



# Henning Elmstrøm looks back!

**Henning Elmstrøm, CLGE President from 2005 till 2010, retired from our Council on 26th September during the Moscow General Assembly. He received a standing ovation for his work with the Council. This interview is a welcome opportunity to allow him to outline some of his achievements whilst in office.**

*Muiris de Buitléir*

## **Henning, you can look back over a long career with CLGE. Please tell us what were the highlights for you?**

For many observers the history of CLGE goes back to 1962, when a group was formed to follow up the construction of what would become the European Union. This group was a special commission within FIG. However, the history of the Council really began in 1972 concomitantly with an extension of the European Community. The challenge for CLGE cooperation with Europe was obvious, but the process proceeded at a very slow pace for more than 25 years.

In 1999 the Danish Surveying Associations proposed me as their representative to CLGE. Three years later I was invited to join the executive board and become vice president together with the late Klaus Rürup, who, at that time, took over the presidency from Paddy Prendergast. After four years of vice-presidency, I became the successor to Klaus Rürup for two consecutive terms of office. My second term was somewhat longer than the usual two years, because of the work involved in facilitating the integration of CLGE and Geometer Europas, the association representing publicly appointed private geodetic surveyors in Europe.

## **What progress did CLGE make during your terms as vice-president and president?**

Before accepting the invitation to join the CLGE executive board, I asked that some changes in the governance of CLGE be considered. It was important to encourage new growth.

A working plan was drafted during an inaugural meeting on "Das Feuerschiff" in Hamburg. At that time CLGE was a rather tiny organisation. It was difficult to see its possibilities and to recognise what benefits it might hold for its members. The future of the Council was discussed,



*Henning Elmstrøm, in the centre of the photograph, vice-president in Bratislava, 2004. To the left, president Klaus Rürup (DE) and secretary general Gerda Schennach (AT). To the right vice-presidents Marc Wijngaarde (NL) and Vaclav Slaboch (CZ)*

together with the late Volkmar Teetzmann and Hagen Graeff, respectively presidents of BDVI and DVW, as well as with some other German experts.



*Handover ceremony between Klaus Rürup and Henning Elmstrøm*



*Henning Elmstrøm with the late Volkmar Teetzmann, a pillar of CLGE, in Bucharest*

It was decided to expand the organisation, based on preparations put in place by the immediate past-president, Paddy Prendergast. The working plan was written and submitted for the approval of the General Assembly. The goal was to pave the way for the long term actions to come. The first plan was written for the election period 2003 – 2005. It was partly based on insights gained from the CLGE Role Paper (2001), the Strategy Paper (November 2002) and the new statutes, as adopted in October 2003, during the London General Assembly.

At that time the General Assemblies lasted for two days, as they do now, but there was no real reporting to the national associations. This had to change. Following our talks, it became clear that the accent must be placed on Professional Education, Professional Practice and European Union relations.

In the period from 2001 to 2005 the role of CLGE was profoundly changed to allow it to become an active professional organisation. The General Assemblies were changed to include local presentations; lists of

seminars had to be planned. The idea was to represent us, not only in the surveying arena, but also in associated areas, at the European level and indeed worldwide.

A vice-presidency for European affairs was established. The relationship with Geometer Europas was discussed and a possible merger was considered at that time.

In 2005, I was elected as president, while Gerda Schennach and René Sonney were respectively secretary general and treasurer.

In December 2005 we organised a landmark one day conference in Brussels to show how our events should be structured in the future. The title of the event was "Professional Qualifications for Geodetic Surveyors"; a precursor of work to follow in the field of the European Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications.

In 2007, Jean-Yves Pirlot took over from Gerda Schennach as secretary general during the Luxemburg General Assembly.

From then on we organised major conferences every two years with smaller seminars in between. It started in 2008 in Strasbourg with the first CLGE Conference of the European Surveyor, two years later we held our CLGE Conference in Bucharest, which focussed on the publicly appointed cadastral surveyor, with a milestone intervention by the French philosopher André Jacquard. In between we organised the Bergen Seminar about boundaries. All these, and other events, led to a number of interesting results that can be seen on the website in the 'basics' section [www.clge.eu/about\\_us/basics](http://www.clge.eu/about_us/basics).

Up to 2005, CLGE was a rather introverted organisation. From 2005 to 2010 there was a period of enhancement, which allowed CLGE to expand sufficiently to become a credible partner in the context of relations with the European Union.

My second presidency was from 2007 until 2010. As I said before, it was a bit longer than the usual two years because we had to integrate Geometer Europas. After a revision of the statutes, this independent organisation became an essential and integrated part of CLGE. From then on it would be known as the Interest Group of Publicly Appointed and Regulated Liberal Surveyors or IG-PARLS. René Sonney, the long-time and very trusted CLGE treasurer would soon retire to be replaced by the Geometer Europas' treasurer, Dieter Seitz.

During this period we also started to take an active role in INTERGEO. FIG had recently established the Young Surveyors Network, I think that was in Stockholm in 2008. This network got a boost in Europe with the first CLGE Students' Meeting that we organised in 2009 in Karlsruhe. The same year we had a landmark event with the solemn signature of the European Code of Conduct for Surveyors in Rome, in September 2009.



*Henning Elmstroem signing the Code of Conduct, together with Fausto Savoldi, president of the Italian CNG and Alain Gaudet (FR), president of Geometer Europas*

Due to the initiative of our Secretary General we experienced our first involvement with sponsoring. This was only possible after considerable efforts to expand our Council to become a credible partner.

Lead by vice president Rob Mahoney, we also modernised the CLGE website, our window to the outside world.

### How do you see the evolution since then?

Jean-Yves Pirlot, who supported me during my two terms of office, followed me as CLGE President. He had to consolidate the association after its rapid growth. During my terms of office CLGE acquired eight new members. This level of growth would have been difficult to maintain and from 2010 until 2014, we got a further four new members and three observing members (Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro and Ukraine). During this period, the increased visibility of CLGE became apparent. Our monthly participation in GeoInformatics, for instance, stems from this time. The contacts with the European commission increased too. A highlight of this cooperation was the organisation of the European Space Expo, which was organised in Budapest during our general assembly, with the help of the European GNSS Agency.



*The European Space Expo during the CLGE General Assembly in Budapest, 2013*

CLGE also acquired an advisory role for impact studies launched by the GSA. The annual budget was rapidly more than doubled, based on an increased level of partnership with the private sector. Workshops were introduced during the general assemblies and the delegates became more and more conscious of the importance of being part of these efforts.

The House of the European Surveyor and GeoInformation was inaugurated in October 2010 and has been improving every year since then. The Day of the European Surveyor and the European Surveyor of the Year became a reality. With the help of the American National Society of Professional Surveyors it has now become an inspiration on a worldwide level within FIG.

Other initiatives under my presidency should not be forgotten. The matter of education, for instance, resulted in us becoming an active partner in the European Leonardo Project: GeoSkills Plus. The goal of this project was to bridge the gap between the needs of the labour market and the young professionals produced by our Universities and Technical High Schools. This was something I had anticipated during my presidency.

In this period the tradition of CLGE conferences and seminars was maintained. During the Hanover Conference in 2012, for instance, the European real estate area label euREAL was solemnly launched. It



soon became part of European legislation via INSPIRE. Now it's the basis for the International Property Measurement Standard "IPMS". I am very proud of all these achievements.

## What's the future outlook, as you see it?

The future is in the hands of Maurice Barbieri and his team. They face the challenge of preparing CLGE for a new expansion. New members are knocking at the door and hopefully they will join soon. Maurice Barbieri must find a balance between our ambitions and the

available manpower. His proposal is to increase professionalization with more responsibilities for individual delegates and I think that this is a very wise and also a very necessary move. Another development that I foresee is an increased cooperation with other European and international organisations such as EuroGeographics, PCC, Eulis, FIG, WPLA, IPMS, etc.). I also think that in the long run a permanent office will be required, but these would be normal developments as a result of what we've built since 2000.

# CLGE takes an active part in FIG

**During the FIG Working Week in Sofia, Maurice Barbieri, CLGE President, was asked to give a keynote on "Global and Regional Professional and Institutional Reforms, some actions of the CLGE". He found his time in Sofia very worthwhile and confirmed CLGE's willingness and commitment to a close cooperation with FIG.**

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Jean-Yves Pirlot

**A**fter a general presentation from CLGE, including our strategy and some of our actions, Maurice Barbieri commented on the FIG statement as follows:

- In Europe, there is a strong focus on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications.
- The goal is to favour a strong internal market with sound competition based on the free movement of citizens, including professionals.
- CLGE agrees with this philosophy but we accept that the European and National legislators must proceed with caution.
- Over regulation is undesirable, but under regulation can be harmful too.
- For cadastral surveying we are in favour of strong national regulation leading, in the best case, to the public appointment of surveyors. The achievement of this goal is being sought by CLGE's interest group of publicly appointed and regulated liberal surveyors.

CLGE's approach was then explained in more detail. Firstly, the new Code of Professional Qualifications was presented. Together with our Code of Conduct these provide us with a solid professional basis. Reference was then made to the CLGE workshop on self-regulation and co-regulation mechanisms. This was possible thanks to the cooperation of Jorge Pegado Liz from the European Economic and Social Council in Limassol, in March 2015 and the subsequent approval of the position paper presented by Mr. Pegado Liz, adopted by the EESC on 22nd April.

As a conclusion Maurice Barbieri mentioned possible common goals of CLGE and FIG and confirmed earlier proposals for future actions:



Maurice Barbieri, second from the right.

- Influence:
  - Strong cooperation in the field for these stepping stones (ethics, education, evolution)
    - Try to implement the approach: 'think globally, act locally'
    - Support Bilateral MoU's
    - Create a council of regional bodies at FIG level
- Visibility:
  - Join the National Surveyors Week of the USA and the Day of the European Surveyor to make it a global surveyors' week.
- Renewal:
  - Confirm continued support to the FIG Young Surveyors' Network and to its European branch the FIG YSEN

To conclude, President Barbieri emphasised that state regulation or self-regulation are the strongest ways to ensure a high quality of work in order to protect the real estate market...and to keep our profession vibrant!