

Resolution of the 33rd congress

of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux a.s.b.l.

held in York from August 22nd till August 24th, 2002

The 33rd congress of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux, which met in York from August 22nd till August 24th, 2002, has dealt with the questions on **town planning** and **local Agenda 21**.

It has adopted following resolution:

All the European leisure and allotment garden federations reaffirm the social, economical and ecological function of the leisure garden movement. Even if the conditions have changed since its creation at the end of the 19th century, the allotment garden movement continues to contribute to the finding of solutions for the pressing questions of the urban areas, of nature and environment protection and for a sustainable urban development.

This contribution to the public welfare is not yet sufficiently considered today in our society and allotment garden sites continue to disappear. Groups of garden plots are closed down without provision of replacement grounds or are instead removed far away from the original site at the city outskirts in order to allow the realisation of other urban projects; sometimes the proposed replacement grounds are sites that are exposed to heavy nuisances (proximity of a motorway, an intersection, a rubbish tip ...)

The leisure and allotment gardens are however an essential element of the quality of life of the citizens; in fact, they can favour the contact, the meeting of persons of all age groups, from different social, ethnic and religious origins.

The local urban policies ought to take the following recommendations into consideration:

- Necessity to carry out an assessment of the local needs for green spaces, including allotment and leisure gardens, based around clear standards of provision for these green spaces,
- Reservation of a sufficient number of grounds for the creation of allotment and leisure gardens in all new housing development plans and especially with a high density,
- Obligation to find quality replacement grounds, that have an easy access and situated at a short distance from the residence of the gardeners when existing allotment and leisure garden sites have to be closed down for projects of public utility. These requirements are even more justified for people with disabilities or special needs, elderly people and families with small children,

- Necessity to safeguard the allotment and leisure gardens at the same time as green spaces and public gardens, which are the green lungs of the cities, in order to comply with the recommendations of the Agenda 21,

Efficient strategies conferring sustainability to our aims should include following essential points:

- Increase of the information of the public and its sensitization for the beneficial aspects of the allotment and leisure gardens, with the support of the written press and other media,

- Intensification of the Exchange of experiences and co-ordination of specific projects in the area of allotment gardens,

- Information and strengthening of the individual responsibility of every allotment gardener in regard to the protection of environment and the sustainable development,

- Insertion of the activities of the leisure gardeners in the strategies and requirements of the local agenda 21.

These strategies will only be efficient if the European Union and the member states will strengthen the legislation, protecting the existing allotment and leisure gardens and if the local authorities will include them in the local planning schemes.

It is particularly important that a co-operation between the local politicians and the representatives of the allotment and leisure garden associations on all the levels of the elaboration and execution of a local planning scheme is guaranteed.

York on August 24th, 2002.