



2012

OFFICE INTERNATIONAL

du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux

Regroupement des fédérations européennes des jardins familiaux

association sans but lucratif

Dear allotment gardeners

The local, European and World information continuously draw our attention.

The uncertain future of our economic system, the vision of an increasing lack of security around us, the effects of a damaged environment and nature as well as biodiversity in regression destabilize us.

Our future often seems dark, without real perspective and without real hope.

We, allotment gardeners, should not become withdrawn, but on the contrary, we should act and make our contributions towards society and nature known. Our small garden plot has an inestimable value and enables us to offer our members and our fellow citizens a solution to fight the above mentioned perspective.

The garden is trendy. The allotment garden should benefit from this general positive environment. However, we need to be better perceived; our contributions to reduce the lack of security of our fellow citizens, to safeguard a healthy nature and environment, to preserve biodiversity, to improve citizens' health, as well as the numerous innovative projects, have to be recognized at their right value by all the politicians and by the population. If we delay to do it and if we take the wrong steps, others will do so better and will try to supplant us from the area of competence that is ours.

We need a concrete and long lasting commitment from the decision makers and the population to be on our side, in order for us to serve all the citizens with our garden.

Words of support, so easily pronounced, but without commitment, are not sufficient.

In order to reach our aim it is not sufficient that our associations simply create new activities, it is not sufficient to react by simply suffering the reality and the changes in our societies. On the contrary we have to act, to work out new strategies, to become offensive and follow new ways.

Therefore, the International Office has started to work out a new description of its aims and visions. All the federations are then going to be requested to put these visions into practice, preferably by common activities that are going to be realized within a fixed period and in a fixed area, in order to increase the visibility of our movement. An example of a Dutch association, presented during our study session in Zurich has underlined the positive consequences of such a new charter.

The Office has started a discussion spreading over a three year period in order to find out how we are perceived. The findings hereof are important in order to better present what we

really do, to fill the gap between the perception and the reality of our activities and fight the wrong ideas that still continue to circle around.

We have to work out a strategic plan in order to improve both our functioning and the reputation and image of the allotment gardens.

There is much work to be done. If there is a good cooperation, we will succeed more easily.

Therefore your suggestions, your comments, your ideas, your impressions or your experience are important as they will help to elaborate a new strategy for the future that will benefit us all.

Taking into account this reality, we can then inscribe our movement in the heart of the public action. We can become more dynamic and we can consequently establish ourselves as an unavoidable and accepted element of our urban environment.

The future is a fantastic challenge that we have to take up, not only for our own sake or for the continuation of our movement, but for the well-being of our society, our urban environment and nature.

I rely on all of you in order to reach this aim and wish you as well as your family already now a happy New Year 2013, a good health and much pleasure in your garden.



Malou WEIRICH
Secretary general