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NEWSLETTER 9

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VIA EGNATIA FOUNDATION
A WAY TO CONNECT

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Dear VEF friends and supporters,

We hope that you all had a good summer and are back to work with renewed forces. Some of us met each other “on the way”, during the summer, and had the opportunity to exchange views, fun and ideas. Especially the people who joined us in “pathfinding” in Albania and Macedonia – the Elbasan students and the friends from Ohrid and Bitola – contributed greatly to the project and to an unforgettable experience together. Thank you !

We hope to create in the future more opportunities to “meet each other on the Way”, for that is the idea of Via Egnatia.

1. Trail marking

Together with ten students in “sustainable tourism” from Elbasan we set off in May to explore and describe the part of VE between Elbasan and the Ohrid Lake. Because of the rain we were always offered hospitality in private houses, which was a moving experience. We also met with difficulties, i.e. badly eroded parts of VE, in urgent need of repair. We intend to do something about that, as soon as we have the money for it. With the municipalities of Librazhd and Elbasan we talked about the possibility of engaging unemployed local people in repair jobs.

Big parts of the Via Egnatia hiking trail in Albania and Macedonia have been marked and described, this season. Not only the trail itself is described, but also a network of people along the way, who offer Bed and Breakfast, guiding, renting donkeys and horses, etc. All these “V.E. stakeholders” agree with the mission of VEF. We published already a small guide for the Albanian part. This means that other people are now able to walk and follow the trail, and contribute with their footsteps to the development of Via Egnatia. Isn't that great?

The rest of the sign posting in Albania and Macedonia will follow as soon as possible. As you understand, a lot of work and walking is involved and local help is very welcome. If you want to join in this job, please let us know by email! viaegnatia@planet.nl

We strive to complete the part Albania-Macedonia – until Florina next year, if possible with an official opening ceremony.

After that parts of the Via Egnatia hiking trail in Greece – also the branch Korce-Krystallopigi-Florina – will follow.

2. Lectures Istanbul

The NIT (Dutch institute in Turkey) in Istanbul organizes a symposium on “Roads in Europe”, on 27 October 2011. On this Symposium VEF will have two lectures:

1. “Via Egnatia as a culture corridor”, by Marietta van Attekum,
2. “A long and winding road, common heritage versus national pride”, by Holger de Bruin.

There will be other lectures about roman roads and connecting arteries, and room for discussion. We invite especially our VEF friends in Istanbul – and those of you who happen to be near – to this event ! See: www.nit-istanbul.org.

We are looking forward to meet you there!

3. Exhibitions in winter.

VEF organizes this winter lectures and exhibitions in Holland, to raise interest and money for the project. These events are published on the website. (www.viaegnatiafoundation.eu)

In January and February there will be an exhibition of photographs and the children’s painting in the Town Hall of the municipality of “Heuvelrug”, near Utrecht. This will be combined with lectures and a high school project on Via Egnatia, in which most of the Dutch VEF friends will participate. This will be a try-out for such an educational sub-project.

4. Facebook.

We are expanding our Facebook-network. Old fashioned as we are, this is a bit of a trial for us. However, we strive to publish our messages in the future also by Facebook. If you want to participate in this, please get a Facebook contact with “Via Egnatia”. So become also a virtual friend with us.

With kind regards,
The VEF board.