

Notes of the 7th EXARC meeting in Barcelona (Spain), March 20th , 2004

as remembered by Roeland Paardekooper.

See for the addresses of the EXARC members, the address list on the website

Present: Banghard, Karl (D), González Marcén, Paloma (ES), Holten, Lars (DK), Jakobsen, Björn M. (S), Johansen, Geir Are (N), Krogh, Helle (DK), Paardekooper, Roeland (NL), Pajusi, Arwo (S), Peise, Fabian (D), Schmidt, Martin (D), Schöbel, Gunter (D), Valburg, Bert van (NL), Veldman, Jack & Moniek, (NL), Wunderli, Marlise (CH)

15 people

Guest: Sør-Reime, Geir (N)

Not Present (with notification):

Members: Apala, Zigrida, Apals (Lv); Janis (Lv); Andrian, Barrie (UK); Apals, Janis (Lv); Bartoli, Angelo (It); Boer, Miriam de (NL); Boonstra, Anneke (NL); Confalonieri, Joel (F); Dixon, Nicholas (UK); Ghirardi, Danilo (It); Grigonienė, Dalia (Lt); Hein, Wulf (D); Jonikienė, Audrone (Lt); Kern, Anton (A); Piotrowski, Wojciech (PL); Rasmussen, Marianne (DK); Reschreiter, Hans (A); Saint-Georges, Ingeborg (N); Strassmeir, Andreas (D); Thér, Richard (CZ); Tichy, Radomir (CZ); Tikovsky, Ondrej (CZ); Vemming, Peter (DK); Vicze , Magdolna (H); Vilka, Anda (LV); Walter, Peter (D); Wellin, Lars (S); Zajaczkowski, Wieslaw (PL)

28 people

Aspiring but not present (with notification):

Chevillot, Christian (F); Cotoi, Ovidiu (RO); László, Attila (RO); Nielsen, Ole (DK); Tencariu, Felix (RO), Tomov, Ventsislav (BG).

6 people

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1. Opening

The meeting was opened at 13:00h.

At this meeting, we have three new participants, who haven't been in our circle before: *Helle Krogh* from the Middelaldercentret (DK), *Geir Are Johansen* from the Viking museum at Borg (N) and *Bert van Valburg* from HOME, Eindhoven (NL)

Last meeting, we had 23 organisations as member, totalling 36 people. Right now these are 26 organisations with 41 people. The total amount of people on our mailing list remains virtually unchanged.

2. Last Year in Europe: reports by members

In order to get a year report by EXARC itself, all members are requested to fill out a form to answer just a few questions. The form was handed out the evening before.

Archeon: (Moniek & Jack Veldman) Archeon visitor numbers grow slowly (2002: 160.000, 2003: 174.000). However, the costs of running it (with the introduction of the Euro) grew faster. 2003 has, however, been regarded as a good year. The staff has to keep up with the steady growth of Archeon.

Foteviken: (Björn Jakobsen) In the Viking reservation, 3 more houses are built and the number of visitors was very much increasing in 2003 in comparison to 2002 (i.e. to 35.000). In 2004, the service building will be renewed.

On the other site, 2 cog ships are already built and the city of Malmö would like to invest 3 million Euro in a medieval visitor centre "Malmö 1340".

Unteruhldingen: (Gunter Schöbel) In 2003, we had 6% less visitors (i.e. 281.000), both because of the heat as because of the growing competition with other tourist attractions. The winter was used for renovation. 2004 is the 150 years' anniversary of lake dwelling research. For this different activities are set up in the region. Press and media activities have been intensified. We will hear soon if the EU project "Delphi" (with Archeon and Arais, 1 year, Culture 2000) will be rewarded and can be pushed through.

Middelaldercentret: (Helle Krogh) 2003: 85.000 (a little more, compared to 2002)
Main activities in 2003: building of the new merchants house, a Tolkien open air event with "The two Towers" on a big screen, fireworks et cetera, a medieval diving event, markets the introduction of a new knight, hands-on-activities with the public, education of the volunteers and of staff. The major research projects were: gunpowder seminar, textile seminar, a reconstruction of a medieval ballista from Quedlinburg. Problems? Only smaller problems i.e. with organising food for the volunteers, but that has been taken care of. Also we could use more volunteers in especially May – June and September. New projects: Finishing the merchants house and making furniture for the house. Canon project, Gunpowder experiment, A textile project concerning house textiles, A smithy for making tin amulets et cetera.

Lofotr: (Geir Are Johansen): We have made a 30 minute DVD on iron smelting by the top specialist on that subject in Scandinavia: Mr. Lindblad from Sweden.

Kalmar/Eketorp: (Arwo Pajusi) Eketorp, 2002: 70.000, 2003: 60.000. Salve Medieval Town: 2002: 35.000, 2003: 25.000. In Eketorp, the fortified wall will be finished and one more Iron Age house will be built. Concerning Salve, a new medieval town will be built (6 - 7 houses) outside of the city. Arwo will be running the website of Tomas: www.fornidateknik.z.se

Düppe: (Fabian Peise) 2003: 28.00 – 30.000 (more than 2002).
We have only volunteers to run the place. Most of our staff is 65+. New, young, volunteers should feel better at home. The financial situation might become problematic in 2 – 3 years from now: we pay our animal keeper, but it is not our job to do it.

HOME: (Bert van Valburg) 2002: 55.000, 2003: 48.000
We have only 1 goal: to have a season 2005. We have a lot of projects running and in 3 months from now we will know if we are successful or not. We need more visitors and a more secure income.

UAB: (Paloma González Márcen) our situation and resources are very different from open air centres. The future for open air centres in Spain is not very positive.

Oerlinghausen (Karl Banghard): 2002: 32.000, 2003: 37.500
our centre is old and small. We had a good 2003, our visitor numbers rose with 20%. Developments are in the early medieval part and in prehistoric food.

Martin Schmidt: maybe there are too many new open air centres developing nowadays in Germany.

Zug / AEAS: (Marlise Wunderli) The showcase museum in Biel has a new exposition. The one in Luzern has a special futuristic exhibition concept. Prehistory and history are welded together and transformed. People are dissatisfied.

In 2004, because of the Lake Dwelling Jubilee, there will be some non permanent open air exhibitions of reconstructions.

The AEAS is burning a low fire.

Roeland Paardekooper: both the Czech and the Bulgarian colleagues have sent us a report, both attached to these notes.

To be continued...

3. The EXARC Members' meeting

After some discussion, *Björn* sets out to lead the members' meeting of EXARC. EXARC is a Swedish organisation and should follow in these the Swedish statutes.

1. Did everybody receive the invitation for this meeting at least two weeks before this meeting? The answer of all is: "yes".
2. *Björn Jakobsen* is chosen as chairman of this session.
3. *Roeland Paardekooper* is chosen as secretary to this session.
4. A year report has been drawn up, see above notes.
5. Financial report: according to *Gunter Schöbel*, our balance at this day is € 1061,10. *Geir Are Johansen* does the job of auditor and declares the books and balance are in order.
6. The old board is freed from its responsibilities, there is not a single objection of the members present.
7. The following old members are voted into the board again: *Gunter Schöbel*, *Lars Wellin*, *Lars Holten* and *Roeland Paardekooper*. The following new members are voted into the board: *Anda Vilka*, *Paloma González Marcén* and *Wolfgang Lobisser*.
8. *Paloma González Marcén* is voted for as president. *Lars Holten* is voted for as vice president.
9. Were there any other suggestions for this year meeting sent in on paper before? No.
10. Are there any other questions which should be dealt with in this year meeting? No.
11. The year meeting is closed.

4. The proposition for an EXARC award

and better structuring EXARC

Björn: it is too early for EXARC to set up such a thing as an award. Don't show off now.

Jack: EXARC has no PR policy in which this would fit.

Paloma: it is maybe not a problem of money, the problem is to first better establish EXARC and its PR.

Marlise: EXAR has the same kind of plans for an award.

Jack: nobody knows EXARC yet.

Björn: we should first organise EXARC better.

Paloma: is it the chicken or the egg situation? Just put it in the fridge for a while.

Considering better structuring EXARC

Björn: we will translate the statutes soon into English.

As an annex to the year meeting we should appoint an economic auditor and a reserve. These people will be *Peter Walter* and *Marlise Wunderli*.

Further, we need a commission suggesting new board members. These people will be *Helle* and *Björn*. next time, we have to make a schedule: the chairman and secretary will be elected for two years and have to be replaced in an uneven year; the vice chairman and accountant will as well elected for two years but will have to be replaced in the even years.

What follows is a discussion on the not being clear of the rules.

5. PR of EXARC

All paying members will receive shortly a pass, proving their membership. This card allows them free entrance when visiting another member. But do call in advance, this makes things easier. It is the joint responsibility of *Roeland* and *Gunter* to have this card developed and forwarded to the members.

An old idea is to have each EXARC member having a shield with 'Member of EXARC' on it near their gates. It should have some text, the URL and the logo. This is the joint responsibility of *Gunter* and *Roeland* as well.

Roeland will send out a press release and a photo to all members, asking them to contact their own national and international journals to have a message on EXARC published.

We have to start somewhere.

Website

Fabian: The website is off line since March 1st. An American provider stole the domains from our provider in Germany, Strato. Now, they are trying to steal the costumers back. legally, we don't know where to get things in order again. We want to cut the contract with Strato and change to America. The website will be back on line within two weeks.

Jack: I know the logo of EXARC is available electronically, but everybody should use it! *Roeland* will send it to all members by e-mail, as a reminder. It is available in any necessary quality. Is it a recommendation to use it, or an obligation? The members present do not take a decision.

Bert: what is the main thing, EXARC wants?

Paloma:

- being an organisation of experts,
- exchange information, learn to know and associate with other organisations

Martin: to create a body for quality of archaeological open air centres in any respect. We should be more than fun parks. We still failed to discuss clearly our standards and what we really want to achieve.

Bert: is EXARC a waste of time? I do not see anybody standing up and doing something. There is for example not a single reaction on the EU proposition. These EXARC meetings could be more tight, with faster discussions at a higher level. Why is there nothing happening between March and October?

Björn: I agree with *Martin's* goal. However, the EU is a tool, an instrument, not a goal itself. There is a Manual for Quality Control for reconstructed houses and living history individuals in progress.

My proposal for any next EXARC meeting:

- it should start on Fridays, 13:00h and should finish on Sundays at 15:00h. This saves two days of travelling;
- it should always be over a weekend;
- the morning sessions should start at 10:00h with respect to the long evenings before;
- it should never last longer than these 2 days / 50 hours;
- all people in a single hotel, everything on one spot, as well the meetings, meals et cetera.

Jack: *Roeland* needs help. Further, there should be commissions or workgroups of members. Themes could be the next meeting, PR et cetera.

Martin: besides the technical problem: nobody has time. We all expect others to do something. This waiting is no good. There should be more personal initiative. This is the last call for people to become active; else we simply remain a nice chatting forum.

Jack: the board should become more active or install workgroups.

Bert: who is doing something? Who will step into the workgroup "EU"? Nobody applied as yet... EXARC has to do something.

6. The EU plans of EXARC

An EU Workgroup is installed and will convene in Foteviken in May. The group exists out of *Lars Holten*, *Bert*, *Martin*, *Geir Sør Reime* and *Björn*. *Roeland* offers to be their secretary.

Paloma: does EXARC have enough content for such an INTERREG application?

Roeland: I am sure we have.

7. Our colleagues at EXAR

Marlise mentions the assembly of EXAR a few weeks ago in Stuttgart. After *Martin* stepping back from the board, *Roeland* tendered his resignation a few months ago. *Marlise* is now the last being both in the EXAR board as in EXARC. *Marlise:* the board of EXAR is 100% German speaking.

The "Tagung" will be held on Saturday and Sunday, 16th and 17th of October in Hochdorf near Stuttgart. There will be a sort of "Best of Bilanz" published in English. Furthermore, there are plans for an award, to foster research in experimental archaeology.

By the way, AIN had a meeting in 2003 in Zug. besides their members, some guests were invited as well.

8. A European Yearbook

Roeland received several times signs of the Czech members. They publish a yearbook on experimental archaeology in their own country and miss a similar book in English. True, the 'Bilanz' is far from filling that gap, right now, but even if it would, there would be room for our yearbook as well. Editing, translating and printing 500 copies would cost a little over E 3.000 (E 6,23 per copy).

The members think, just like with the award, EXARC needs to work on its structure first, before taking such tasks. True, the costs are not high, true, we might get the work done, but EXARC itself needs to be reinforced first.

We can publish articles on our website and should actually work harder on getting the site better. The papers presented at other EXARC meetings should now finally be published.

9. Languages in EXARC

Is there a language problem in EXARC? *Björn* asks if anybody sees a problem if we remain using English only. For us, there is no real problem, but we should be conscious that there are people out there who have clear problems with speaking English. This does not mean, we introduce other languages that clearly, we should just realise that English is not the universal 'Lingua Franca' in any circle in Europe.

10. Next EXARC meeting

Next meeting will preferably be held in Biskupin in November. A second option is Sweden. EXARC is as well invited by HOME, Archeon, Zug and the Middelaldercentret.

11. Last round of remarks

Helle: I was new here and came to learn more about EXARC. Please, all of you, pass by whenever you can!

Jack: the board should be leading the way. Proposals are presented, justification and a report should follow. maybe the board can 'convene' more often by means of video conferencing?

I suggest a doubling of the contribution fee for 2005. If you go on – please make progress.

Gunter: Thanks to Paloma for being our host and organiser. It is important to combine aims: standards – aims – instruments. We should move on with EXARC and the EU meeting definitely should take place. I offer any assistance I can give.

Jack: the Delphi-EU-application is a good beginning.

Björn: these were some good days. We try to find a way. There is a main direction and EXARC's aims are good. A shield for all members is a good step. The logo is impressive. EXARC is very good for us.

Gunter: I have information on the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage:

Outstanding heritage achievements will be rewarded by six money Prizes of 10,000 Euro each, in addition to Medals and Diplomas in the following categories:

1. An outstanding restoration project in the field of:

- A) Architectural heritage
- B) Cultural landscapes
- C) Collections of works of art
- D) Archaeological sites

2. An outstanding study in the field of cultural heritage

3. Dedicated service to heritage conservation by individuals or groups

For more information: www.europanostra.org/lang_en/0260_activities_eu_en_awards_call_2004.html

or contact Laurie Neale, Heritage Awards Co-ordinator, +31 70 302 4052, ao@europanostra.org

Application forms will be available for downloading on 1 March 2004. Closing date : 15 September 2004.

Björn: please send e-mails with only 1 subject at a time and include the theme in the headline, *Roeland*. Else, I have difficulties in finding information back.

Geir-Are: I am very new here. Not all issues are familiar to me. I came here because of Tomas visiting Borg a year ago. EU-projects show benefit of engaging international work. maybe the goals do not have to be that tangible. Apply experience in your own setting.

Arwo: thank you to all.

Fabian: At the beginning of EXARC, we realised we were all re-inventing the wheel. Please again, ask each other between the EXARC meetings as well for exchange of information and material. I just accidentally heard at this meeting some news which is very beneficial for my work. Can there be a forum for contact between the meetings?

Bert: I am glad to have joined you here, hearing about problems, opportunities, .. I hope next year some things are better developed. EXARC is Something in Europe. It deserves to be more than just 2 weekends.

Paloma: I have been listening well. Let us see about the future.

Karl: thank you, Paloma, for hosting this meeting. I think, last 12 months, things did happen. We gained experience in collecting EU projects. We are not just any marketing network. I know, this is a low level answer, but EXARC is very good for us.

Geir Sør Reime: Thank you for inviting me. EXARC has INTERREG potential. Try to find more items for cooperation.

Martin: I still hope for a future for EXARC. Not just some talking. Thanks for still inviting me.

General: thanks to *Roeland* for his secretarial work.

Closed at 15:20h

Attachment 1:

On the Current State of Experimental Archaeology in the Czech Republic

Community of Experimental Archaeologists

Experimental archaeology in Bohemia is represented by several entities with various aims. The *Working Group of Experimental Archaeology of the Czech Archaeological Society (OPS ČAS)* is a title that they have in common rather than a functional body unifying archaeological experiment in Bohemia. The current problem for *OPS ČAS* is the low number of groups on a professional level. For most of them experimental archaeology is only a peripheral subject. They are often entities working in education (Mamuti Praha, Altamira Kosmonosy, DDM Litomyšl, Muzeum Břeclav), field archaeology either on a commercial basis (Villa Nova Uhřetov) or as a compulsory part of their work (Archeologické centrum Pedagogické fakulty Univerzity Hradec Králové) or in the application of scientific methods (M. Hložek). On top of this some of the high quality projects (Villa Nova, Altamira) stay out and don't take part in conferences and publication. This fact is occasionally misused by organisations that are not capable of independent work but are very good in presenting themselves. In the end both of these extremes are damaging to the position of experimental archaeology.

The responsibility for the activities of *OPS ČAS* is currently probably carried out mostly by the Society for Experimental Archaeology Hradec Králové which is linked to Archaeological Centre of the Faculty of Education of the Hradec Králové University. This year we managed to publish in co-operation with the Museum in Břeclav another number of the yearbook REA and to organise another conference 'Reconstruction and Experiment in Archaeology' (University Hradec Králové 22/11/2003). We are preparing a workshop focusing on bronze metallurgy in June 2004 at the CEA grounds. This follows 'work meetings' of active organisations (SEA, Mamuti, DDM Litomyšl) focusing on pottery firing.

OPS ČAS doesn't intend to transform all activities to an expert and publishable level. In many cases that would defeat their purpose and be to their detriment. But there should not be a loss of important experience allowing us to further our knowledge. Non-archaeological groups whose main aim is education (children's groups Mamuti Praha and Altamira Kosmonosy) have been gathering important data in practical experience for twenty years. Thanks to their careful approach and co-operation with archaeologists (J. Malina, R. and I. Pleinerovi, V. Matoušek, J. Waldhauser) they have reached high levels in managing prehistoric technologies. The fact, that they are children's groups doesn't lessen the value of their experience and its utilisation.

Attempts to unify experimental archaeology under one authority (for example the organisation 'Reconstruction of Archaeological Structures – RAO) have failed. We see the way forward as creating an environment for meeting. That is also one of the aims of the magazine 'Rekonstrukce a experiment v archeologii' whose range we are currently attempting to widen from a national to European arena and thus theoretically create a space without borders. This would allow for an exchange of experience in experiment archaeology across Europe so that it should not be necessary to repeatedly reinvent wheel.

Open-air Museums

Only a minority of entities in Czechia have reached a balance between expertise, attractiveness for the public and management abilities. The projects, which have been based on experiment and expert reconstruction have either stagnated as static museum exhibitions (Březno u Loun), or they have problems providing for their further development (CEA, Villa Nova). New, very often large scale, projects are founded more or less on a commercial base, which requires they be profitable. Because of time and personnel demands experimental work is in such cases only very marginal. The medieval town Tuležim was founded in this way. Being newly created is the Great Moravian open-air museum in Modrá near Velehrad and a reconstruction of an early medieval fortress in Chotěbuz.

Archaeologists and Experiment

The position of experimental archaeology has been changing in recent years together with new prospects of archaeology, which stresses the relation between archaeology and the public. It is here that experiment and reconstruction play an important role. They are a side gate which allows the public behind the walls of academic archaeology. Although academic archaeology can resist such openings. Zdeněk Smetánka, a leading Czech medieval archaeologist, has tried to bar such approaches with his purist terminology. He has created the term 'experenciální archeologie' as an opposite to experimental archaeology. Experimental archaeology is defined according to the natural

sciences while the repeating of technologies already 'tested' or as a part of a presentation for the public is mere 'experiencing'. While Smetánka himself has done much work in education the public, according to his concept, it remains a passive subject. Meanwhile the term 'experienciální archeologie' takes roots. One of societies, whose activity we would have normally described as experimental archaeology, even calls themselves 'Experiencia'.

The department of Archaeology at the West Bohemia University in Pilsen headed by E. Neustupný is the most advanced in cultivating relations between archaeologists and the public. For example: both the Czech internet magazine Archaeologica (www.archaeologica.cz) and Archeologická společnost (<http://ars.archaeologica.cz>) are initiatives of the Pilsen students.

The conference 'Archeologie a veřejnost' (Archaeology and the Public) which takes place in May 2004 in Prague will show the way Czech archaeology copes with this subject. The last conference on a similar theme 'Archeoparky' was from the experiment and education point of view a failure. Leading personalities of Czech archaeology discussed the topics of conservation and opening access to monuments 'in situ'.

Radomír Tichý, Richard Thér
Archeologické centrum Pedagogické fakulty Univerzity Hradec Králové
Společnost experimentální archeologie Hradec Králové

Attachment 2:

A Prehistoric open-air centre in Bulgaria

Introduction

The potential of the Present and the Future is hidden in the Past.

The establishment of a prehistoric experimental open-air museum in Bulgaria is an initiative of the “Oak Gate” Celtic Society. The project aims to combine both science and curiosity, academia and the public in the endeavour to learn more about the life of our distant ancestors.

The project is inspired by the experience and the achievements of the EXARC members. In particular, it is based on the principles and ideas developed by the Lejre Experimental Centre.

A Few words about Bulgaria

The Republic of Bulgaria is situated in South-eastern Europe, to the south of the lower reaches of the Danube River.

The Bulgarian Black Sea coast is famous for its summer resorts. The distinguishing geographic feature of the Balkan Peninsula – the Balkan Range (*Haemus, Stara Planina*) – stretches across the country's territory.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Full country name: | Republic of Bulgaria |
| Area: | 110,910 sq km |
| Population: | 7.35 million |
| Capital City: | Sofia (population of 1.1 million) |
| People: | 85% Bulgarian, 9.5% Turkish, 4.5% Roma |
| Language: | Bulgarian, Turkish, Romany |
| Religion: | 85% Bulgarian Orthodox, 13% Muslim |
| Government: | Parliamentary democracy |
| Head of Government: | President Georgi Purvanov |
| Annual Growth: | 2.5% |
| Inflation: | 5.9% |
| Major Industries: | Food processing, machine and metal building, electronics, chemicals, textiles, ferrous and nonferrous metals |
| Major Trading Partners: | Italy, Germany, Turkey, Greece, Russia, USA |
| Member of EU: | no |

Sources: National Statistical Offices, IMF, IFS, WDI 2002 and Staff estimates.

Bulgarian Prehistory

Stone Age

What is striking about Bulgarian prehistory is the abundance of archaeological finds. More than 550 tells, 490 flat sites, 75 tombs and numerous barrows speak of dynamic human occupation that intensified from 7000 BC onwards.

The geographical position of the present Bulgarian territories – on the thresholds of both Asia and Europe – played a crucial role in the process of European Neolithisation.

Source: Bulgarian Academy of Science, History of Bulgaria, volume I, Sofia 1979.

Iron Age

Given the present geographical location of Bulgaria, it may seem that its Iron Age population was in the periphery of the Ancient World.

Despite the Greek colonization of the Black Sea coast and later the Roman Empire's expansion to the Balkans, the local Thracian population managed to create, sustain and develop an original and unique culture.

Source: Bulgarian Academy of Science, History of Bulgaria, volume I, Sofia 1979.

The Thracians had left behind a rich heritage: settlements such as Sevtopolis and Nove, tombs such as the ones in Kazanluk and Starosel, and treasures such as the one from Panagiurishte region.

Open-air centres, museum towns and reconstruction of the past in Bulgaria

"Etar" Open-air Museum

The “Etar” ethnographic museum is the first and only one of its type, operating in Bulgaria.

The museum features the vernacular architecture, the way of life, and the economic past of the Gabrovo region in the National Revival period (mid-18th - 19th century).

Museum towns – Bojentsi & Koprivshitzza

There are 14 museum towns in Bulgaria. Bojentsi and Koprivshitzza are among of the most popular ones. Koprivshitzza is a small and charming Bulgarian Revival town. It features some 388 architectural monuments from the Revival period, 15 of them of national significance, and 6 museums.

Governmental policies, cultural tourism and national heritage programs

- Tourism is ranked among the national priorities in the Bulgarian Government Program
- Developed mass tourism in the Black Sea summer resorts and in the skiing areas in the mountains
- Rich cultural and natural heritage
- Price for value competitive advantage in the region
- Poor tourism infrastructure
- Overall low quality of services
- Few initiatives in the alternative tourism sector - eco-tourism, rural tourism, cultural tourism, etc.
- Weak NGO sector in tourism
- Lack of a national tourism strategy
- Insufficient national tourism advertising
- Poor image of the country abroad
- Weak historic preservation movement
- Funding needed
- Needed changes in the historic preservation legislation

The centre

Name and place

Working name:

Prehistoric Open-air Centre (Bulgaria)

The Centre will be established in a picturesque area in the Strandzha Mountain--the south-easternmost territory of Bulgaria, a national nature park.

The park is the only place in Europe where flora typical for the Caucasus, the Colhida area and the Black Sea coast of Asia Minor has been preserved, from the tertiary period up to the present.

The oldest natural protected area in Bulgaria is situated in the Strandzha Park.

- Established 1995.

- Second category under the IUCN (the World Conservation Union).

Type of organization

§ The Centre will be registered as an independent, non-governmental non-profit organization under the Bulgarian Law.

§ The organisation will operate as an **archaeological open-air museum centre** according to the standards set by EXARC.

It will perform activities in four basic areas:

- education
- research
- presentation
- tourism

Project objectives

§ To provide conditions for gaining new knowledge and ideas about the life of our ancestors.

§ To contribute for the establishing of traditions in the area of interdisciplinary research, carried out by teams made up of representatives of a variety of disciplines studying the past.

§ To draw the public closer to the scientific understanding of the life and cultures of the ancient societies, and to bridge the gap between the community and the experts.

§ To contribute for reaching a better understanding of the ancient peoples, and to reveal the values of the past.

The above project objectives will be achieved through:

§ conducting archaeological, historical, ethnological, anthropological and other experiments, as well as implementing various research projects based on interdisciplinary work.

§ organizing practical and theoretical courses, seminars, interactive exhibitions and other education activities, based on the principles and methodology of interactive learning.

Philosophy and concept

“The truth about the past? It does not exist.”

This is the premise underlying the philosophy and the conceptual framework of the Danish **Lejre Experimental Centre**.

The team of the Prehistoric Open-air Centre in Bulgaria also shares this simple and unbiased idea; thus all the activities in the Centre, both scientific and educational, will be carried out by following this guideline.

Dialogue and discussion, active participation, and re-enactment – the basic educational tools used in Lejre Experimental Centre – are also embraced in the methodology of Prehistoric Open-air Centre in Bulgaria.

The aim is to provoke a positive feedback in the public and to create a lasting experience of the past.

Priorities

Research, experimental work, reconstruction and popularization of various aspects of the culture, skills, and way of life of the inhabitants of South-Eastern Europe in the Neolithic, Stone-Copper, Bronze and Iron Ages.

Historical focus and organization structure

The infrastructure needed for the implementation of the scientific, experimental and educational activities in the Centre will include:

- Education centre and parking lot
- Stone Age village
- Iron Age village
- Experimental field
- Prehistoric farm
- Shop
- Service buildings
- Areas under cultivation

The two major sites in the Prehistoric Open-air Centre in Bulgaria will be:

- (a) the Stone Age village
- (b) the Iron Age village.

The Stone Age village will include 6 reconstructed houses with architecture and household inventory featuring the Neolithic, Stone Copper, and Bronze Ages accordingly; as well as additional buildings.

The Iron Age Village will include 4 reconstructed houses and additional buildings with architecture and household inventory featuring the two phases of the Iron Age in Bulgaria (two houses from the Thracian period) and Central Europe (two houses from the Celtic period).

Furthermore, the Iron Age village will provide the unique opportunity to examine the complex historic relationships between the Thracians and the Celts in the period between 4th century BC and 1st century AD.

Partners

The “Oak Gate” Society

Bulgarian non-governmental organization for research, reconstruction and preservation of the Celtic culture - past and present. The organization is a project initiator.

The National Archaeological Institute and Museum under the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Prehistory and Thracian Archaeology Departments.

Malko Turnovo Municipality, Bourgas Region

“Strandja” Nature park, National Forest Services, Malko Turnovo

“Semperviva” A Bulgarian non-governmental organization for biodiversity conservation and ancient breeds of domestic animals

“Modvs Vivendi” A Bulgarian non-governmental organization for research and reconstruction of Medieval culture.

Call for Cooperation

The team of the Prehistoric Open-air Centre in Bulgaria would like to express its willingness to cooperate with the members of the European network for open-air museums, research and exchange in the field of experimental archaeology (EXARC).

Needs

The major project needs are in the field of information resources and funding.

The project team is currently organizing a fund-raising campaign, and searching for donors, sponsors and organizations that would support us financially or would be interested in investing in the cultural and educational undertakings initiated by the Prehistoric Open-air Centre in Bulgaria.

Conclusion

“A nation without a past is a tree without roots. “A nation that does not remember its past, has no future.” Bulgarian proverbs

We believe that the Prehistoric Open-air Centre Project (Bulgaria) is a great opportunity to make the people of Bulgaria aware of their past and ancestors, through participating in experiments and contributing for the in-depth exploration of life and culture of the ancient societies in South-eastern Europe in prehistoric times, and thus revealing it to the general public and to the world. It is an opportunity that is worth the time, the money and the efforts.

The team of the Prehistoric Open-air Centre in Bulgaria would very much appreciate your feedback and active support.