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**ANNUAL MEETING ICME
MUNICH, GERMANY, 18-20 OCTOBER 1991**

Some 40 people were present in one of the many historical lecture halls of the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich to attend the symposium "Towards a Europe of Cultures", organised at the occasion of ICME's last annual meeting. Both the lecture hall and the University building itself could not be missed: huge ICME signs all over Munich showed where the meeting would be held. A remarkable initiative from Martin Prösler who did a great job to help ICME organising the symposium, in conjunction with the Working Group of the German Anthropological Society during a joint conference with the Austrian Anthropological Society.

The theme chosen for the symposium was "Changes in Eastern and Central Europe and their impact on museums". It was intended to provide a forum for discussion of recent changes in European society and to examine their impact on museum work. The symposium placed emphasis on two interrelated topics, providing a basis for future ICOM/ICME activities.

1. A review of the work of museums of ethnography in Eastern and Central Europe:

The deep social changes taking place in this part of Europe are modifying and sometimes even replacing the earlier modes of museumwork. Cultural policies are changing too and consequently government expectations concerning the work of museums are exerting an influence on their functioning.

In the face of these changes, new challenges have become apparent for museums, such as an increasing trend towards "xenophobia" in a number of countries. How are ethnographic museums reacting to these changes? What actions have they undertaken and what results have they produced? What vision do we ourselves have of the rôle of the museum in to-morrow's society?

2. Forms of co-operation between museums of ethnography:

As a result of the changing face of Europe, other forms of co-operation can be established between East and West. Accordingly, perspectives and structures for co-operation between museums of ethnography should be revised. What do both sides hope to achieve from new forms of exchange?

After words of welcome by our vice-chairman David Boston, the symposium was introduced by Martin Prösler from the Linden Museum in Stuttgart.

Further contributions given were:

■ "The times they are changing. Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow -- The museum of Non-European Cultures in Slovenia, by Ralf Cepak, curator of the Slovenski Etnografski Muzej in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia-Slovenia.

■ "Ethnographic Museums in Croatia: Between Postmodern Europe and Premodern Reality, by Damodar Frlan, director of the Etnografski muzej Museum, Zagreb, Yugoslavia-Croatia.

■ "Ethnographic collection in Hungary" by Tamas Hoffman, director of the Neprajzi Museum in Budapest, Hungary.

- "Museums, Museology and the Changing World", by Vinos Sofka, museologist, of the Statens Historiska Museum in Stockholm, Sweden.
- "Changes in the Museum of Ethnography of Prague", by Jana Souckova, director of the Naprstkovo Museum in Prague, Czechoslovakia.
- "Difficulties with Property Rights Concerning Museum Objects- Experiences in Leipzig Today, by Lothar Stein, director of the Völkerkundemuseum in Leipzig, Germany.
- "Unknown Europe: a vision" by Rudiger Vossen, Hamburg, Germany
- "Dealing with Hostilities towards the Strange and the Stranger. Some perspectives on the Work of the Dresden Museum of Ethnography", by Silvia Dolz, curator of the Völkerkundemuseum in Dresden, Germany.

This wide array of lectures provided an excellent opportunity for an extensive exchange of ideas between the participants. Attention was also drawn to the forthcoming conference on the theme "Europe of Cultures", to be held in Paris in 1993 (see also under Future Events).

ICME was also informed about the destruction of the national cultural heritage in Croatia and, at its business meeting, urged ICOM to take all necessary action to support an end to this grave situation which has threatened to extend even further afield. The committee further took note of the conclusions reached by ICOFOM at their October meeting in Switzerland and recorded strong support for their views.

Finally, ICME adopted the following resolution, also submitted to the ICOM Executive, related to the need for adequate resources, especially for museums in Central and Eastern Europe: There is an urgent need to strengthen the educational role that ethnological and ethnographical museums could and should play, particularly in relation to minority issues and racism.

After the symposium and in between ICME business meetings, visits were arranged to look behind the scenes at the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Munich, currently undergoing restoration, and to see its branch two hours away by bus in Oettingen. Under the guidance of Girma Fisseha we admired there a remarkable and comprehensive exhibition on Ethiopia.

ICME remains most grateful to Martin Prösler, to other German colleagues involved in the organisation of the meeting and to the participants. (As stated) it has been agreed that the papers will be published in the Proceedings of the Ethnological Museum in Hamburg.