The city of Cáceres also has a vibrant arts scene with a sustained development of the flamenco dance and other Spanish artistic heritage. Cáceres has also been for 20 years one of the capitals of the WOMBAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance), the world festival promoted by Peter Gabriel since 1982.

The Old Town of Cáceres was inscribed as a [World Heritage Site](#) during the 10th [session](#) of the [World Heritage Committee](#) in Paris, France, on 24 - 28 November, 1986.



Torre del Bujaco

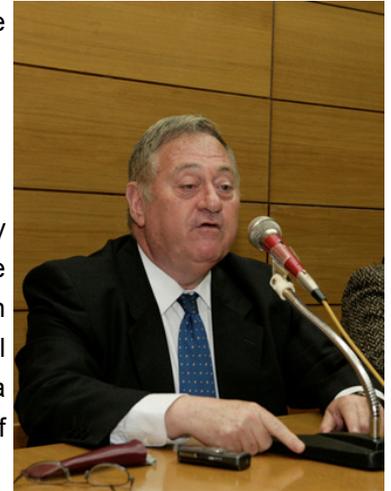
Photo: Wikipedia, Chemagato

Visit to the National Museum of Roman Art and Roman Monuments

On 28th October, the second day of the workshop continued with a visit to the National Museum of Roman Art and afterwards the visit to Roman Monuments in the city of Mérida (ES).

The last workshop entitled Lusitania, a common Roman past of Spain and Portugal, was pronounced by the director of the Museum, Mr. José María Álvarez.

He told about the close relationships between the Museum and Portugal, especially the collaborations with the National Museum of Archaeology in Lisbon and the Monographic Museum of Conimbriga (Coimbra). There is a way of cooperation which is permanently opened, sharing experiences and collaboration in archaeological investigations. As a result, there are several books published and compiled in a collection called *Studia Lusitania*, where there is a very important number of participants from Portugal and texts written in Portuguese.



José María Álvarez

Photo: Junta de Extremadura



Roman Art Museum

Photo: picture result, Google

The Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida holds the remains of many public buildings that were the trademarks of a major Roman provincial capital. Mérida was founded in 25 BC with the name of Emerita Augusta. The city became the capital of Lusitania province, and one of the most important cities in the Roman empire.

The museum is a centre for research into and diffusion of Roman culture, where conferences, colloquiums, lectures, courses, exhibitions and many other national and international events take place. It is built over part of the Roman town and on prior appointment visitors can see the foundations of Roman buildings and other remains in the basement.

Lastly, what makes the buildings of the National Museum of Roman Art in Mérida more important is its possibility to become the most important research centre of the Roman world in Spain, as well as a place of meeting, communication and cultural dissemination for Extremadura.

The visit to Roman Monuments

Merida is the capital city of the Autonomous region Extremadura, and is located in the Province of Badajoz. One of the most important Roman capital cities in the Iberian provinces of the Roman Empire, the city has today one of the best preserved collections of Roman monuments in Europe.

Amphitheatre and Roman Theatre: Outstanding. The amphitheatre was built in 8 BC and had capacity for 14,000 people. The theatre, donated to Mérida by the Roman Emperor Agripa in 16 BC, had a capacity for 6,000 spectators. Each summer a season of classical theatre is organised, although it is quite difficult to get tickets because of high demand.



Roman theater

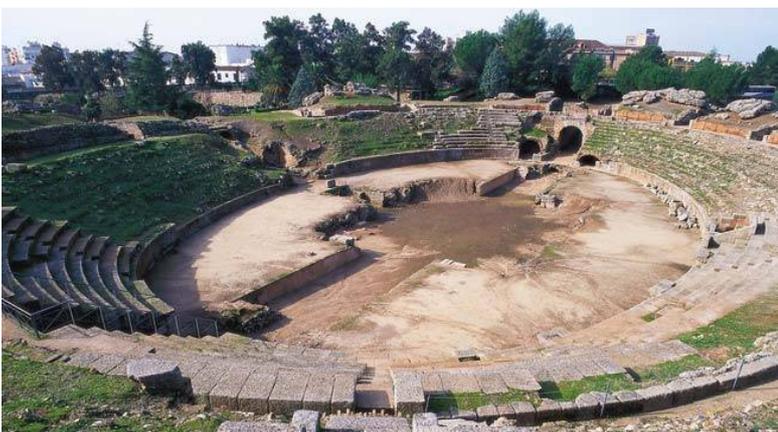
Photo: picture result, Google

In later centuries the theatre underwent several restorations which introduced new architectonic elements and decorations. The structure was restored to the current state in the 1960s-1970s, trying to keep the original aspect.

Besides, being the most visited monument in the city, since 1933 it hosts the Festival of Classical Theatre of Mérida thus returns to its original function.

Amphitheatre, Mérida

Photo: picture result, Google



The gladiatorial contests took place on the amphitheatre's arena. This monument belongs to Mérida's archaeological site, which has the UNESCO World Heritage designation.

It was officially opened in 8 B.C. and is located beside the theatre, making use of the slope of the hill of San Albín. There is a cross-shaped pit in the centre of the arena.

A contribution by a Portuguese living in Portugal on CBC and Culture:

Someone said that culture is all that remains after having forgotten everything we learned.

I think it is quite true. If we understand that the human being is a product of biology and environment, in its various facets and understandings, however, his own contribution, his own mark, the transformation that he produces, on its own initiative, rational or unintentional, wilful or negligent, in the surrounding environment is still important.

These considerations, somehow empirical and from the common sense, are not less important, however, to further the understanding of culture and its influence in the context of the border.

Often artificially drawn by the imposition of the times and of the policies, boundaries have always been, in one way or another, the scene of successive periods of struggle and calm in relations between peoples. We are, of course, within this second stage: we share a common area, either on the level of the Iberian Peninsula, and in the wider European context, a fact that has allowed us, from the late 80s of the last century, to share the important investments that have allowed to make tremendous progress in bringing people together and in the blurring of internal borders.

Not only the approach and the facilitation of physical accessibility has been a reality, but also the investment in the cultural area has been fundamental to the construction of a stronger, richer and more cohesive border area.

Between the Alentejo and its neighbouring Spanish regions of Extremadura and Andalusia - space to which I belong by integration in the Commission for Coordination and Regional Development of Alentejo (CCDR) -, this effort has been quite visible and crucial to the development of neighbourly relations, economic, social and cultural enrichment and development of peoples

Either we focused on the recovery of the built heritage, the preservation of both material or immaterial cultural elements, or on the development and dissemination of modern attractions and cultural enjoyment provided by the numerous forms of "cultural" tourism, the European instruments of territorial cohesion and cooperation have promoted investments of great value throughout the border zone and, therefore, in a direct or indirect way, have improved the conditions of access, provided jobs and an increased economic development, due, precisely, to the efforts to increase progress and to provide dissemination and cultural knowledge in these remote and disadvantaged areas of Europe.

Moreover, this effort has been made possible only by another form of 'culture': the sharing of engagement for the common good, working in conjunction, in a word, by CBC. This fundamental way of working together to achieve common goals already allowed the creation and launch of a joint strategy for cooperation between the Alentejo and the neighbouring regions, aiming at the 2020 horizon and its new cohesion policies, seeking to so act with a concerted and declared effort on the border area and to promote the development and the common good.

To learn more, please go to <http://www.euro-ace.eu/pt-pt> and <http://www.euroaaa.org/>.



Paulo Silva

Photo: CCDR Alentejo

Junta de Extremadura (Cross-border Initiatives Cabinet)

The functions of this Cabinet are the stimulation of all types of relations and cooperation projects between Extremadura and Portugal, advising and putting those involved from both sides of the border into contact as well as the direct organisation **and / or** technical and financial support for conferences and seminars on specific issues, Portuguese courses, congresses for entrepreneurs, art exhibitions, cultural activities and any other project of interest in achieving its goal. For more information, please follow this link:

<http://www.gitextremadura.com/>

Municipality of Kavala

In concrete in the area of education and culture the Municipality of **Kavala** has enough experience in the foundation, preservation and management of the existing educational infrastructure, establishment and operation of the local libraries, recreational centres management, local culture promotion via initiatives such as the public dance classes, museums and galleries, archeological sites protection, cultural festivities, exhibitions, cultural exchange in collaboration with cross-border regions. For more information, please follow this link:

<http://www.kavala.gov.gr/web/guest/home>.

Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)

The AEBR is a wide and multidisciplinary network, with members in 33 regions within and without the European Union. It works in general fields regarding Territorial Cohesion and Cooperation and especially Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC). It also develops its activities in Sectorial fields like CB Health, CB Transport Networks, CB Innovation and Development, CB Rural Developments and CB Culture and Education. AEBR's more than 100 members usually have their Culture and/or Education Committees, organized very often in a CB manner, and they enjoy the participation of many CB practitioners in cultural and educational related issues. For more information, please follow this link: <http://www.aebr.eu>.

Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Euroregion (DKMT)

The objective of the DKMT Euroregion is to support and encourage the cooperation between self-governments, local associations, participants in economy and citizens in various fields which can contribute to the stabilization, the integration in Europe, the social and economic development of the area. For more information, please follow this link: <http://www.dkmt.net/en/index.php?page=nyito>.

Fundação Eugénio de Almeida was established in the 1963 by Vasco Maria Eugénio de Almeida, a philanthropist working in the cultural, educational and social field. Aside from the backing of the projects of other entities, the foundation is driving force behind an integrated series of initiatives of its own, either exclusively or in partnership, covering the areas: Culture and education, social welfare and aid as well heritage. For more information, please follow this link:

<http://fundacaoeugeniodealmeida.pt/>.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry—Blagoevgrad is an NGO whose main activity is the representation and defence of interests of its members and participation in the economy and social life in the region of Blagoevgrad district. The chamber is a member of the Bulgarian-Greek Euroregion Strymon-Strouma, established to work for the development of the **two** border regions of Blagoevgrad and Serres. **One** of their **six** working groups is dealing with the field culture and education. For more information, please follow this link: <http://www.cci-bl.org/>.



EVENTS AND NEWS ON EUROPEAN CULTURE ISSUES

In 2012, the border cities of Guimaraes (Norte Region, Portugal) and Maribor (Slovenia) hold the European Capital of culture.

The AEBR is also paying attention to the debate, at European level, on Intellectual Property Rights, an issue affecting very deeply to Cultural enterprises and creators. In 2012, the European institutions intend to make deep progress in the complementation of the single market. Here intellectual property rights across borders play a major role.

Current initiatives are:

- a reviewed definition 1383/2003 on enforcement of these rights by custom authorities
- studies on the level of protection granted to trade secrets and parasitic copying
- prevention of unlawful use of musical and audiovisual work
- the ACTA (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement⁹, signed on 26th January 2012, this international treaty aims to set up a global international framework to combat breaches of intellectual property rights and the counterfeiting of numerous products; however it has created some concerns in the CZ, Poland and Latvia.

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