

# Carrefour

## Summary



Terraces and dovecotes at Tinos, in Greece.

### Why the European Dry-Stone Forum?

#### A common heritage

Dry stone constructions are part of the rural scenery in many European countries. From Scotland to Cyprus, dry-stone walls, sheepfolds, paths and shelters present a wealth of variations and local characteristics, making this feature of common heritage particularly fascinating.

#### A threatened heritage

These constructions are humble witnesses to traditional ways of life. They are part of a vernacular architecture that depends on an ancient and complex expertise currently under threat. The danger stems both from a lack of awareness as to the value of this heritage and from the loss of the knowledge needed to sustain it.

#### An impetus for Europe

The Forum was launched by the European Centre for the Environment and its partner organisations, with support from the Culture 2000 programme of the European Commission. The Forum's purpose is to provide an impetus for the restoration and preservation of dry-stone constructions throughout Europe.

#### Sustainable development

This European organisation assembles the energies of various associations, crafts-people, regional authorities and the general public of Europe, focussing on the preservation and transfer of the traditional expertise that is the only way to maintain and develop rural dry-stone constructions. This heritage is observed from a modernist viewpoint, not only because it is still so frequent in European culture and countryside, but also because it answers current requirements for sustainable development (construction methods that take account of local ecological and economic considerations, using "clean" building materials).

### How does the European Dry-Stone Forum Work?

It focuses on a variety of features based on four main principles:

#### Acknowledgement and preservation of a traditional European profession and expertise

**thanks to:** a comprehensive list of dry-stone wallers providing clear identification of those who hold this specific expertise, a way of gathering professionals around a quality charter agreement in the context of a European association.

**Development and improvement of basic and advanced training** for young people and established wallers, based on reference knowledge that can be transferred to other regions of Europe.

**Promoting dry-stone constructions:** by proposing local action programmes that integrate dry-stone heritage into local development strategies, by raising the awareness of young people and adult volunteers in the five countries involved in the programme, with practical field-based activities.

**Pilot activities for the restoration of dry-stone constructions:** model work sites that can both preserve threatened heritage items (walls, paths, sheepfolds) and also be used to train professionals in traditional methods.

*The European  
Dry-Stone Forum:  
why? how?.....* page 1

*The European forum:  
origins  
and partnerships.....* page 2

*The European Forum:  
activities.....* page 3

*Directory,  
Glossary, Agenda.....* page 4

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Education and culture

### Culture 2000



Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur



## The European forum: origins and partnerships

The launch seminar for the European dry-stone forum was held in Avignon (France) in May 2003.

Partner organisations of the European Dry-Stone Forum are all not-for-profit organisations that have agreed on the objective of raising awareness and training people to protect and develop cultural heritage.

By organising practical initiatives (restoration work sites, training sessions, etc.) and by carrying out research and other activities, all the partner organisations of the Forum aim to be locally efficient as well as relevant on a European level.

They are all involved in leadership and participation in a wide selection of Euro-Mediterranean networks and projects.

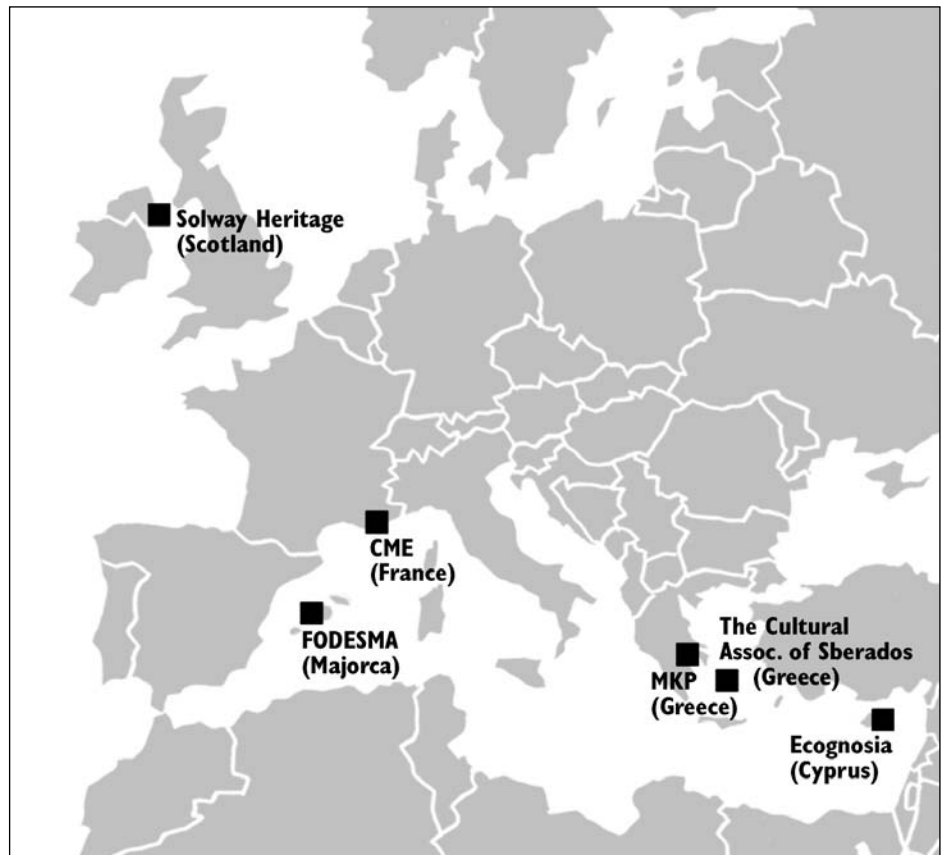
**The Mediterranean Centre for the Environment (CME)** in Avignon, France, is the project coordinator: an association dedicated to environmental education and the local cultural landscape. The CME works alongside local groups on projects that preserve and enhance the Euro-Mediterranean heritage.

**FODESMA Majorca, Spain:** A public training organisation linked to the Consell Insular de Mallorca. Its training activities and heritage management programmes are an integral part of the island's sustainable economic development.

**Solway Heritage Dumfries, UK:** an NGO focussed on the development of environmental and cultural heritage in the Dumfries & Galloway regions. Dry-stone constructions being an integral part of the scenery and culture of the area, the purpose of Solway Heritage is to promote and develop this feature by laying out tourist routes, setting up activity programmes and helping with restoration work.

**Ecognosia Nicosia, Cyprus:** a research and information centre for the environment and local heritage, this organisation has been carrying out studies and activities for the past ten years that focus on developing traditional dry-stone features. The group's aim is to maintain the link between the local population and its environment.

**Mesogeiako Kentro Perivallontos (MKP) Athens, Greece:** an NGO that helps local initiators to develop protection and development policies for the natural and cultural heritage of Greece. The MKP uses European projects to help create links between these local leaders and their counterparts in other countries of Europe.



**The Cultural Association of Sberados Tinos, Greece:** a local initiative that aims to develop the area's cultural heritage by carrying out annual activities

to restore the architecture of the village with the participation of volunteers and by making use of individual expertise.

### Profession: dry-stone waller

Craftsmen who are able to preserve and develop this heritage – wallers – are not acknowledged as they should be, and the survival of their expertise still largely depends on their capacity to pass it on by word of mouth. It is time to invest properly in this knowledge and provide it with a framework in legal, scientific and institutional terms. Such measures would help to preserve this heritage in the long-term, and enhance public and private interest for dry-stone features, given that this is currently at a stand-still due to the lack of a context of common reference.

The European Forum depends on strong trans-national cooperation, particularly in the area of exchange between wallers from different origins during practical workshop encounters. It is also taking part in European inventories and the constitution of a European wallers' association, with a specialised website.

## The European Forum: activities

### France

#### *A training programme in Provence for teachers and leaders*

This workshop was held from 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of November in Sault, in the Vaucluse. It gathered training personnel from the five regions of the project (Scotland, Provence, Cyprus, Tinos, Majorca) with the objective of sharing the teaching skills necessary for passing on the traditional knowledge of dry-stone construction.

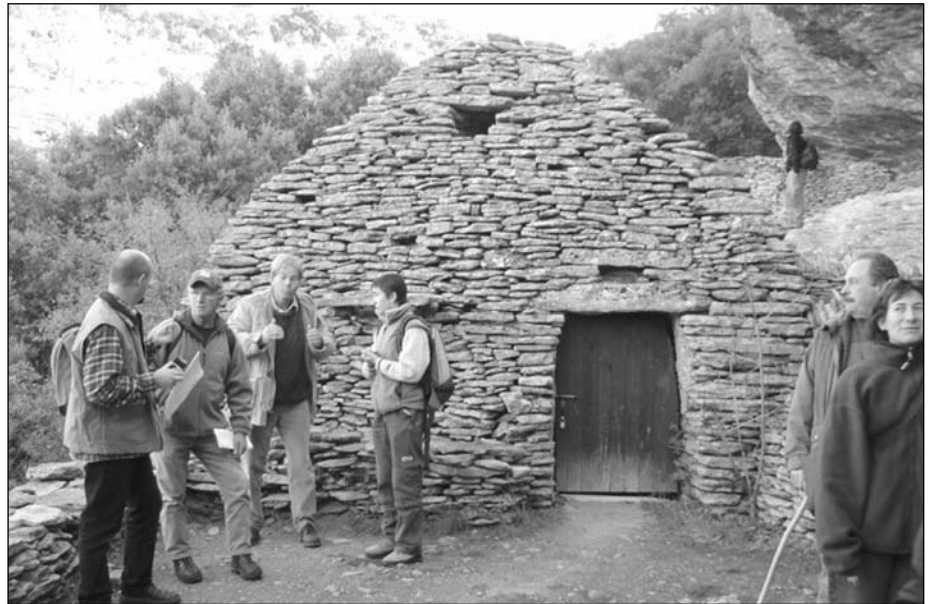
The different levels of this transfer of knowledge, from raising public awareness to professional training, were all brought up by a variety of speakers and visits to dry-stone features and work-sites.

> The role of local initiatives in raising public awareness of dry-stone heritage, with Mireille Gravié, from the "Permanent Centre for Environmental initiatives in the Vaucluse"

> Basic training in dry-stone walling techniques through volunteer work-sites, with Jean-Michel André, director of work-sites for the APARE (Association for Regional Action and Participation).

> The role of local businesses in transferring traditional expertise: the example of the OPUS company developed by its director, Paul Arnault.

> LITHOS, the dry-stone museum in Le Beaucet, and its role in training and research, presented by Claire Cornu, from the Vaucluse Professional Guild.



*A workshop training for teachers and leaders in Sault in Provence.*

Beyond these experiences taken from the French context, this workshop allowed participants to compare their approach of dry-stone walling with that of other countries, and look at the different stages in safeguarding this expertise. In particular, the organisation and long experience of training programmes in Scotland and Majorca could be used as theoretical models for Greece

and Cyprus, where no training, even basic, is provided, despite the importance of their dry-stone heritage.

### Greece

#### *The young volunteers work site in Tinos*

Tinos is a Greek island of the Cyclades that enjoys an exceptionally rich dry-stone heritage. This work site was part of the programme for volunteers set up by the APARE (many other such work camps are organised each year by the APARE in France and other Mediterranean countries: [www.apare-gec.org](http://www.apare-gec.org)).

Locally, it was led by the Mediterranean Centre for the Environment of Athens and the Cultural Association of Sberados (Tinos). Between 23<sup>rd</sup> of August and 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2003, eleven young people from France, Rumania, Greece and Ireland were introduced to techniques for restoring dry-stone walls. They took part in cleaning and rebuilding a path in the village as well as the access and lateral walls of a village fountain. The work was carried out in the morning under the responsibility of Yannis Psaltis (from the Cultural Association of the village of Sberados), with the help of two local craftsmen. The volunteers received theoretical training based on the geomorphological and geological characteristics of the island, on stone cutting and well as on the tools currently used to build dry-stone walls.

*Tinos: volunteers workcamps*



*Continued on page 4*

## The European Forum: activities (continued)

Afternoons were dedicated to social and cultural activities: discovering the island, its villages, its culture and its beaches, under the responsibility of Véronique Thomazea (APARE).

One Greek participant said with tears in her eyes: "It was quite a thrill to see those young people come from so far away, at their own expense, using their holidays to work so hard for restoring our heritage..." This shared thrill was the motivating factor for this local collaboration. The volunteer commitment of the young people, their desire to meet and exchange with the local population – overcoming the language barrier – gathered two other local associations from Tinos around the project and the Cultural Association of Sberados. A further common association was founded to provide the materials and tools needed for the work, and care for the long-term financing.

### Scotland Dalbeattie Granite Festival

From 13<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2003, wallers from Spain, France and Cyprus met up in Dalbeattie with their counterparts from Dumfries & Galloway (South West of Scotland). Using their Mediterranean expertise, they took part in the work-site for wallers that was taking place during the Dalbeattie Granite Festival.

Under the leadership of Jimmy Scott, an expert dry-stone waller, this international team built a stone wall made of granite (called a "granite boulder dyke" in Scotland) in the forest of Dalbeattie, helping to develop a new hiking/cycling path, the "Seven Stanes Cycle Track".

Solway Heritage put this programme together with the collaboration of the Dumfries & Galloway Council and the support of the Forestry Commission Scotland and the Dalbeattie Community Initiative. This work site helped to strengthen the network of partnerships around the Forum, and it contributed to raising awareness of the project among the local population.

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Scotland, Dalbeattie Granite Festival.

## Directory: advertise yourself and others!

The European Dry-Stone Forum is taking part in the European dry-stone wallers' inventory. Its objective is to identify those who have the required expertise in the different regions involved, and set up an international network of professionals.

**Request  
a registration form from:**  
medcenv@hellasnet.gr  
fax : 00 30 210.98.87.565

**Web site:** Soon online!  
www.carrefour-europeen-pierreseche.org

## Glossary: an expression in every language!

- dry stone waller *in English*
- drystone dykers *in Scotland*
- bancalero *in Spanish*
- pardaïre  
ou muraïaire *in Provençal*
- muraïlleur  
ou muraïller *in French*
- μάστορας  
ou ξερολιθιάς *in Greek*
- margener  
ou marger *in Catalan*

## agenda

### Upcoming Forum features:

#### Tools for professionals

- > A directory of professionals (individual wallers and companies) working in the relevant regions.
- > A European wallers' charter
- > A European basic training referential for the walling profession
- > A protocol for scientific research in order to design a reference guide for dry-stone walling techniques that can be transferred to other European countries

#### Training and awareness-raising

- > « Heritage classes » in Tinos
- > A training work-site session in Majorca

### Carrefour *European Dry-Stone Forum*

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