

## WACS CONTINENTAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**REGION: EUROPE**  
**DIRECTOR: BRIAN COTTERILL**  
**DATE: MARCH 2004**

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I have served as the European Continental Director for the last four years and it has been both a pleasure and a challenge. A pleasure, because I feel we have achieved a great deal in Europe and it has been a privilege to encourage and help so many of the new European countries to become part of the WACS community.

It has been a challenge, because the European Continent is the largest and most diverse of all the WACS Continental areas. There are thirty-four European member countries with almost as many languages. I have worked extremely hard to unite the members in Europe and overcome the cultural and language differences – and in the main, I think we have succeeded in radically improving the communication and the effectiveness of the European Continent.

To achieve closer links I have tried to visit as many countries as possible. I have taken up many invitations to visit member countries and to assist them as much as possible with internal competitions, membership and queries etc. I have visited at least half of the countries within my remit and would like to thank everyone involved for the hospitality I received during my visits.

During my period of office I have kept in contact with all of the national associations in Europe and have tried to help them in every way possible.

I am glad to report that the European Continent is now an active and vibrant WACS area, which has addressed WACS issues and come forward with many constructive ideas. These were collated in an action plan, which was taken to the WACS Board in November 2002. The majority of issues and ideas have now been actioned – no small achievement!

Work on the action plan was carried out at the annual European Continent meetings. Over the last four years we have had regular annual meetings and

this is the first time that this has been achieved in Europe. The meetings have all been very well attended and constructive.

The Chefs and Cooks Circle hosted the first European Continent meeting in London, in 2001. It was held at the Strand Palace Hotel in the centre of the city.

My thanks to the Austrian Chefs Association and President Zodle, for hosting the second meeting in Vienna. It was a very productive meeting and our visit coincided with the centennial anniversary for the Austrian Chefs Association, so we were able to join in the very enjoyable celebrations.

The Cyprus Chefs' Association and President Hadjiosif hosted the third meeting at the beautiful Coral Beach Hotel and Resort in Paphos. Executive chef, Yiannakis Agapiou, and the hotel management of the hotel, overwhelmed us with their outstanding hospitality.

Our last meeting was held in November 2003, in the beautiful city of Florence, Italy. It was hosted by the Federation of Italian Chefs and President Caldana. Our visit was an integral part of the Caterina de Medici Gastronomic Festival and I was very proud to be presented with the Caterina de Medici award for my services to chefs and the catering industry in Europe. President Schaber also received an award for his world-wide services to the catering industry.

I would like to bring to your attention one outstanding initiative, agreed in the European Action Plan, that still needs to be resolved. At our meeting in Vienna it was agreed that education and training were of prime importance to WACS members. An Education and Training sub committee was set up to explore the possibility of gaining EU funding to develop a European WACS training scheme.

The committee was chaired by Julian Zarb from Malta, assisted by Gert Sorrenson from Denmark, John Clancy from Ireland and Kurt Scheller from Poland. A simple questionnaire was sent out to all the European associations to start the process. Feedback in the questionnaire would provide us with the basis for a EU bid.

Unfortunately, the returns have been very slow to come in and to date the committee has received only eight replies. If we do not receive completed

questionnaires shortly, from every country in Europe, we cannot proceed with this project.

Many members ask why WACS is not doing anything about training. The answer is, in Europe we are trying, but without the co-operation of the national associations we cannot progress.

I would therefore, ask whoever is elected to the posts of Continental Directors for the next Presidium, that they continue with this worthwhile venture that is already well underway.

Regarding the decision to allocate three Continental Directors for Europe, my personal view, and the view of the majority of the delegates at the last European meeting, is that it would be a mistake to split Europe up into three regions. We would be in danger of fragmenting the strong Europe that we have worked so hard to build over the last four years.

If we are to have three European Continental Directors they should be chosen because they have the qualifications for the job – not because of which region they are from. We need to ensure that we choose the best candidates who fulfil all the requirements of the job description, regardless of which country in Europe they come from.

This is a serious issue for all European member countries and I ask you all to think seriously about this before you vote.

On a practical note, the minutes of all the European Continent meetings will be passed on disk to the next Presidium to ensure continuity and I will be happy to assist the incoming Directors, if required.

In conclusion I would like to thank all my colleagues in Europe for their valuable input and outstanding support throughout my term of office. It is very, very much appreciated. I am sure Europe in WACS will continue to go from strength to strength. It has been an honour to represent Europe through such a constructive four years and I am very proud to have served on the WACS Board for my third term of office since 1980. The aims and ideals of WACS are very close to my heart. Thank you.

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