



# OFFICE INTERNATIONAL du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux

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## Regroupement des fédérations européennes des jardins familiaux

Dear allotment gardeners

2013 was the European year of the citizens.

This year was dedicated to the rights that come with European citizenship and was due to allow a discussion of these rights in order to build a vision on how the European Union should be in 2020. This situation will not be very much different in Switzerland and Norway.

Christian SCHWÄGERL wrote in his article « Mensch macht Natur » (man makes nature):  
Could gardens and urban agriculture characterise the new towns and an avalanche of problems could be avoided.....“

We allotment gardeners should therefore as citizens, and as members of a great European organisation with a social and environmental vocation, take part in the building of our and our children's future.

Therefore, we have to reinforce our movement in order to increase its force of action and its visibility.

In this context we must certainly increase the number of our members, but that is not sufficient. We also need above all committed and motivated members, ready to get involved themselves in our associations and federations in order to prepare the future.

Our movement is only what we make of it!

The formation of our members is essential. It must be continued so that all members adopt a gardening respectful of nature and that the new members will not be overwhelmed by the new tasks of their hobby. Courses, lectures, documents, educational material and all other means have to be used.

We must be flexible and reduce our rules in order to comply with the necessities of our time and the requirements of society in order to enable our members to transform their potential into reality.

We have to apply the principles of good governance in our associations and federations. Horizontality, decision sharing and involvement of all are the principles that we have to put into practice.

The projects that we carry out must be meaningful and useful for society. Our activities for children, elderly people, disabled or migrants for example, our activities for the safeguard of biodiversity or honeybees have to make a difference in society. These projects must be solid, effective and sustainable.

Additionally we have to make our activities and innovative projects known by society and politics. We have to explain them the value of our efforts and activities, the reasons and benefits of our gardens for society.

Therefore, the International Office will not only adopt a strategy for the future during its congress 2014 in Utrecht, but has already joined this year other organizations in order to be able to increase its influence.

The Office has become member of EUROPA NOSTRA, a pan-European organisation working for the protection of the cultural and natural heritage.

The Office and the federations take part in the Cost Action: „Urban Allotment Gardens“ aiming at establishing the value of the allotments in a scientific study.

The Office takes part in the Council of Europe’s campaign “Responding together” and presents there, among others, a sample of social activities carried out by the allotment associations.

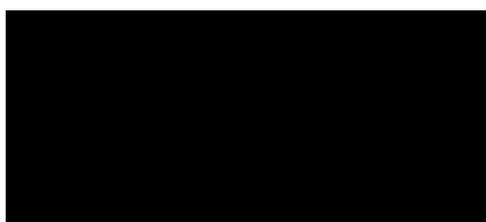
The year 2014 is now approaching quickly.

This year 2014 has to become an exciting and dynamic year for all the allotment gardeners. Let us take up the challenges.

This year 2014 has to become an excellent year. However this largely depends on us, on our real involvement.

This year 2014 has to enable us to undertake important things. The higher we reach the more we can achieve.

In this optic I wish you and your families a happy new year 2014 and a good health. Let us always remember that if we join our efforts we can move mountains.



Malou WEIRICH  
Secretary General