

## Report of workshops

### European Walled Towns Symposium - 30 September 2016

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This is a report on the outcome of the workshops held in the afternoon session of the European Walled Towns Symposium. Three workshop groups were asked to reply to the following questions:

- How can EWT better serve the needs of its members?
- As a member, what service do I expect from EWT?
- What service do we expect EWT to provide to the community – this being the people who live in the cities of EWT member?
- What should be our purpose? What should be the objectives of EWT?

The following is a summary of what was discussed. I took the liberty of adding my own comments and suggestions.

None of what is included in this report is the official position of EWT. It is the intention of EWT to discuss and consider the suggestions from the workshops.

The outcome of the workshops can be subdivided into five heading namely learning, networking, awareness, exposure and extending membership.

#### Learning

A key role of EWT is to enhance learning amongst its members. One group noted that can best be achieved through the exchange of best practice either by being present in person to a EWT symposium or else online on the internet. The website site could be used to exchange ideas, useful media articles and working papers.

My suggestion is to have part of the symposium dedicated to training sessions on specific aspects of walled towns. In this respect, the Archway guidelines produced by EWT could provide an excellent basis for such training. (<http://www.walledtownsresearch.org/2011/04/archway-documents.html>)

## Networking

EWT activities are an excellent opportunity for members to network and create new contacts. It is important for people to get together and discuss issues with people who have similar interests and who deal with similar work issues. Having the opportunity to discuss is a form of support for members.

Networking is useful for members' their own professional development but also for the purposes of identifying potential partners for EU projects.

It would be a good idea for EWT to network with other organisations which have a common interest. EWT could operate under an umbrella organisation such as ICOMOS, ICON or UNESCO WH Committee. It might also be a good idea to develop a partnership with another like-minded organisation and organise joint activities. This would create more opportunities for networking by members.

## Awareness

EWT is a means for towns to publicise themselves with other towns and also with the wider public.

EWT can be effective in raising awareness for issues revolving around walled towns including the need to protect town walls, the need to improve accessibility, the need to make effective use of space in around walls.

More effort is needed to raise awareness of the cultural and heritage value of town walls, especially among the young.

EWT could act as a lobby with EU institutions.

Walled towns seek support from EWT where there are specific issues where the urban heritage of the town is under threat (as was the case with Ljubljana) or where the city is seeking support for a particular cause (as was the case with Bursa).

## Exposure

Several groups spoke about the importance of more exposure of EWT amongst its members and also with potential members. Most of the suggestions on better exposure referred to more effective use of social media and more specifically of the EWT website.

One group suggested that place name plaques would include 'member of European Walled Towns' below the plaque's name. It raises the profile of the place and also of EWT.

#### Extending membership

One group noted the need to increase EWT membership. This is needed also to ensure continuity of the organisation as people change. Moreover, from each town there should not be just one person involved, but two or three. This ensures continuity in the involvement of that town in EWT.

EWT could consider a change in name to include old towns and not just be limited to walled towns. Although there are many issues that are specific to walled towns, historicity is a common factor both walled towns and old towns and therefore there are many issues that are common to both. The name could be changed to Walled Cities and Old Towns of Europe or Fortified Cities and Old Towns of Europe. EWT would not refuse a membership to an old town because it has no existing walls but changing the name in this way would be a signal to other cities to join.

EWT could also consider providing incentives for selected target groups to become members. One potential target group are individuals who have retired from the profession and who were involved in their working lives on urban heritage. On the assumption that they will be paying their own way to the EWT symposium, retired professionals could be offered significantly reduced registration for the symposium and two years free membership. For retired professionals it would be an opportunity to remain involved, to socialise with like-minded people and also to visit historic towns. Retired professionals would also have more time on their hands and could possibly contribute some time to EWT by, for example, providing information to be uploaded and shared with members.