

Resolution to support the Swiss allotment garden federation

During the international seminar in Ghent the delegates adopted with unanimity and signed the following resolution :

The 14 members of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux, meeting at a seminar at Ghent from 7 till 9 September 2009, were alerted by the Fédération suisse des Jardins Familiaux to the fact that numerous allotment gardens are threatened by real estate projects.

- 1. The Basle Central Federation is to have a new structure plan. This new plan envisages that 20% of allotment gardens will disappear in the coming 5 to 10 years in order to make room for the building of apartments and official buildings. This represents about 1200 plots.*
- 2. In the City of Berne, several garden sites are also threatened by apartment building projects and no provision exists for any compensation or replacement.*
- 3. In Romandie an allotment garden site will be eliminated at Lausanne Vidy and other sites are under threat in Geneva, even though in that city there is a waiting list of 700 names which bears witness to the high demand for allotment gardens.*
- 4. In the Berne region, the allotment gardens in the town of Thun have fallen victim to the construction of a new stadium. Since the end of February 2008, the area has been entirely cleared and the garden sheds have been demolished or sold. The association still exists, but it no longer has any land.*
- 5. In eastern Switzerland, a group of Gardens at St Gall is threatened by the construction of an underground shooting centre, with apartments built above it. Another site is threatened by the construction of a tunnel for trains because the construction of apartments is planned in this area. There exists an allotment garden concept stipulating the provision of replacement grounds. These grounds exist but not always near the residential areas*

The Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux is scandalised by the fate being suffered by allotment gardens in several regions of the Swiss Confederation and calls on the federal government to oppose the scheduled disappearance of a large number of allotment gardens.

In response to the crisis which is afflicting the most underprivileged, most European States encourage the creation of allotment gardens.

In response to the energy crisis, numerous countries take an interest in the development of short supply routes, of which allotment gardens are one element.

In view of the reduction of biodiversity that has been observed, allotment gardens, as has been shown by the study carried out by the German federation, are a means of preserving biodiversity and enriching it in urban areas.

An ever-growing proportion of the population lives in urban areas, which are expanding ceaselessly. City inhabitants suffer stress. There is nothing like allotment gardens to combat this malady in our society. The contribution made

by allotment gardens to the health of city dwellers has been highlighted by the work and observations of European, Canadian and American medical teams.

Gardening is also beneficial for older people who are depressed.

As a result of plots used for teaching purposes, allotment gardens offer schoolchildren a place to learn about and respect nature, a special place to make them aware of sustainable development.

Giving priority to real estate projects to the detriment of allotment gardens would merely worsen the living conditions and state of health of the inhabitants of the towns concerned. Studies showed that gardening is healthy. It makes fitness studios unnecessary.

Allotment gardens must be regarded as the green lungs of cities. Cities really need them. It is impossible to imagine cities in the future without green spaces, and garden allotments are extremely valuable in economic, social, ecological, town planning and health terms.

If, on public-interest grounds, which we can understand, it is sometimes necessary to do away with an allotment garden site, the local authorities must make every effort, at the very least, to replace the plots that have been lost and their facilities. This is the rule that applies in most other European countries.

The Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux asks the Swiss Confederation Government and the political leaders of the various regions to review their position and to do everything to, at least, preserve the existing allotment gardens and, if possible, expand their number in order to respond to the needs of the Swiss population.

Ghent, September 9th, 2009





OFFICE INTERNATIONAL du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux

Regroupement des fédérations européennes des jardins familiaux
association sans but lucratif

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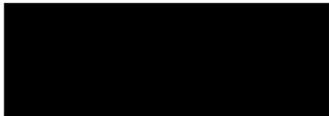
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Ghent, September 9th, 2009

For :

Austria : Zentralverband der Kleingärtner
und Siedler Österreich

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Wilhelm WOHATSCHEK

Belgium : Ligue Nationale des Coins de Terre
et du Foyer-Jardins Populaires Asbl

President : 
Alexandre VERCAMER

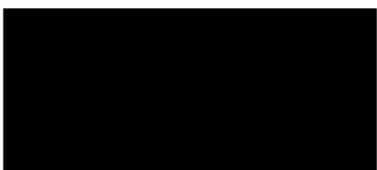
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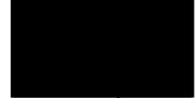
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