ARCHAEOLANDSCAPES EUROPE: Five Years of Pan-European Collaboration to Foster Education and Research in Aerial Archaeology and Other Advanced Surveying Techniques

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Aerial archaeology, satellite imagery, geophysical investigations and airborne laser scanning (LiDAR) are techniques of archaeological surveying that have long been recognized throughout Europe and abroad. But still the use of these methods is not mandatory in all European countries. While in some parts of Europe aerial archaeology is hardly used at all, LiDAR scanning is not known in others – and vice versa. Sometimes this is caused simply by the lack of expert knowledge within some countries; sometimes it is the lack of awareness of the abilities of these techniques; and sometimes it is simply the differing cultural heritage policies in different countries that hinder their adoption.

Fig. 1: Partners from the ArchaeoLandscapes Europe-*project at the kick-off meeting in Bucharest.*

To overcome these problems, the mutual exchange of ideas, teaching activities and networking in general has to be cultivated amongst universities, cultural heritage management authorities and research institutions from all over Europe.

In February 2010 the European Commission (Directorate General Education and Culture) accepted the project proposal for the 5-years networking project within the framework of the funding programme Culture 2007–2013 (Agreement number - 2010 - 1486 / 001 – 001, CU7-MULT7). Currently 39 partners from 25 European countries are working together to build up a self-supporting network of institutions and partners involved in advanced surveying techniques such as aerial archaeology, satellite imagery, geophysics and airborne laser scanning. A budget of 5 million Euros (50% provided by the EU, 50% coming from the co-organising partners) will support the work for the next five years.

The partner organisations are drawn from the field of archaeological heritage management, from universities, archaeological research institutions and from pan-European non-profit organisations such as the Aerial Archaeology Research Group (AARG), which was one of the leading partners in the predecessor project *European Landscapes: Past, Present and Future* (2004–2007) and was also deeply involved in the proposal for the *ArchaeoLandscapes Europe* project.

Public awareness and dissemination of challenging skills in aerial and remote sensing techniques will be achieved by the project through eight key Actions:

1. By creating an ultimately self-supporting network, with a small central secretariat, to provide leadership, coordination and advice on the use for heritage purposes of aerial photography, remote sensing and landscape studies.

2. By using traditional and innovative methods to publicize the value of aerial survey, remote sensing and landscape studies amongst the general public, students, teachers and all those who explore, enjoy or care for cultural landscapes and heritage sites across Europe.

3. By promoting the pan-European exchange of people, skills and understanding through meetings, workshops, exchange visits, placements and opportunities for specialist training and employment.

4. By enhancing the teaching of remote sensing and landscape studies through courses for students and teachers, and in the longer term through a European masters degree in remote sensing and heritage management.

5. By securing better exploitation of existing air-photo archives across Europe by researching, assessing and publicizing their potential for heritage interpretation and landscape conservation.

6. By providing support for aerial survey, remote sensing and landscape exploration in countries relatively new to their use, especially in northern, eastern and southern Europe.

7. By further exploring the uses of laser, satellite and other forms of remote sensing and web-based geographical systems in archaeological and landscape research, conservation and public education.

8. By providing technical guidance and advice on best practice in aerial survey, remote sensing and landscape studies, with a particular emphasis on conservation and heritage management.

A large number of meetings, conferences, aerial field schools, technical training schools, exhibitions and publications will be the basis of the project's work, both for the internal and external networking aspect and for the dissemination of ideas and knowledge to the archaeological community and to the general public.

The kick-off meeting took place alongside this year's AARG conference on 19 September in Bucharest and hosted representatives from all of the co-organising (CO) and from most of the associated partners (AP). This first meeting was a very successful get-together at which the eight Working Parties, responsible for the eight Actions mentioned above, were collocated and at which the General Management Board, consisting of two APs – University of Vienna (AT), Aerial Archaeology Research Group (International) –, and six COs – Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres (BE), Discovery Programme, Dublin (IE), Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research, Oslo (NO), University of Ljubljana (SI), The Heritage Laboratory Galicia, Santiago de Compostela (ES), Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh (UK) – as well as the Roman-Germanic-Commission of the German Archaeological institute (DE) as the project leader, was established.

While COs are fully committed in terms of EU funding, APs have no financial commitment but are fully integrated in all activities and in all panels and boards of the project. It is the aim of *ArchaeoLandscapes Europe* to further extend the network so new representatives of other countries and institutions can still be accepted under certain circumstances as associated partners. For more information on the '*ArchaeoLandscapes Europe*' project, please visit www.archaeolandscapes.eu or contact Axel Posluschny at posluschny@rgk.dainst.de.