

## Report of the Small Meeting Samuel March 2008

### Friday the 4th of April

Several employees and the mayor greet us and we have dinner together. We finally retire at approx. 22:30 local time, 23:30 in Austria, 24:30 in Estonia, they've been on their feet since 3 o'clock this morning.

### Programme for Saturday the 5th of April

**Participants:** Vice-president and mayor of Lassee DI Karl Grammanitsch, Mayor of Samuel Catarino Ribeiro, Horacia Pedrosa (president of the Associacao de Samuel), Ilidio Comes (council member), Sergio Monteiro (council member), Manuel Pinto (council secretary), Clara Santos (social assistant Associacao de Samuel), Carmo Ribeiro (social assistant Associacao de Samuel), Wrdes Simoes (Association secretary), Teresa Pedrosa (organisation Samuel), Pillerin Aalde (child protection specialist, Polva, Estonia), Kadri Plato (social department manager, Polva, Estonia), Sandra Hengl (communication officer Lassee)

9:30 "Childhood and old age support in Samuel"

11:00 Coffee break

11.30 Visit of the existent equipments in Samuel

12:30 Lunch

14.30 Presentation of the situation of the country in each participant commune.

19:00 Dinner with the members of the council.

Vice-president Karl Grammanitsch brings the official greeting in the name of Frans Ronnes and the presidium. He express his regret that only Lassee and Estonia are here in Samuel, he is however confident that we will use the chance and have a successful meeting. He underlines the intention of learning from each other. We will also use the opportunity to discuss specific questions concerning the Charter in future.

### Childhood and old age support in Samuel

Ø An association exists the "social, cultural and recreative Association. Grounded 25 years ago in order to solve problems concerning social affairs, on a private basis. A total of 80 women and 4 men are employed. Support of childhood, dealing with integration, protection of the old age. Music school, choral group. Sports- senior football team, children from 8-14 years old. Adult education has been introduced and focused upon opening new chances for adults. Recognition and certification is achieved. Last year over 300 people from the region attained qualifications this way. The insertion enterprise involves labour and employment incentives. 36 clients at the moment, long time unemployed, mainly doing laundry and household duties.

Ø Old age – domiciliary support. Social service specialised on individual and personalised care. Began 20 years ago as pilot project here in Samuel. Took a while for the services to become established. Services include – meals, laundry, house hygiene, personal hygiene, health, animation and occupation, support during weekend and holidays. Offers the chance to stay independent. Daytime centre – keeping people near their social and familiar environment, independence and is very flexible!

Ø Integrated support for those with physical, mental or social dependence. Service available also to younger people. At the moment 5 such people are affected. Familiarity

centre: 135 users. People living alone, activities offering the opportunity to socialise. Theatre, beach, sight-seeing, etc.

Ø Day nursery: 40 children – 3 to 36 months – daily activities (hygiene, meals), pedagogical activities. Many children are collected from home. Maximum parents contribution 210€, according to income. Maternity leave – four months (100% wages from authorities), optional 5 months leave (80% wages).

Ø 50 children visit the Kindergarten – 3 to 6 years old. 5 day week, 7:00 until 19:00. Extra curricular – musical expression, swimming lessons. Minimum 36€, maximum amount depends on real expenses per month, 195€. Only nappies need to be supplied by the parents and a change of clothes.

Ø Free time activities centre. 60 children 6 to 13 years old. Costs maximum 98€. Available after school and during holiday time.

Ø Project “A look at the children”, aims to place into appropriate families, children who were taken from their natural families. Social feature, similar to child fostering (400 € grant from the government). Social assistant and psychologist involved.

Ø Financing - social security, national responsibility. Private contribution of users, income based as well as fund raising. Minimum pension 170€. Maximum 60% payment for services - rest subsidy. Average wage is approx. 600€/month.

Ø 9 years school minimum is to be changed shortly (next September) to 12 years education. Children start school at the age of 6. Rate of birth 1,2%. New rules next term – more responsibilities for the main regions. Municipality of Soure is affected not Samuel directly.

Childhood and old age support in Estonia

Ø Retirement at the age of 63. Life expectancy men 66 women 76,9. Polva has 6334 residents, covers 5,5km<sup>2</sup>. Had 57 births in 2007. Residents under 18 years of age, 1225. Over 63 years of age, 1140. Government legislation regulates child and elderly welfare. Family benefit 200€/month/child. Maternity leave is 140 days an optional 575 days are possible with less financial assistance. Kindergarten from 18 months, government paid. Maternity employment protection for 3 years.

Ø Tax benefits – Allows deduction of education costs up to the age of 26 years. 28 days holiday – leave for fathers for 10 additional working days. One additional day holiday/month for a disabled child. Deductions by youth camps, public transport, school- and school food fees. 12 classes' compulsory education. 41 disabled children – disabled scheme, support from town budget.

Ø Elderly care is focused on helping the elderly to cope independently. Counselling, acting as a legal guardian. Home services (only about 20 people receive meals) – technical aids. 220 people have a caretaker (often a close person, neighbour) help with – getting dressed, washing, shopping, cooking etc. payment 30€/month.

Ø Day centre – reading, social activities, washing, using a shower, warm food, massage. Need for help is assessed. 10 welfare institutions in Polva but no nursing home. Childhood and old age support in Lasse

Ø Community consists of Lasse, Schönfeld and recreation centre. 2349 permanent inhabitants, 491 of which are under 18 years of age and 850 are over 60. When a baby is born the parents receive a so-called baby parcel containing vouchers for clothing, shoes etc. Within the community parents have the opportunity of obtaining advice from a child specialist and a general practitioner is also available. At the moment one surrogate mother takes care of children during daytime hours, when parents are working.

Ø 90 children in four kindergarten groups cared for by five qualified carers and four assistants. Due to changes in federal regulations it became necessary last year to extend the kindergarten from 3 to 4 groups. This was due to an age reduction from 3 to two and a half years. Mothers are entitled to maternity pay for two and a half years.

Ø We have a junior school with 4 classes, 101 pupils and 17 teachers. Modern classrooms with furniture suitable for children and technical aids such as computers are available. Many optional subjects are on the curricular, such as: tennis, Slovakian, cooking, even circus activities.

Ø 24 children make the use of the possibility of afternoon care, including lunch. In the secondary school we have 177 pupils and 17 teachers. The number of pupils is constantly increasing.

Ø A school for children with special needs, teaches 52 children between the age of 6 and 18 years. Local children from 19 surrounding villages are cared for in 7 classes. 14 teachers and one assistant are employed in this school. These children have mental or physical disablement, behaviour disturbances and, or difficulties in learning. The director is responsible for a total of 71 children, including children in other schools. She also assists them in questions of occupation.

Ø Our community covers a relatively large area; therefore 2 minibuses are needed for transport of children to and from kindergarten and schools. Within the community there are over 35 clubs and groups and one of the main aims is the promotion of the youth

Ø Senior citizens receive wood from the communal forest, delivered to their door and they can have meals on wheels delivered if they want. People in need of care can do so with the help of two local organisations, on an hourly basis. 2 nursing homes are approx. 20 km away.

Ø Some of our senior citizens are very active members of the community e.g. council officials and prettier village society. 2 pensioners clubs do various activities, e.g. excursions, playing cards, dancing or gymnastics. Each year the council arranges a pensioners outing. Last year however we decided to stay in the village and provided food and drink, music and dance in our new European park. They had a great time.....

The building of a nursing home is planned in Samuel. They too are facing the problems of population ageing.

After visiting the social buildings we see the intended building site. We are able to view plans for the new building. 65 bed complex fully furnished and equipped, estimated cost 1,4 Million Euro for finished furnished building. We are very impressed and wish them good luck. We all agree that it is a most interesting project.

**Sunday the 6th of April**

10:00 visit to Figueira da Foz  
Lunch at the families  
Visit to Coimbra-University  
Dinner at the families

### **Monday the 7th of April**

10:00 Visit to Soure (District council)  
-Reception in the Camera Municipal de Soure by the mayor Joao Gouveia and two executive councillors Ana Treno and Antonio Mota.  
- Visit to a wind park in the Soure region  
14:00 Lunch  
15:30 Visit to a local cheese production with cheese tasting.

During the evening meal the participants discussed what the Charter means for them and what their contribution to the Charter is:

**Samuel:** Has been a member since the beginning of the Charter. Samuel held the big meeting in 2002, the mayors meeting in 1989 and has participated in all annual meetings other than in Cashel and in Kolindros (due to forest fires, when the association is busy providing the fire fighters with food and drink, around the clock).

Samuel has also been a regular participant of small meetings. The Charter is important and represents responsibility, European integration and solidarity between different people. We try to keep in touch with the organisation and with things that are happening. Aiming to make a positive contribution by taking part in meetings, discussions, welcoming people to Samuel and changing experiences. We can learn from each other e.g. the workshop on Saturday! When we built the first Kindergarten we needed two European partners in order to qualify for a grant. It was made easy for us through our Charter connections – we visited France and Denmark

**Polva:** Estonia joined the Charter in 2005. Estonia's commune sent a child protection specialist and a social department manager as participants to Samuel. They have both enjoyed the meeting. They say it has broadened their minds and they found that the examples were very good. The workshop even led to further discussions between the two Estonian participants. They were able to compare situations, they asked themselves, "What can we change, do better?" They reach the conclusion that maybe more flexibility would help their social system and many things take a while to become established. Samuel makes them hopeful for the future.

**Lasse:** We replaced Andau in 2003 in the Charter and held the annual meeting last year. Lasse would like to suggest that each member should participate in small meetings and make an active contribution to the Charter activities. It is not enough just to meet for the annual meeting to have a party nor should it be a senior citizens outing. Mayor Karl Grammanitsch has been actively involved in the extension of the Charter as it has grown into the once east block countries. He is putting some effort into finding a member in Bulgaria and was hoping to meet some Spanish mayors here in Samuel, maybe finding a substitute for Falset. Unfortunately they didn't come and as we inquired into the respective distance from Samuel was told approx. four hours drive. We will continue our search. In our opinion the meeting was most interesting for all involved and the example of the combination of young and old works wonderfully here.

### **Tuesday the 8th of April**

A big thank you, "Obrigarda(o?)" to everyone who made us so welcome in Samuel: We had "6 star" accommodation and treatment!

Departure of the delegations

[Sandra Hengl, communication officer of Lassee.](#)