

AEMI CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2010-2011

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my privilege to be reporting to you as Chairman for the ninth year in succession, and since this is the final occasion on which I shall do so, I should like to begin by recalling the words of our previous Chairman, Knut Djupedal of the Norwegian Emigrant Center, when he handed over to me at our **Annual Meeting in 2002 in Stavanger, Norway**.

Having reminded us of the origins of the Association – the initial meetings in Aalborg and Stavanger in 1989 and 1990 and the first formal meeting, now twenty years ago, in Bremerhaven in 1991, he set out the philosophy by which he had sought to guide us during his period of office. Our concern, he said, is with ‘one of the central aspects of the human condition: the movement of individuals and groups, and the consequent meeting of peoples of different races, languages, cultures and social organizations. Coming as we do, he said, from Finland to Portugal and from Croatia to Iceland, speaking twelve different native languages, and coming from countries which occasionally have had rather frosty relations, it has been important for us to spend time ‘getting comfortable with each other’, and to keep in mind that a fundamental basis of the Association is ‘friendly communication across boundaries, the counterweight to angry communication through violence’.

We met the following year in **Lisbon in 2003**, hosted by Professor Armando Oliveira and Professor Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade and their colleagues in the Open University there. I reported that the Board had met three times that year in Luxembourg, including a trip to Strasbourg to make a presentation to the Council of Europe. I should like to pay tribute in particular to the generous support and work of Antoinette Reuter and her colleagues in the Centre des Documentations in Dudelange, not least for putting us in touch with Michel Thomas-Pennette, Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes (<http://www.culture-routes.lu>) and his colleagues in Luxembourg .

In Lisbon, we were on the verge of submitting a major application to the EU Culture 2000 programme for the ‘European Migration Heritage Route’ project, which became a major topic for discussion amongst members. Also in Lisbon we celebrated the appearance of the first edition of the AEMI *Journal*, thanks largely to the hard work of its founding Editor, Hans Storhaug.

After that meeting in Lisbon last year, a small group representing AEMI travelled to northern Portugal to lend our support to Dr Miguel Monteiro and his colleagues in the municipality of Fafe who were planning a Museum of Emigration, building on the town’s particularly strong historic connection with Brazil, evident in its architecture of where the ‘Brazilian Houses’, built by returned emigrants, are a special feature.

In 2004 we met in Växjö, Sweden, hosted by Dr Per Nordahl and his colleagues at the Swedish Emigrant Institute.

I reported that although the Board had not met face-to-face in the course of the year, our effort had been mainly directed towards three main objectives: completion of an application for the European Migration Heritage Route Project to the European Union-funded Culture 2000 programme, which was done in November 2003; preparation for a pilot European Migration Heritage Week programme in October 2004; and production of the second issue of the *AEMI Journal*. The anticipated results of the European Migration Heritage Route project were:

1. Enlargement the Association of European Migration Institutions to include one member institution in each European state and thereby a more inclusive and effective trans-European network focused on migration heritage
2. Value added to European Migration Heritage through development of a new on-line 'European Migration Heritage Resources Portal'
3. Enhanced awareness of European Migration Heritage through establishment of a new, annual 'European Migration Heritage Week' (October), including an events programme, advertised and co-ordinated by the enlarged Association of European Migration Institutions Network
4. Improved access to European Migration Heritage through establishment of a new 'European Migration Heritage Route'

As it turned out, we were not successful with the funding application. Nevertheless, through the experience of putting together our application we learned a great deal about ourselves as an Association and our capacity and appetite for delivering such an ambitious programme and these remained our strategic goals.

In Växjö we welcomed several new members, launched the second issue of our *AEMI Journal*, heard many interesting papers on the theme of 'Connecting Contemporary Migration with the Past' and engaged in discussion.

When we met **in Paris in 2005**, hosted by Driss El Yazami and his colleagues in Genèriques, in the splendid setting of the House of Europe, I reported that the Board had had one face-to-face meeting in the course of the year, in Luxembourg, thanks again to Antoinette Reuter and her colleagues, as part of a seminar and major conference organised by the Centre des Documentations on 'The European Itinerary of Migration Heritage' which showcased the achievements of the Cultural Routes programme of the European Institute of Cultural Routes. If we needed any further convincing, this excellent conference impressed upon us how successful the European Institute of Cultural Routes has been in promoting a huge range of 'routes' or 'itineraries', and how important it was for us to make sure that the theme of migration was well represented.

A most pleasant and very exciting occasion during that year was the official opening of the new Emigration Museum in Bremerhaven, Germany – the Deutsches Auswandererhaus – on Monday 8 August. I was delighted to be there on behalf of the Association along with our immediate past Chairman Knut Djupedal, Antoinette Reuter and Wolfgang Grams. The Association received distinguished mention in the speeches. So did our long-standing member Jürgen Rudloff and his colleagues of the Förderverein Deutsches Auswanderermuseum. It must have been particularly

gratifying for them to see their dream realised in such an impressive new building. We should remember here with gratitude that it was Jürgen and his colleagues who hosted the meeting in 1991 at which the decision was taken to formally launch our Association. We should also remember them hosting our Annual Meeting Bremerhaven in 2000 when the announcement of funding for the new museum was made. Those of us who were in Växjö may well also remember the presentation of the new museum given to us by Simone Eick and her assurance that even though building had not even begun at that stage that it would be ready to open in August 2005 – as indeed it was!

What I said at the time of the opening was that “members of AEMI throughout Europe and beyond will be thrilled that this project has come to such successful fruition and it will be a great encouragement to them. It is difficult to think of more pressing challenge in Europe today than that presented by migration. What we know from history is that rapid social change rarely takes place painlessly and there needs to be serious investment in education if people are to adjust smoothly to new circumstances. Making the link between Europe’s long tradition of emigration to its ‘New World’ and current immigration is vital to our future well being and this new museum is a splendid example of investment that helps us to make that link. ... We look forward to working with this excellent new institution in taking a leading role in the development of migration studies world-wide.”

In Paris last year we welcomed several new members, launched the third issue of our *AEMI Journal* and heard many interesting papers on the theme of ‘Cinema, Literature and Migration’. I remember in particular the guided tour we had round the Palais de la Porte Doré, which was under renovation as the site of the new national museum of immigration history, *Cité de l’histoire de l’immigration*, which was due to open in April 2007. I also recall the fascinating tour of Paris by bus, designed by the staff of Génériques, based on the theme of migration and our visit to the Belleville district, which was to feature so prominently in the news after riots there few weeks later – a powerful reminder of what can happen when migration policy does not work.

This completed my first three-year term as Chairman.

In 2006 we were in Trogir, Croatia for our Annual Meeting, hosted by Silva Meznaric and her colleagues at the Institute for Ethnic and Migration Research, Zagreb. The venue for the Annual General Meeting that year was most unusual. In keeping with our theme, the whole meeting was truly migratory, beginning in the beautiful mainland town of Trogir and then moving to the island of Vis on board the ‘Adriatic Paradise’, with the Annual General Meeting being held on the return journey, against the noise of the ship’s engines.

I reported that it had not proved possible for the full Board to have a face-to-face meeting that year but that Hennig Bender, our then Secretary and Treasurer and I had been able to meet, once more at a seminar in Luxembourg, which included a series of papers on Migration Database, thanks to the Centre des Documentations in Dudelange. One important development that I was able to draw attention to was the publication of the ‘Migration Heritage Map of Germany’ by the German National Tourist Office (www.cometogermany.com) with the assistance of Wolfgang Grams,

which has since provide an inspiration and model to others. Another useful model was the migration tour of Paris and associated brochure developed by Génériques.

I also reported that just as we had been delighted the previous year to welcome as new members the Museum of Emigration and Communities in Fafe, Portugal, represented by Miguel Monteiro, and the Kinship Center, Karlstad, Sweden, represented by Erik Gustavson, we were now pleased to welcome intentions to apply for membership from representatives of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris and the Association pour la Maison de la Memoire de l'emigration des Pyrenees at du Sud-Ouest de la France, and also to receive an application for associate membership from the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York. It was also a special pleasure to welcome Benan Oregi from the government of the Basque country who had visited several member institutions, including my own, that summer.

I also said that the opening of a national museum concerned with migration in France in April 2007 would be a major development in our field, like the opening of the German Emigrant Museum in August 2005. I said 'all the indications are that migration will remain an issue at the top of the political agenda for all the countries of Europe for the foreseeable future, whether as mainly receiving countries or sending countries, and the force of the argument for more investment in migration studies of all kinds is increasingly apparent. The better we understand our migration heritage, the more likely we are to make good decisions about current migration policy and respond well as citizens to the challenges that current migration brings'.

One major project that several of our member institutions were then engaged in exemplified this well. This was the Youth and Migration Project 2008, involving collaboration primarily between Stavanger, Norway and Liverpool, England, in which Hans Storhaug took a leading role. Our colleagues in Dudelange were also then planning an important migration project for 2007 when Luxembourg would be European Capital of Culture.

In 2007 the Annual Meeting took place in Finland for a second time, kindly hosted in Turku once more by Olavi Koivukangas and his colleagues at the Institute of Migration in their splendid new premises.

I reported that the Board had held one face-to-face meeting during the year 2-3 July in Aalborg, Denmark, thanks to the hospitality of the Secretary and Treasurer, Henning Bender. There we reviewed our Strategic Plan, noting that since the Annual Meeting in Portugal (2003), the Association has gained 7 new members (in Croatia; in Germany (Ballinstadt); in Italy (Genoa); in Portugal (Fafe); in Scotland (Scots Abroad); in Sweden (Kinship Center and Immigrant Institute). Regrettably, we have also lost 4 members in Iceland; Ireland (Dunbrody); in Germany (Hamburg); in Italy (Rome); in Denmark (Farum). We also noted that some member institutions had paid subscriptions consistently but never managed to send a representative to an Annual Meeting, and we discussed possible ways of encouraging them to do so.

We also discussed the conference on Migration Museums that was held 23-25 October 2006 in Rome, jointly organized by UNESCO and IOM with the objective of exchanging information on the role of migration museums in promoting migration integration policies and cultural diversity. This was a major new initiative in our field

and four of our member institutions were represented at the conference (Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade and Miguel Monteiro from Portugal, Miguel Benito from Sweden and Agnès Arquez-Roth from France).

In Finland we noted with pleasure the announcement in May that Simone Eick and her colleagues at the German Emigration Center, Bremerhaven had been awarded the title of European Museum of the Year, 2007. Another gratifying development in July that year was the official opening in Hamburg of BallinStadt – ‘Port of Dreams – Emigrant World Hamburg’, and we were delighted that Ursula Wöst from BallinStadt was there with us in Finland to give a first-hand account of the project.

So far as the work of the Association as a whole was concerned, the main highlight of the year was the news from Antoinette Reuter in Luxembourg that our ‘Migration Heritage Route’ had been officially approved by the Council of Europe in April, and that there was to be a formal presentation of the charter at a special ceremony to be held in Luxembourg on October 5th at which the ambassadors of all our countries would be present.

As Antoinette frequently reminded us in those years, the main activity associated with the ‘Migration Heritage Route’ was ‘Migration Heritage Week’, which we designated as 4-14 October. That we have got as far as we did with this project, I need hardly remind you, was largely thanks to the initiative and hard work of Antoinette and her colleagues in Luxembourg in working closely with the European Institute of Cultural Routes.

Another highlight that year was the official opening in July 2007, immediately after the Board meeting in Denmark, of the Museum of Emigration and Communities in Fafe, Portugal. I am glad to have been able to attend that occasion on behalf of the Association at the invitation of Miguel Monteiro and his colleagues. As I have already mentioned, after the Annual Meeting in Lisbon 2003, hosted by Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade, some of us made the journey north to the town of Fafe to be shown the ambitious plans for this new museum. Some of us wondered if they were not being overly ambitious, requiring as they did the full backing of the municipal authority. What impressed me especially at the splendid opening was how wholeheartedly not only the municipal authority but also the national government was supporting this imaginative project that daringly incorporates the evidence of migration that is to be found in the townscape, in buildings such as the so-called ‘Brazilian’ houses.

One of the benefits of attending the opening of the new museum in Fafe, Portugal, was the opportunity to meet with Luc Gruson and Agnès Arquez-Roth of the Cité Nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration, Paris, and also Carine Rouah of UNESCO who was also in attendance. Carine was one of the main organisers of the Rome conference and I am delighted that she has been able to come to address us here in Finland about her project. In choosing to focus on ‘museums’, I said that I believed that this welcome initiative may be missing a trick: ‘A main strength of our Association has been the vision of its founders in seeing the need for all institutions concerned with the documentation, research and presentation of migration to come together. As we know, migration, relatively-speaking, is an ‘artefact-poor’ area of human experience (unless we are prepared to take the imaginative ‘outdoor’ approach of our colleagues in Fafe) and our understanding of migration has to rely on the

collections of libraries and archives as much as on those of museums. We see this, for example, in the way that Bremerhaven avoids the exclusive description of itself as a museum, calling itself the *Deutsches Auswandererhaus* or German Emigration Center, incorporating not only a museum but a migration archive that supports family history research.

Nevertheless, I urged that we should listen carefully to what Carine Rouah had to say to us about how she saw things developing and that ‘we should be open to new initiatives and proposals from whatever direction they come, bearing in mind the strategic objectives that we have set ourselves’.

I was also privileged that year to be invited to speak about the work of the Association at the Fourth World Congress of Basque Communities Abroad in Bilbao, Euskal Herria, 9-13 July 2007. And I reported that ‘if European countries are looking for models for developing the way in which they engage with their diasporas they could hardly do better than to take a close look at how our Basque colleagues manage this issue. The level of investment which goes into this and the results that are achieved are most impressive’. We were glad to have Benan Oregi at our meeting in Finland to tell us about plans for the Basque Migration Archives project.

In Finland I also noted that the Museums Association would be debating at its annual conference later that month in Glasgow ‘Does the UK need a migration museum?’, and we looked forward to the official opening of a new national migration museum in France on 10 October.

In 2008 the Annual Meeting was in Italy, hosted by Fabio Capocaccia and Silvia Martini and their colleagues at the International Centre of Italian Emigration Studies (CISEI) in Genoa in the splendid setting of the Palazzo San Giorgio, where the modern system of accounting was developed. No doubt many of us who were there have recalled it to mind in thinking about what has been happened subsequently to the world banking system!

I reported that Fabio and Siliva had not only hosted a visit by Henning Bender on behalf of the Association in October 2007, as agreed at our meeting in Turku, but also a meeting of the Board in Genoa in April 2008 – both indications of the commitment of CISEI in bringing AEMI to their new institution.

The Board meeting in Genoa was particularly valuable because we were able to bring Carine Rouah from Rome to meet with us and continue the very important discussion that we had begun in Turku in 2007 about possible cooperation between AEMI and the newly-formed International Network of Migration Museums of which Carine was the volunteer Project Manager. As an initiative of UNESCO, originating in a conference held in Rome in October 2006, the International Network of Migration Museums aims to offer a Web interface to assist the growth of the international network of migration institutions, to support the activities of migration museums and to facilitate the interactions among them.

The main concern of the Board at our meeting in Genoa was to clarify the relationship between membership of AEMI and membership of the International Network of

Migration Museums. Some but not all AEMI members were already members of this new Network. The question to be clarified was whether all AEMI members were eligible for membership of the Network. This is an important issue because AEMI includes, as its name is intended to indicate, various types of migration institutions as members: museums, libraries, archives, heritage centres and research institutions or study centres, whereas the name of International Network of Migration Museums suggests that it has an exclusive focus on migration museums, as distinct from other types of migration institution. Carine Rouah explained that so far as membership of the Network was concerned it was intended that the term 'museum' should be interpreted inclusively rather than exclusively. Institutions which are not strictly speaking museums are already members. All members of AEMI would therefore be welcome to join the International Network of Migration Museums.

We found ourselves in agreement that the special nature of migration museums is such that they depend for their success on developing archive and library collections of migration records (especially passenger lists, letters, photographs, oral histories, published autobiographies and biographies) as well as museum collections of migration-related objects. The migration museum is a new kind of institution that should embody the idea of partnership between museums, libraries, archives and research or study centres. Your Board argued that it would be unfortunate if the name of International Network of Migration Museums were to give the impression that museums were being privileged to the detriment of libraries, archives, heritage centres and research and study centres which share the objectives of this Network. A powerful way of signalling that this Network is concerned to include all relevant institutions, we suggested, would be simply for it to change its name. I was pleased to report that the Network was in the process of changing its name to the International Network of Migration Institutions, with the explanatory strap line – 'promoting the public understanding of migration', see: (<http://www.migrationmuseums.org/web/index.php?page=home>). Members may recall how I wrote after that meeting urging all AEMI members that, given this clarification, we should all consider joining the International Network of Migration Institutions.

In Genoa we also discussed with Carine how this network might grow over the next five to ten years and it seemed likely that in expanding it would need to develop a regional structure. Institutions in different regions (such as North and South America and Australasia where there are already important groupings) may find it more practical to come together for face-to-face meetings annually - as AEMI does at present in Europe. A meeting of the global network may then be practical only every 3-5 years.

Finally, we discussed how we might mitigate the clash in dates of the AEMI Annual Conference in Genoa and the International Conference organized by Museo de Historia de la Inmigración de Cataluña that was planned to gather members of the International Network of Migration Museums in October 2008 in Barcelona, Spain, and how best to promote European Migration Heritage Week 2008. Unfortunately it did not prove practicable to arrange a video link-up for the programmes of our two conferences.

What we managed to agree in principle was that instead of having two separate conferences the following year, the International Network would co-operate with AEMI in its Annual Meeting in 2009.

We found ourselves in agreement that the special nature of migration museums is such that they depend for their success on developing archive and library collections of migration records (especially passenger lists, letters, photographs, oral histories, published autobiographies and biographies) as well as museum collections of migration-related objects. The migration museum is a new kind of institution that should embody the idea of partnership between museums, libraries, archives and research or study centres. Your Board argued that it would be unfortunate if the name of International Network of Migration Museums were to give the impression that museums were being privileged to the detriment of libraries, archives, heritage centres and research and study centres which share the objectives of this Network. A powerful way of signalling that this Network is concerned to include all relevant institutions, we suggested, would be simply for it to change its name. I reported that the Network was in the process of changing its name to the International Network of Migration Institutions, with the explanatory strap line – ‘promoting the public understanding of migration’, see: (<http://www.migrationmuseums.org/web/index.php?page=home>). Members may recall how I wrote after that meeting urging all AEMI members that, given this clarification, we should all consider joining the International Network of Migration Institutions.

In Genoa we also discussed with Carine how this network might grow over the next five to ten years and it seemed likely that in expanding it would need to develop a regional structure. Institutions in different regions (such as North and South America and Australasia where there are already important groupings) may find it more practical to come together for face-to-face meetings annually - as AEMI does at present in Europe. A meeting of the global network may then be practical only every 3-5 years.

Finally, we discussed how we might mitigate the clash in dates of the AEMI Annual Conference in Genoa and the International Conference organized by Museo de Historia de la Inmigración de Cataluña that will gather members of the International Network of Migration Museums in October 2008 in Barcelona, Spain, and how best to promote European Migration Heritage Week 2008. Unfortunately it has not proved practicable to arrange a video link-up for the programmes of our two conferences but I trust that there will have been some communication between Genoa and Barcelona during these days to our mutual benefit.

What we have managed to agree in principle is that instead of having two separate conferences next year, the International Network will co-operate with AEMI in its Annual Meeting in 2009. It remains to be determined by our Annual Meeting where exactly our meeting will take place. As last year in Turku we are in the happy position of having received firm offers from two member institutions to host our next meeting in 2008, both in Germany: the German Emigration Center in Bremerhaven and BallinStadt in Hamburg. I have been involved in discussions with both institutions to see if it may be practicable to combine in some way in the organisation of the programme so that we may have an opportunity to visit the splendid new facilities of both.

Another development that year that I reported on was the meeting in Brussels on 16 May which Antoinette Reuter kindly invited me to attend in order to discuss the development of the European Migration Heritage Route. Present at the meeting was Luc Verheyen, representing the Red Star Line project in Antwerp, which has ambitious plans for opening a new migration museum there in three or four years time. Subsequently, Luc sent his colleague Torsten Feys on a fact-finding mission to various other AEMI institutions, including our own in Northern Ireland, and I am glad to say that Torsten was able to be with us in Genoa on behalf of his institution with a view to joining the Association.

A second development that year was initially less happy. Members will recall the urgent appeal to the scientific community and general public made in July by colleagues in the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies in Zagreb, Croatia, who kindly hosted our Annual Meeting in 2006. This concerned the manner of the appointment of their new Director and I believe it is a case that illustrates the importance of the Association. Were our own institutions to be faced with a similar situation, to whom could we turn? The fact that the Institute was prepared to send our old friend Ruzica Cicak-Chand to attend our meeting in Genoa as its representative we took as a good sign that things there were on the mend.

The third development was altogether a happy one. I was delighted to be contacted in August by another old friend of the Association Jürgen Rudloff in Bremerhaven. As a result of his long-time dedication to the initiative of building an international emigration museum in Bremerhaven, he was awarded a medal by the Federal President, Horst Köhler. This was presented to him at a ceremony on 5 September, hosted by the Chief Magistrate of the senate of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen.

I reported that I thought that there were signs generally that there was a growing interest in the work of institutions such as ours and their relevance to the whole question of social integration. A number of major conferences I thought bore witness to this. These included the symposium on Intercultural Dialogue in March 2007 at the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris, which hosted our Annual Meeting in 2005. We congratulated colleagues on their successful opening on 10 October 2007. The launch of the splendid Youth and Migration website, which many members will recall having seen demonstrated by Hans Storhaug in previous years in its pilot stage of development, was launched in Norway on 25 September as part of a youth conference that brought together in a 'Global Village' over sixty young people from nine different countries, within the Stavanger 2008 programme as European Capital of Culture along with Liverpool. There was also the conference on 'Museums, Migration and Interculturality' taking place in Barcelona at the same time as our own in Genoa. Coming up later in October there were major conferences in Berlin and Bonn that were both addressing the issue of migration museums.

This was the year that Henning Bender tendered his resignation as Secretary and Treasurer of the Association having served in those posts since the initial meeting in Aalborg in 1989. He had retired that year as Director of the Danish Emigrant Archives in Aalborg. We thanked Henning warmly for all his sterling work on behalf of the Association, not least in ensuring in his inimitable way that we were all more or less prompt in the matter of our subscription.

In 2009 the Annual Meeting took place unusually in two venues in Germany. We were kindly hosted by Simone Eick and Aislinn Merz and their colleagues at the German Emigration Center in Bremerhaven and Maja Berends and her colleagues at the BallinStadt Emigration Museum in Hamburg. This was a remarkably successful effort of inter-institution co-operation. In moving between the two institutions we in fact were modelling the idea of a European Cultural Route based on the theme of Migration that has been a central concern of the Association in recent years.

In Bremerhaven and Hamburg we were joined by Carine Rouah and colleagues from the International Network of Migration Institutions (INMI). I expressed gratitude to Jens and Eva for their work in the posts of secretary and treasurer that were previously combined in the person of Henning Bender from the establishment of the Association in 1989 until his retirement the previous year. We were also grateful that our Journal Editor had been restored to full health, having had to miss the previous year's meeting and had our *Journal* back on track.

A continuing issue of concern that year had been future cooperation between AEMI and the International Network of Migration Museums of which Carine Rouah was the volunteer Project Manager. As an initiative of UNESCO, originating in a conference held in Rome in October 2006, the International Network of Migration Museums was established to offer a Web interface to assist the growth of the international network of migration institutions, to support their activities, and to facilitate the interactions among them. In order to signal more clearly that the Network welcomes to membership not only museums but also libraries, archives and research centres, it had been re-named Network of International Migration Institutions. I said that at that meeting that 'I think it is fair to say that we have a shared understanding that the special nature of migration museums is such that they depend for their success on developing archive and library collections of migration records (especially passenger lists, letters, photographs, oral histories, published autobiographies and biographies) as well as museum collections of migration-related objects, and that the 'migration museum' is a new kind of institution that should embody the idea of partnership between archives, libraries, museums and research or study centres. We hope therefore that 'migration institutions' in both our names will help to promote this inclusive approach and spirit of collaboration'.

It was with great regret that year that I had to decline kind invitations from Erik Gustavson at the Swedish American Center in Karlstad, to attend not one but two splendid events. Nevertheless the Board was at least represented on the first occasion by our Secretary and Treasurer. I did represent the Association and speak about its work at two conferences in October last year, the first in Berlin on 'Migration in Museums – Narratives of Diversity in Europe' (23-25 Oct) and the second in Bonn where the Metropolis included a section on 'Mobility, Integration and Development in a Globalised World: Migration Museums' (27-31 Oct), to which Carine Rouah also contributed.

A particular pleasure that year was the other half of Ireland was once again represented in the Association by Seán Reidy, director of the Dunbrody and Ros Tapestry Projects of the JF Kennedy Trust.

In 2010 our Annual Meeting took place in Bilbao in the Basque Country, Spain -another iconic port city of transformation. There we were hosted kindly by Benen Oregi and Andoni Martin and colleagues.

I reported that apart from meeting in Bilbao immediately before the General Meeting in the grand surroundings of the Guggenheim Museum, the Board had not met together face to face that year and I warned that:

while this may be economical in terms of saving on travel expenses, it is not a good policy in the long term. If your Board hopes to give strategic direction to the Association beyond the organisation of the Annual Meeting and production of the next issue of the *Journal*, it is important that they come together to reflect on progress to date and plan for further development. The value of face-to-face meeting is apparent each year at our Annual Meeting where friendships are formed and the mutual trust necessary to sustain common projects developed. Therefore I hope that your Board will meet at least once in the coming year, probably in January or February because as we approach our twentieth anniversary year, for there is much to consider.

I am pleased to be able to report that your Board did indeed manage to meet face to face this year in Aalborg, about which more later.

The fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Swedish-American Center, Karlstadt and the fifth anniversary celebrations of the German Emigration Center, Bremerhaven in 2010 were greatly enjoyed by the members who were able to attend.

A matter of regret was that the year did not see much progress by way of closer cooperation between AEMI and the International Network of Migration Institutions (INMI). Nevertheless, a good sign of growing contact between migration institutions within and beyond Europe was the welcome presence in Bilbao of colleagues from the United States and Australia, as also were the strong connections with institutions in South America evidenced by our Basque and Portuguese colleagues.

I concluded my report by saying:

There is little doubt that AEMI has the potential to grow into a large organization. Our association continues to welcome small, medium and large-sized institutions but the onus in expanding the Association must necessarily fall on the larger institutions, which have the resources better able to support the kind of work involved. As in previous years, I would again urge members to consider that a sign that that our Association will have made the shift from a medium-size organisation to a large one will be when the general expectation is that the Chairman of the Board will not normally serve more than one three-year term. Your present Board has one more year to run before its three-year term is complete, and also my third term as Chairman and now is the time to consider urgently how best to bring on new talent while maintaining some continuity. One way of doing this may be to extend the membership of the Board (bearing in mind the need to achieve a good gender and geographical balance) to include a vice-Chair who would in due course serve a term as Chair.

I then quoted an old Basque saying, *zenbat buru, hainbat aburu* (there are as many options as people) to make the key point:

we have an Association with considerable achievements to its name in its twenty-year life, thanks largely to the foresight and positive spirit of its founders, which we plan to celebrated in the next issue of our Journal. As we contemplate the next twenty years, and as our deliberations here have shown, we continue to be ambitious in our aspirations for the public understanding of migration mediated through our different kinds of member institutions - museums, libraries, archives and university-based research centres.

Having been indulged this far by your patience in this review of the work of your Board over the last nine years, I turn finally to what we have been doing over this last year since we met in Bilbao.

As I mentioned, the Board met this year face-to-face in Aalborg on 4-5 April 2011, thanks to the hospitality of Jens Topholm and his colleagues. As well as helping Jens to plan the programme for this meeting, we gave some thought to the composition of the new Board to be elected at this Annual General Meeting and the desirability of designating the post of Vice-Chair, which will be proposed in due course. We also gave consideration to the strategic aims that we are bequeathing to the new Board. Apart from the *Journal*, which I hope all agree has been a most worthwhile initiative and one to be maintained, our strategic objectives remain threefold:

1. Promotion of the 'European Migration Heritage Route' as Cultural Route
2. Development of a new on-line 'European Migration Heritage Resources Portal'
3. Enlargement of the network of the Association of European Migration Institutions to include at least one member institution in each European state

The event that brought home to me this year the importance of the work that we are about, summed up in the theme of our meeting 'Migration History Matters' was receiving an invitation to attend a seminar on 'Migrants and Intellectual Life' in London on 13 July in the London School of Economics, organised by those who are promoting the idea of a Migration Museum for Britain. Amongst the distinguished speakers was Sir Harry Kroto, who won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1996. This is how the seminar was introduced (<http://www.migrationmuseum.org/2011/05/early-evening-seminars/>)

Migrants are often presented as a burden, but no one can deny the impact they have had on Britain's intellectual life. One quarter of Britain's Nobel Prize winners in science were born abroad. Our religious, philosophical and ideological heritage has often been inspired by migrants, from royal patrons (Prince Rupert, Prince Albert) to refugees (Ralf Dahrendorf, Isaiah Berlin). It is rarely noticed on the migration balance sheet, but our science, philosophy, critical and spiritual life has been repeatedly shaped and reshaped by newcomers.

I take this to be a sign of the urgent need, not just in Britain, for each country to have a 'focal point' for the issue of migration, such as Ellis Island has become for the

United States, Pier 21 for Canada, and our own institutions, to a greater or lesser extent in our countries – the need for an institution that will promote the public understanding of migration in a globalising world that, one way or another, makes migrants of us all.

In closing my final Chairman's report I would like to return to the words of the Association's first Chairman, with which I opened. Our concern as members of the Association of European Migration Institutions is indeed with 'one of the central aspects of the human condition: the movement of individuals and groups, and the consequent meeting of peoples of different races, languages, cultures and social organizations' and the fundamental basis of the Association indeed remains 'friendly communication across boundaries, the counterweight to angry communication through violence'. It has been a great privilege for me to have been your Chairman over the last nine years. In commending to you the work of your Board over the last year I would like to thank you all for the confidence you have placed in me and for the support that you have given to the work of the Association. I believe there is no doubt about the continuing importance of the Association in its vital work of promoting the public understanding of migration; and in carrying that work on I can only wish that you continue to give incoming Board, and the new Chair in particular, the kind of support that will enable the Association to go from strength to strength. Thank you.

Brian Lambkin
Chairman, AEMI
22 September 2011

2002 Stavanger, Norway

2003 Lisbon, Portugal

2004 Vaxjo, Sweden

2005 Paris, France

2006 Trogir, Croatia

2007 Turku, Finland

2008, Genoa, Italy

2009, Bremerhaven and Hamburg, Germany

2010 Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain

2011 Aalborg, Denmark