

Dear members,

welcome to the 14. General Assembly of the Friends of Gökova- Akyaka (G.A.S.-Der).

As we already did on our last general assembly, we are presenting our triennial activity report to you in form of a booklet.

This year is our association's 18. anniversary. Our NGO has a strong CV and a lively past. The Friends of Gökova- Akyaka are known and acknowledged for their quality work, their stability and competence on national and international platforms.

Like always, we want to thank the members or rather our friends of the board, who manage the association cordially in good and in bad days, sharing the hardship as well as our success. Thank you very much. During the last period four of our board members lost close relatives, our deepest condolences to them and their families.

We have heard with great sorrow about the demise of one of our founding members, Adnan Pekman and our member, Murat Çatay. Our heartfelt condolences to their families and friends.

In October 2008 we lost Nail Çakırhan, who was very close to us and who always gave us confidence and trust. We loved and respected him very much. Our Uncle Nail lived his last days in the Yücelen Hospital in Mugla. We thank Hamdi Yücel Gürsoy and his family that we could share these hard days with our Uncle Nail and his Halet. He is irreplaceable, our loss is enormous, condolences to all of us.

Our town has grown, tourism and population increased; naturally civil society became more active, too. Over the last years some more associations have been found and we even have a newly found Citizens Council according to the new Municipality Law. We liked these new developments very much, in the past we were forced to carry all the weight of civil society alone, now duties are shared and some are carried out by other associations.

So we had to define our work plans and strategies anew, according to these new developments but still faithful to our association's vision. Based on these new decisions we wanted to emphasize culture, art and communal work even more than before. This decision came quite naturally to us since even our former art and culture activities were performed on a level that would fill another association's agenda totally.

Furthermore we wanted to underline the safekeeping of our independent spirit and commenced even more in networking with other associations, encouraged by their support of some of our works. Our new and maybe yet unfamiliar focus points and the ones we have abandoned should be regarded and evaluated in this light. We could see that these efforts decreased the local pressure, by now we work in a more peaceful environment and came to the conclusion that our different approaches have lead to quite successful results.

Let's have a look on the activities of the last period:

1. Nail ÇAKIRHAN- Halet ÇAMBEL Culture and Art House and our other Culture and Art Activities

Over the 12 years we are managing the Nail ÇAKIRHAN- Halet ÇAMBEL Culture and Art House we have shown and prepared 113 exhibitions. Together with the events we shared in the summers of 2007 and 2008 with the Tatbiki Gallery this means organising 115 openings. These openings are not just cultural events, they offer a meeting, chatting and entertaining opportunity for the local population and visitors. We have been praised many times for these evenings.

Even if we did not cooperate with the Tatbiki Gallery in 2009, we are planning some winter activities in the Nail ÇAKIRHAN- Halet ÇAMBEL Culture and Art House, some art events for winter and trying to give an opportunity to meet for the interested.

Furthermore we have distributed more than 10.000 art catalogues over the years. We were told that our annual catalogues are collector's objects by now. With the incentive of our main sponsor, Mepar Tour we added a small tourism guide and heard that the addition has been very useful. The exhibitions are contributing to the local tourism anyway: our artists, their friends and families are usually staying in the area for about 10 days.

As is our habit every spring before the exhibition season starts, the culture house and our office have been repaired in winter 2006/07. The wood of the culture house has been cleaned and painted, the lighting completely renewed and changed, the office had to be regularly maintained, the broken fax machine replaced. The refrigerator, very important for our openings gave up in 2009 and had to be replaced.

Since several years we are in close contact with other people and organisations working with art, for example Ajans Villa and the Kalimerhaba Association, who are striving for the same aim in Marmaris. We participated as KSE Artist Group in their "Women and Art Festival" in March 2009.

Exhibitions of the last period:

2007 Exhibitions

19.05.	-	27.05.	Çakırhan – Çambel Culture and Art House "10 Years Retrospective"
01.06.	-	10.06.	Korkut Tıryaki
15.06.	-	24.06.	Muazzez Uludağ & Keriman Nargaz
29.06.	-	08.07	İmren İyemAslan
13.07.	-	22.07	Orhan Özkaya
27.07.	-	05.08	Emre İkizler
10.08.	-	19.08.	Yıldız Dinçer-Yalçiner & Sezen Yalçiner
20.08.	-	23.08	Tatbiki Art Gallery "Night Exhibitions"
24.08.	-	02.09	Vahdet Kadioğlu
07.09.	-	16.09.	Nuran İskit-Bektaş
21.09.	-	30.09.	Alp Arslan
05.10.	-	14.10.	Emin Güler & Ruhsar Uçar
19.10.	-	28.10	Tülay İlhan

2008 Exhibitions

23.05.08	-	01.06.08	Memik Kibarkaya
06.06.08	-	15.06.08	Fikret Yaltraklı
20.06.08	-	29.06.08	Çizgelikedi Kadınlar Projesi
04.07.08	-	13.07.08	Ayşegül Apak
18.07.08	-	27.07.08	Mehmet Bildirici
01.08.08	-	10.08.08	Simon J.A. Simpson
15.08.08	-	24.08.08	Svetlana Inaç
25.08.08	-	28.08.08	Tatbiki Art Gallery, Street Festival
29.08.08	-	07.09.08	Ayşe Saray
12.09.08	-	21.09.08	Ülkü Onur
26.09.08	-	05.10.08	Türkan Dişbudak + Neşe Aksoy
10.10.08	-	19.10.08	Hale Ozansoy
24.10.08	-	02.11.08	Ekendiz Tanay

2009 Exhibitions

22.05.09	-	31.05.09	İbrahim Keleş
05.06.09	-	14.06.09	Tracy Harrington-Simpson
19.06.09	-	28.06.09	Hatice Önal
03.07.09	-	12.07.09	Arzu Karaduman
17.07.09	-	26.07.09	Süheyla Zengin
31.07.09	-	09.08.09	Bahadır Erdem
14.08.09	-	23.08.09	Gül Gökova
28.08.09	-	06.09.09	Aysel Özenir
11.09.09	-	20.09.09	Ülkü Yalçın
25.09.09	-	04.10.09	Dineke Mühürdaroğlu
09.10.09	-	18.10.09	Fehnur İpek
23.10.09	-	01.11.09	Filiz Şimşekçi

The openings are on the first day of each exhibition (Fridays) at 18.⁰⁰. Everybody is invited.

For his never ceasing efforts in the coordination and organisation of the exhibitions and his patience over all the years managing the culture house we thank Thomas Schmitz from the depths of our hearts.

2. Nature Protection, Field and Research Activities

- Every year without fault we control and assess our local biodiversity. From migration bird censuses to the control of White Stork nests we assess birds and their living conditions and areas. Our records are among the longest standing records in Turkey and are used by diverse science branches. We are doing the same work concerning Fishotters.
- Protecting species means of course protecting their living spaces, too. The Ula District Governor banned hunting from the 1. Degree Nature Protection Site of the Gökova Plain in the late '80s. When in 1988 Gökova has been declared a wide ranged SPA, hunting became banned all through the year. The burning of the reed beds by the hunters is a catastrophe for nature and, of course, very bad for tourism.

Certainly hunting and poaching decreased of the last year, nevertheless we are still suffering from mostly non local hunters and regrettably we have to remind the state organs every year anew about the hunting ban. More's the pity that we still have to come out against bird hunters on the plain and have to alert the Gendarmes every autumn over and over again. We find this 20 year long struggle very tiring, but it is very important to keep to these laws, if we ever want to have an alternative and more sustainable tourism in the basin.

- For the same reasons we contest the ever more popular boar and bird repelling sound contraptions used on the fields nowadays. This method disturbs human visitors and local people alike, and, if nature tourism should be prioritised, the idea of repelling birds and all other wild life like this should not be part of the plan.
- Someone nearly destroyed all of the area along the Gözbaşı Canal in 2007. Regrettably our complains have not been taken seriously and the culprit remained scot-free.
- Please read about the 2006/07 'Beach Club' construction on the Akçapınar beach, why we complained and the outcome of the court cases in the "Legal Processes" Section.
- We have always been actively involved in the protection of the river and its sides. Of course we are trying to halt the harm done to nature by the ever increasing commercial use and the tour traffic. After the Gökova SMAP III Project and the founding of the Civil Town Council the issue has found a broader platform, education and awareness building activities have increased. The municipality and the concerned state departments have brought out a River Directive in summer 2009. This is a big step to protect at least our remaining nature values.
- Because the manager of the municipality park facilities did not know what to reply to citizens complaining about the ivy growing on the Pine trees, he came to us to inform himself. After a longish research period we could answer, that ivy is not penetrating the bark of the trees but just holding itself with its tiny "feet", therefore not harming its host. he was glad that the attractive ivy, that gives shelter to insects and birds had not to be cut and thanked us.
- Together with the then coordinator of the Gökova EU Project we protested against the construction of the road between Iskele and Akbük, because a great number of trees and other natural features were being destroyed. However our complaints did not find open ears and has not been answered favourably, the road construction went on. Ever since its completion the road sides have been used to install thousands of bee hives, moreover the road should then have been used as a one way road between Obrukalan and Çınar and was not, so we complained to the concerned state departments. The matter was researched and despite being totally rightful our complaints was answered as if the situation should be just like it is.
- After the canalisation between the Postacı and Kavak Street overflowed several times we send a warning to the municipality. The waste water from the canal did not only spoil the immediate surrounding but reached the river as well. The municipality has successfully repaired the canalisation by now.

- In 2006 we became a member of the Underwater Research Society's (SAD) Mediterranean Monk Seal Monitoring Network (AFBİKA). The network gained importance with the rehabilitation of the Monk Seal 'Badem'. We had to decline the wish of the SAD management to take responsibility for Badem and to specially care for her, since we were against the rehabilitation of a hand raised animal like this from the start. We could foresee the problems to be and the following complaints. Therefore we did not want to be Badem's caretakers.
- Among the research subjects based on local people's complaints are 'coal burning and coal prohibition', 'chlorine in drinking water and its potential health risks' and 'the gas machines used to frighten away animals in the plain'. We will naturally share all research results with you.
- We have been asked by the inhabitants of around the Vardiya Hill in the Köyceğiz-Dalyan SPA to assess their biodiversity and prepared a comprehensive report.

Of course we transmit all complaints and all praise we receive from Akyaka and around to all concerned persons and/ or departments. We find these communications very important for good nature protection.

3. NGO Work Groups and their activities

3.1 Street Animal Work Group:

The group is commencing its valuable work with the help of our representatives and volunteers. By now our town has not one but three different groups working on the subject. Regrettably, like happens everywhere in the field of these social and communal activities, the matters are personalised and politicised by the volunteers. While this might be normal, behaviour like this cannot lead to useful outcomes, we wish that the street animal activities will be conducted more objectively and with more respect for human and animal health in the future.

Herewith we want to thank our representatives Yasemin İlseven and Anita Baumeister-Dehninger and our close volunteers Sema Meral Savaş and İtir İnelbağ for their longstanding engagement with the subject and their valuable efforts and wish them success for their future work.

3.2 Women Group:

We have lost contact with the group which had realised some very nice excursions since 2006. Therefore we were forced to regard the group as inactive and non existent from 2008 on.

3.3 Organic Agriculture Work Group:

The Organic Agriculture Work Group has been one of the most important outcomes of our Bio- Gökova Project, regrettably we could not really support them after finalising the project. We urgently need to develop a project to cover subjects like promoting organic agriculture and assisting with the marketing of products. Despite us foreseeing these problems since implementing our Bio- Gökova Project we could not really do anything to prevent this. We sincerely hope to be able to cover these subjects over the next winter season, we did get a promise from Mayor Ahmet Çalca to support our future project. We thank our Mayor in advance for his nice cooperation offer.

4. Cooperations, Projects and Events we participated in

4.1 Gökova SMAP III, EU Project (2006-2009):

We essentially have been the small NGO partner in this project, but for a number of reasons our cooperation did not work out the way it was planned. Nevertheless we participated actively over a three year period:

- We assured the Muğla University of our support and participation with an official letter during their application procedure.
- Together with the project coordinator, Prof. Dr. Erdal Özhan we defined the participation conditions of our association and have been in contact over the whole project period.
- After the project work groups had been set up we chose representatives to participate in their proceedings, set their goals and prepared all necessary guidelines. Our representatives did not only participate with discipline and fortitude in the monthly project meetings but in our own preparation and evaluation meetings as well. Each group had one or two NGO representatives, their tasks have been as follows:
 - Sedir Island Work Group = Neşe Hırsar-Yalçın
 - Beaches Work Group = Thomas Schmitz, Salih Armutçuoğlu
 - Nature Protection Work Group = Bahar Suseven
 - Rivers Work Group = Nurhan Kavuzlu
 - Family Fishing Work Group = Samet Yaşar
 - Water Quality/ Waste Work Group = Erdoğan Karşlıoğlu, Naci Kaya
 - Education Work Group = Safinaz Karakuyu Erhan Parla

beside these:

- Azmak Bridge Commission (with the municipality) = Thomas Schmitz
- Field Research Work Group (with EPASA) = Bahar Suseven
- For the first two years we participated constantly in the monthly meetings together with our representatives.
- Our president Bahar Suseven gave a presentation about the results of the beach erosion field work.
- The first river assessment of the project has been prepared and presented by Thomas Schmitz on request of the municipality.
- To better cooperation, communication and to enhance the governance of the project, we approached the project management many times.

Despite all our efforts our research results have not been acknowledged and our experience was not welcome, therefore it never came to a fruitful cooperation. we distanced ourselves from the project in its last year and preferred not to participate in any meetings any longer.

4.2 Dr. Ali Abbas Çınar's book "Verbal History of Akyaka and the Culture of the Gökova Basin" (2006):

In winter 2006 Dr. Ali Abbas Çınar wanted a date with us while preparing his book to gather information and knowledge from us. After spending a fruitful time together he left us contently. Regrettably in the book we are not mentioned as participants.

4.3 Local Administration Reform Support Project (2007):

We participated in the first meetings of this important project coordinated by our municipality, we withdrew noticing the repetition of many issues that had been already treated before. We never wanted to diminish the importance and value and congratulate our municipality administrators for their valuable input.

4.4 European Elite Destination Project (2008):

Regrettably we were not granted this nice project, to which we applied together with the municipality. Our town's prestige would have been enhanced with the European promotion of the cultural and natural features we described in the project document. We want to thank our member and municipality employee Devrim Kayalar for the effort she has put into the preparation of the application.

4.5 Civil Town Council (2008 ongoing):

We participated on the founding meeting of the Civil Town Council. But since our association and our volunteers were still disappointed about the adverse outcomes of the SMAP III Gökova Project, only a few members participated. Nevertheless some of our members took actively part in the newly founded work groups. Because we were busy focussing on our other project activities we could not show active interest in the council meetings. We will change our attitude as soon as our agenda will allow us to.

4.6 The "Putting PEEN into Practice Project" of the Underwater Research Society (SAD) (2009- 2010):

This project is different from the SMAP III project insofar as it aims to solve the management problems (usage- protection) of the inner gulf of Gökova. We wanted to participate because at the same time it gives NGO cooperation priority. Our participation already started in the application phase, when we had an input into the preparation and it is ongoing. While as an association we are supporting activities with local logistics and help out with coordination and communication, our president Bahar Suseven is parallel participating in the project as consultant for biodiversity.

4.7 Furthermore...:

We participated on the festivities our Municipality organised in 2009 for Mother's Day. During the celebration our Chairwoman stood in for Mrs. Halet Çambel and received the plaque the Mayor handed had prepared for her. We know that this honour and politeness has pleased our Halet Abla very much and herewith forward her gratitude to the Municipality of Akyaka.

In summer 2009 we have been invited to the opening of the "Resthouse" of the Autism Association in Akçapınar. We thank for the invitation and the warm and friendly welcome and give our best wishes to those who undertake this important venture.

5. Legal Processes

5.1 Courtcase to annul the Results of our last General Assembly:

After the last general assembly we have been accused of irregularities and a court case was opened to annul the meeting by our member Ender Engin. Lasting until May 2007 the court decided to drop the case. Even if democratic and legal we would prefer problem between the association's council and it's members to be solved outside of court and in a more familiar and civilised manner. This would prevent us all from losing time and energy on cases like this.

5.2 The 'Beach Club' on Akçapınar Beach:

The petitions we had filed against the construction and conduct of a 'Beach Club' on the Akçapınar beach in 2006 have been found righteous by the Turkish Culture and Nature Protection Commission who then had a court case opened against the Village Mayor and the Council Members of Akçapınar. The Turkish Culture and Nature Protection Commission founded the case on our petitions and thus named us as second plaintiff. The case concluded in quite high penalties for the accused, who then appealed. Before the end of the appeal period the sentenced were pardoned.

6. OTHER WORK

6.1 Vision Process

As you know we annually evaluated the Vision process after the initial Vision meeting. We then found out that for the proper evaluation of some developments a yearly period does not suffice and halted the meetings in December 2006. Of course we are ready to proceed if needed.

6.2 GÖK- KUŞ- AĞI (Gökova Birders' Network/ Bird Work)

We have to announce the demise of our old member, friend and birding colleague Brian Stoneman. Our condolences to his family.

Because of all our other works and the dwindling number of birders in our region we can not pursue our bird work as thoroughly as we want to. We hope to be able to do more field work during the coming winter.

7. New Projects

You might remember that we successfully completed our UNDP GEF/SGP Bio-Gökova Project in December 2005. We had always regarded this project as a beginning and planned to sustain the most important issues, like organic farming, responsible tourism, sustainable resources management (water, air, soil etc). We, the administrators of the association, tried to fund and sustain these activities as far as we could. We also announced on the last general assembly, that we needed to develop more projects and apply for extern funding if we wanted to safekeep the continuity of these works.

As we mentioned in our last Activities Report 2005/06, we stayed in contact with the French organisation APARE/ CME which we met while participating in their EU Civil Society Project about Eco Citizenship. Meanwhile our chairwoman started to work with them as consultant from time to time and was called to a conference in Athens in 2007 for an exchange of ideas for further cooperations. During this meeting some of the aforementioned possibilities have been discussed. In 2008 the idea for a "Mediterranean Water Heritage Protection" Project was born and developed by APARE. We participated actively already in

the preparation and development phase. Finally the project was accepted by the EU Commission last spring.

**7.1 REMEE = “Redecouvrir ensemble le Patrimoine de l’Eau en Méditerranée” /
= “Rediscover together the Water Heritage in the Mediterranean”,
EuroMed Heritage IV Program (2009- 2011)**

This project aims to assess water usage in the past and present, to educate young people accordingly and to document and archive water heritage. The objective is to envisage the connections between water and civilisations in past and present, to make visible how we treat and how we connect to this most important element of all, water.

Besides of the French coordinator, APARE, we have 'big' partners in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and 'small' partners in Greece, who lead a similar project as we do.

To coordinate the project and to expertly bring the project principles to life is the task of our chairwoman. To be able to focus on our association work and on this important project she is given the possibility to work locally during the project and has not to leave to work in other regions. Mr. Saim Uzunatagan assists with the archive work. Mr. Thomas Schmitz is responsible for communication and files and Mr. Mehmet Bildirici is the most valuable archive officer, who gives his support voluntarily to this project.

One can say that this project has a very spiritual, idealistic approach. There are no tangible results, no material outcomes, and they have not been foreseen. Nevertheless we have a dream above the project principles. We dream of a "Mediterranean Water House" to collect and publicly exhibit all the documents and material we are gathering.

We are very proud to participate like this in the EuroMed Heritage IV Program and feel our strategies and focus confirmed.

7.2 TURKEY CAMPUS 2009, Region PACA, Summerschool (15.08.- 05.09.2009)

We had declared 'Responsible/ Sustainable Tourism' one of our objectives. APARE/ CME has held summerschools about this subjects for many years. CME approached us after they had tried to organise a summerschool in Turkey for five years. Since the sponsor for turkey the 'Region PACA' (Region Province- Alps- Cote D'Azur) has an agreement with the Province of Izmir we had to organise the school there. CME and PACA agreed on 'Eco-Tourism' as the subject for the school. Despite Izmir being one of the most tourism developed regions of Turkey, there are still some places that try a different approach, the village of Şirince in the district of Selçuk is one of them.

Therefore we applied to the Village Council of Şirince and to the Municipality of Selçuk for support. One of the most important characteristics of our preparation phase has been the warm welcome we did get in both places. Not only that, but we found all support and backing we needed to enable us to realise the campus plans and define the subject as "The Eco Tourism Potentials of the Village of Şirince", which was confirmed by our French coordinators. The greatest luck has been the introduction to the most ideal place for a summerschool. When we first saw the Nesin Foundation's Mathematic's Village and came to an understanding to hold the school here, we could not believe our luck.

The planning and implementing stages required a lot of effort. Everything had to be done by us. From the curriculum and principles, the selection of suitable international and

Turkish participants, preparation of equipment and work spaces to the organisation of outings-everything needed to be prepared carefully and professionally. But we did it, left our ten students satisfied and completed Turkey's first ever campus very successfully.

The tangible outcome of the summerschool is the handbook "Roadmap to the Eco Tourism Potentials of Şirince". We hope that our analytic approach to Şirince's numerous possibilities will make it to a good example for other suitable towns and villages. The handbook, a real product of the students group under guidance of their lecturer, is in print in the moment. Furthermore a website is under construction.

Of course we took great care of the legal process, communicated well with the concerned departments and required all necessary permissions.

8. Publications

8.1 The "Science Series" we mentioned in our last activities report has been published. In the moment we can only offer the reports in English, but hope that we will be able to translate them soon.

8.2 We continued to distribute our "Step by Step Gökova" Walking Guidebook to everybody interested. The guidebook did get much attention and by now we are running out, we need a second edition and are looking for financial backup.

8.3 You remember that after we researched mosquito breeding grounds, we published a booklet called "Do you breed Mosquitoes?" and promoted it on several meetings throughout the basin. We had some requests from interested people and departments after we promoted it via internet. Furthermore the Municipalities of Kocaeli, İzmir and İzmit/ Saraybahçe and the TEMA Foundation asked permission to use our booklet as source for their publications and of course mentioned our association as copyright owners. After the booklet proved so interesting and useful, it is in constant reprint. Since by now we are very skilled in desktop publishing we print as many as we can.

All our publications do have an international ISBN number from the General Department for Libraries and Publications of the Ministry for Culture and Tourism.

9. GENERAL INFORMATION

9.1 Purchase of Stock and Inventory

Last period we purchased four easels for the exhibition house, a new refridgerator for office and opening use, a new fax machine and a second hand laptop.

9.2 Membership Status and Membership Fee Situation

In the 2006- 2009 period we gained thirteen real and one honourable member. We lost forty-two members due to their neglect to pay their fees or by resignation. We lost one honourable member, Nail Çakırhan and one real member, Murat Çatay by demise. Closing our ledgers for internal auditing before the General Assembly showed one hundred thirty-nine members of whom seventy-seven had paid their fees and were entitled to participate and use their vote on the General Assembly.

9.3 *Voluntary Support*

In the summer of 2007 we had a young French volunteer, Mr. Mathieu Oulmont helping us out for two months. Because of his lack of Turkish he could not help very much with office work but was very accommodating during the exhibition openings.

In the summer of 2009 we had translation help from Ms Zeynep Özakat, from Mr. Saim Uzunatagan, without whom the season would have been unthinkable, as usual from our member Mrs. İrene Cantez, who is quietly helping our association for many years and Mr. Ersan Göktay for his valuable aid; we thank you all from our heart.

I hope that our activities are to your liking and that you will continue to support G.A.S.-Der with your membership in the future,

for the G.A.S.-Der Board,
sincerely

A circular stamp with the text "G.A.S.-DER" and "AKYAKA" around the perimeter. In the center, there is a smaller circle containing the text "Kod No: 10000000000000000000". A handwritten signature in black ink is written over the stamp.

Bahar Suseven
Chairwoman

Akyaka, September 2009