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Dear President and Board Members,

Here is the report of my activities since our last meeting in New York as well as the recent news and events from Northern Europe.

A la Carte, Uruguay, September 2006

I was asked to judge the A la Carte competition in Uruguay at the end of September, just after the New York meeting. It was a very short trip but a good opportunity to get to know what is going on in South America. The president of the chef association, Hugo Robalez, along with the help of Jorge Monte did a very good job and the event in Uruguay was a well organized success. Iceland has always held good relations with South American countries. Just a few months earlier we had a candidate from Brazil competing in Iceland at the One World Competition.

Kremlin Cup, Moscow, October 2006:

I had the opportunity to visit Russia and observe how things were going and how the Kremlin Cup competition was run as I was the Head Judge for this competition. It is, as many other culinary shows and competitions; not completely perfect, but I believe that this competition is coming very close to be a competition that WACS can approve. In fact, they are very eager to get it approved and asked what steps they could take to get it there. I made the recommendation to my colleagues in Russia to be in contact with Reimund Pitz about this and I believe that this is progressing. The one issue I saw with the competition was the language issue. The translation from Russian to English was not correct all the time. For example, they had announced in Russian that the overall winner would be the one that had the highest overall score in points but in English, it was said that the winner of the most gold medals in all categories would be the overall winner. Because of this, the wrong message was sent out to competitors and in the end, they had to give out two overall winner prizes, one for each criterion, as the competitors had received different ones.

WACS Continental European Meeting in Helsinki October 2006:

The Finnish and Estonian Chefs did a good job organizing the meeting and programs for the WACS European Continental Conference held in Helsinki last October. Unfortunately, there seems to have been an incomplete recording of the meeting minutes, but this situation has been a good learning experience for me and perhaps other board members and it made me realize that, as President Metz said in previous emails, the next meetings (including Board meetings and Continental meetings) should be recorded on

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tape and then transcribed in writing. I think it is important that all the details be included in the minutes and nothing added or taken out afterwards.

Chef of the Year, Portugal, October 2006:

10 days before the Chef of the Year competition in Portugal, Fausto Airoidi asked me if I could step in to judge as some of the judges had cancelled at the last minute and he had problems finding replacements. I went over to Lisbon to help him out and, at the same time, I got the opportunity to visit their Chef Association's new office. It was quite impressive to see and hear about the dreams the Association has for the Portuguese chefs.

EXPOGAST- Culinary World Cup, Luxembourg, November 18th to 22nd 2006; WACS Booth:

I was standing in the WACS booth during EXPOGAST in Luxembourg. The booth was not quite perfect. I think it would have been good to have more hand-outs to give away which explain what WACS is about and what we are doing, but I think it is definitely important for WACS to start promoting itself more directly like this to members. I received very good support from the Icelandic bank Kaupthing which loaned us a Plasma TV screen and computer. A few of my friends from Iceland, Euda Morales from Guatemala, as well as Reinhold Metz and Siegfried Schaber all pitched in to help out at the booth and talk to the people that came with questions.

Bocuse d'Or, Lyon, January 2007:

As the Promotion Manager for the Icelandic team, and President of the Nordic Chefs Association, I attended the Bocuse d'Or competition. This competition is a very important one both for Iceland and all of the Nordic countries. Iceland came in 8th place this year and the rest of Nordic countries showed extremely good results; Denmark taking the Silver Bocuse, Norway making it into fourth position, also taking the fish prize and Sweden fifth, taking also the meat prize. The UK also made it in tenth place. This competition always receives a lot of media attention but, as most of you heard I am sure, there was a lot of negative writing after this last competition. I will not be too quick to judge what happened in Lyon, but I think it is important for any country that comes up with allegations such as these to look closely into their own conscience before they accuse others.

Istanbul Gastronomy Festival, February 2007:

I was in Istanbul judging at their Gastronomy festival. I was asked to do this over a year ago (at the last festival) and had given my word to be there, not only to judge but to have meetings with some of the countries from the Northern European area. There was no intention on my part to go against the restrictions imposed on me by the decisions of the Board last December with regards to my judging competitions. I had a meeting with Ukraine and Azerbaijan there where we discussed their possible participation in the Global Chefs Challenge semi-final in Northern Europe. Both countries, after much discussion, made the decision NOT to participate in this competition but instead be there as observers to learn something so that they could be well prepared for the NEXT Global Chefs competition. At the same time, I held meetings with the Turkish Chefs and also with the Serbian regarding the formation of their federations. These meetings were held on behalf of Screcko Koklic, the Continental Director for the area, with Martin Kobald, President of the South African Chefs Association, acting as an observer. Screcko will be explaining what the outcome of these meetings was.

Gulfoods, Salon Culinaire, Dubai 2007:

In June 2006, I was invited to participate as a judge at the Gulfoods Salon Culinaire in Dubai which was held in February of this year. Again, this was a commitment made prior to the Board's decision to put me on probation in December.

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As I was in Dubai, I also got the opportunity to see the facilities in which the WACS congress will be held in 2008. As for the competition, I was actually quite surprised at the standard of the competition and of the level of organization of the event which was done by the chefs of the Emirates Culinary Guild. The congress site is simply amazing. To tell you a little bit about the standard of this place, it was built for the World Bank and IMF meeting in 2003 and I can say that I will be happy to promote the congress and I am sure that everyone that will take part in it will experience new and exciting things in Dubai. I know John Sloan and Arnold Tanzer will have more to say about Dubai but I just want to say that I have no worries about the congress.

Global Chefs Challenge and One World Competition, South Africa, March 2007:

I went with my team to South Africa in March to support them in the second edition of the One World Competition, which was first held in Iceland in 2006 and now in Johannesburg. This competition focuses on countries that don't always get the opportunity to compete at the international level and it is held in a friendly spirit. During the competition, the competitors must make a presentation on the traditional foods and food culture of their countries and they must use ingredients from the host country. The following countries took part in the competition: Iceland, Russia, Fiji, and Congo. Fiji was the first place winner.

At the same time, I was able to observe the outcome of the first Global Chefs Challenge Semi-Final for the Africa/Middle East Continental area. I was asked the day before the competition by Robert Oppeneder, a member of the Culinary Committee, if I could step in and judge in this competition. I will not say much about the competition because I know Arnold and Robert will both be making reports to the board about their observations.

WACS Continental European meeting

The Slovak chefs showed us great hospitality in Bratislava for the WACS Continental European meeting held at the end of March. I know Reinhold will give more detail about the outcome of this meeting but I would like to thank him and Screcko for their good involvement.

Global Chef Challenge Semi-Final in Northern Europe; Progress and Organisation:

I am working with Tony Jackson and Ene Ojaveski from Estonia, finalising the information we need to send out to the Northern European countries regarding the Global Chefs Challenge Semi-Final of Northern Europe. This information will be ready by the end of May with all necessary details. I have an initial document here with me today to show the Chairman of the Culinary Committee, Reimund Pitz, before it is sent out and I also need to get more information from him regarding some questions that have been raised by Tony and Ene.

Applications for Honouree Membership:

I have received two applications for honouree membership to WACS. These applications are from Azerbaijan and Scotland and I will hand them out when we discuss Honorary Memberships later. I would like to ask if the document about Honouree membership that Glenn Austin had made for the WACS board has been approved yet and if we can send this form out to member countries that would like to apply for it.

WACS Approved Judges Application:

I have informed all of the Northern European countries about the application for WACS Approved Judges. I have forwarded to Reimund Pitz the answers I have received. The countries that already have approved judges are Ireland, Wales, Finland, Sweden, Scotland, and the countries that have sent in names

to the Culinary Committee to date are; Azerbaijan, Belarus, Great Britain and Russia. At the same time, I have with me the applications from Iceland. The countries that are missing are Ukraine, Denmark, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Norway but they may have sent this direct to the Culinary Committee. I will try to ask one more time if they want to send in a list to the Committee before the Committee meeting in Chicago.

The Survey:

I have been asking all the Northern European countries to answer the survey Ed Leonard sent out, and many of them have answered, but I am sure some are still missing. I will ask Ed to give me the list of the countries still missing and keep on working to get them to answer.

General Information about Activities of Member Countries of Northern Europe:

Azerbaijan: has been trying to be more active in WACS events. They will come to the Northern European Global Chefs Challenge Semi-Final to observe and hopefully participate in the following edition. They have told me about a problem that they sometimes have to get Visas to attend some of the European meetings. This is something we should look into.

Belarus: As a new member country of WACS, Belarus has been quite involved internationally, competing in such high standard competitions as the World Culinary Cup in Luxembourg last year.

Denmark has been extremely active in competitions in their homeland. They are getting very good feedback from the industry and I think we will see a lot more of Denmark on the international scene in the future.

Estonia is working hard on the preparations for the Global Chefs Challenge coming up at the end of October. I know they will do a good job. It is a small association but all the members are dedicated to it and, unlike many associations, they have paid staff to make the job easier.

Finland hosted the European meeting in October in association with Estonia. They did a good job and are now preparing to hold the Nordic Congress in May this year.

Great Britain Besides participating in many international competitions, the British also are helping out internationally. Their involvement in the Istanbul Gastronomy Festival is a great example of international cooperation between chefs and an example to follow.

Iceland is preparing for a general meeting in the next week. There has been a lot of discussion regarding whether or not we will keep on competing in the Bocuse d'Or, mostly because of the cost. Like many countries, you have to look at what you have to pay and what you get back. This we believe is health for any association to look into from time to time.

Ireland like many countries, have chosen their candidate for the Global Chefs Semi Final in October.

Lithuania competed in Luxembourg last year and did an extremely good job which has given them much inspiration for the future.

Latvia, like many countries, is struggling with two chef associations. The contact I have had has been mostly with the association that is not a member of WACS, but it looks like both are working closely together. I will be monitoring them closely in the next while.

Norway had a general meeting last month. Haakon Reigstad was re-elected as president for the next two years. I know they are preparing for the Chicago competition. Also, Norway will be running for the next presidium for the Nordic Chefs Association.

Russia I have been in good contact with Russia. They are applying to get the Kremlin Cup Competition WACS approved and they have also started talking about the possibility of forming a Russian Culinary Federation that will serve all Russian Chefs. As is the problem in many countries, especially big ones like Russia, they have an association which is part of WACS that is not working as it should and does not represent the majority of chefs in the country. The Federation would enable the various chef associations to join in and give their input to the organization and represent Russian Chefs better. They are looking into the US, Canadian and German Federation for inspiration.

Scotland held the ScotHot Knorr World Junior Grand Prix this year. Canada came out as winner this time, with U.S.A. second and Iceland in third place. Also they got from me the WACS booth to present WACS during the show.

Sweden is holding its general meeting this month. Just recently, they had a board meeting for the Nordic countries and are becoming heavily involved in the Nordic Chefs Association as well as WACS.

Ukraine will be hosting a Food festival in October/November of this year. This will be confirmed to me later this summer.

Wales is, without any question, the most active country when it comes to sending news to the WACS website. Many countries can take Wales as an example because of how they do their marketing. This marketing is giving them a lot of support as well as sponsors in their country.

You can read more about what is going on in Northern Europe in my report from last month's WACS European Continental meeting in Bratislava.

Kind regards,

*Gissur Gudmundsson
Continental Director Northern Europe*

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