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News from the Global Ecovillage Network

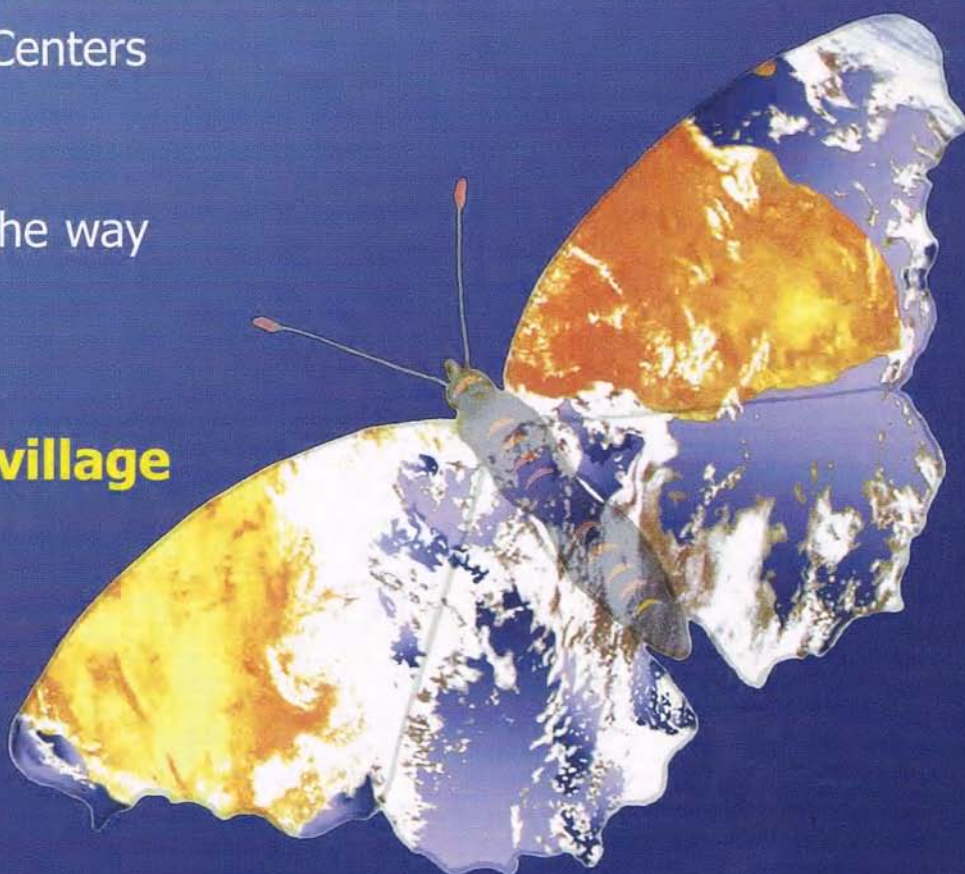
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News

from Europe

GEN Europe: Move to Torri, Italy

Lucilla Borio

In May 99 the GEN-Europe office, now called the "service node" for the network, moved from Lebensgarten, Germany to Torri Superiore, Italy. Declan Kennedy and Agnieszka Komoch, who started the secretariat and nurtured it for the past three years, handed it over to Lucilla Borio, Hugo Arellano and Susanne Keinonen from Torri Superiore in Northern Italy.

It was a bright, crisp spring day when Lucilla and her husband Massimo rang at Declan's doorbell on May 3, after driving a big rented van across Europe for a day and a night to pick up the office equipment. Everything had been prepared and neatly packed up the weeks before. After some rest, food, celebrations and hugs, the Torri group left and headed back to Italy where the little cozy two-room office at the front of the medieval village of Torri Superiore was already waiting for them. The service node is now up and functioning full steam with the support of all ecovillage members, who give their advice and technical help whenever needed. In buildings older than 600 years, the newly installed ISDN telephone line, fax,

internet connection and a fully equipped Mac computer fulfill some of the much needed functions for the modern office's everyday work. Lucilla and Hugo feel they still have a lot to learn from Declan and Agnieszka, and are thankful for their constant support. The workload seems to be growing by the day, but they keep cool and enjoy their ecovillage life, including the many visitors who pop up at the office door to learn more about the Global Ecovillage Network. Small ecovillagers Ida and Ilario, both three years old, pay regular visits and keep the office lively with their drawings and comments.

Some data about the European situation today: GEN-Europe has more than 100 members, some of which are networks of ecovillages like LØS, the Danish Association of Sustainable Communities; the Gen-Europe newsletter was issued as a section of the English newspaper Positive News and circulated in 55.000 copies worldwide - in the future it will become a multilingual newsletter issued in various magazines worldwide; regular national meetings are held in several countries and are publicized through the web.

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GEN-Europe Council Meeting in Turkey

In the little village of Hasandede, 150 km South East of Ankara, the Council of GEN-Europe held its third meeting. Present were four members (Agnieszka Komoch, Lucilla Borio, Thomas Seiersen, Demet Irkli,) while Declan Kennedy and Silke Hagmaier did not attend the meeting.

Decisions made by the Council: The legal seat of GEN-Europe is now the Belgian FAIB (Fédération des Associations Internationales Etablies

en Belgique), in Brussels; Agnieszka Komoch was elected President, Lucilla Borio Secretary and Thomas Seiersen Treasurer. A broader circulation of ecovillage news and concepts will be achieved through co-operation with several magazines in different countries (AAM Terra Nuova in Italy, LØSNet in Denmark, Bugday in Turkey and others), thus reaching many non-English speakers across Europe. The Council decided to offer small grants to ecovillage members wishing to attend the Findhorn Foundation and Kibbutz Gezer seminars, and to organise a straw bale house building course in Turkey for ecovillage activists and earthquake-stricken people.

After the meeting, the Turkish ecovillage network Ekilat had its gathering, attended by 30 people from Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir, among which many university professors and representatives of Greenpeace, WWF, and other organisations. GEN-Europe members from ecovillages Patika and Eco Foca participated actively and described the progress achieved at their projects. The Hocamkoy ecovillage project unfortunately came to a sudden halt when their strip of land and newly built mud-brick house were occupied by local farmers who laid claim to the property.

Mete Hacaloglu gave an interesting tour of the alternative technology applications in the Hasandede area, including a solar drier for fruits and vegetables, a biogas collector, and a solar and wind power generator for a family house. All the projects were accomplished with the support of UNDP. The meeting ended with an oak planting session over a barren hill with the participation of young people from the village, and a final celebration of farewell around a big and majestic oak tree.

Background: GEN Europe's office window at Torri Superiore

