



# Slow Food®

Bra, Italy, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007

To whom it may concern

## **Re: International Support of the Ecomuseum project in Northern Europe**

Slow Food is an international organization based in Italy and founded in 1986, whose aim is to protect the pleasures of the table from the homogenization of modern fast food and life. Through a variety of initiatives, it promotes gastronomic culture, develops taste education, conserves agricultural biodiversity and protects traditional foods at risk of extinction. Slow Food boast 85,000 members in all over the world, organized in nearly 1,000 *convivia* or local chapters.

In 2003, Slow Food created the Slow Foundation for Biodiversity, a non-profit entity behind Slow Food's projects in eco-gastronomy. Founded in 2003 by the Slow Food movement in partnership with the Region of Tuscany, its mission is to organize and fund projects that defend our world's heritage of agricultural biodiversity and gastronomic traditions. The Foundation's direct financial contributions are especially dedicated to the world's less developed countries, where conserving biodiversity means not only improving quality of life, but actually saving lives, communities and cultures.

Funds are used to support Slow Food's projects in biodiversity, including the Ark of Taste and Presidia.

The Ark of Taste aims to rediscover and catalog forgotten flavors, documenting excellent gastronomic products that are in danger of disappearing. Presidia are small projects devoted to assisting groups of artisan producers. The concept was developed by Slow Food in 1999 to be the working arm of the Ark of Taste, facilitating the presence in the marketplace of diverse traditional foods.

Terra Madre, held for the second time in October 2006 in Turin, Italy, is Slow Food's groundbreaking international conference of food communities, joining together thousands of farmers and food producers from more than 150 nations. It is a meeting of unprecedented scale uniting those who seek to grow, raise, catch, distribute and promote food in ways that respect the environment, defend human dignity and protect the health of consumers.

The fifth Congress of Slow Food took place November 8-11, 2007 in Puebla, Mexico. On that occasion, about 600 representatives of the movement from around the world gathered in the Mexican city representing the 85,000 members of the association. This represented the highest moment of the associative life: the managing bodies were elected, and the political guidelines for the future decided. The choice of Mexico as the place where the Congress was organized was strategic and represented the launch of the international network, which has been set up thanks to Terra Madre.

The Ecomuseum project in Northern Europe was presented to the congress and received support and interest from the Slow Food countries representatives involved.

The Slow Food movement is extremely active in Norway, and over the past few years it has grown to encompass over 500 members, organized in *convivia*. In 2005, a Norwegian Ark Commission was



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founded, and so far 4 products have been accepted on board of the Ark of Taste.

Regarding the Presidia, 5 Norwegian food products have been recognized the status of Presidia, namely: Artisan Sognefjord Geitost, Cured and Smoked Herring from Sunnmøre, Stockfish from the Isle of Sørøya, Kristiansund Baccala and Villsau Sheep.

One delegate from Norway – Terje Inderhaug – attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Slow Food International Congress in Mexico, as the representative of convivium leaders, members and Ark and Presidia producers from Norway.

The setting up of Economuseums in Norway and in other countries in Northern Europe where Slow Food is present, would be in full compliance with the Slow Food philosophy and, as such will be supported from an ideological point of view by the movement.

Slow Food strongly believes that the setting up of working museums will be a fundamental tool to showcase how some of the most representative products are prepared. In this way, knowledge about a traditional food product and about ancient artisan techniques will be available for the visitors to understand and to experience. Visitors in the working museum will also have a chance to get to know an important part of the cultural and gastronomic history of their country, and will be offered the chance to experience the whole production process, to the final step in which the food is prepared and served in the restaurant.

Slow Food also believes that the Economuseum could be an important tool for the development of the Slow Food movement in Northern Europe: working museums could in fact become the sites of Slow Food convivia, offering visitors the possibility to become members, to buy merchandise and publications, and to taste some of the international Presidia products, which could be offered on the menu.

We are happy to inform you that the Slow Food movement in Norway, Iceland, Northern Ireland, Irish republic and in Canada are all willing to advice and support the Economuseum developments in their respective countries.

All this considered, the Slow Food movement takes it upon itself to ideologically support and to use its communication media (magazines, website, newsletter) to actively promote the Economuseum projects to its members and partners worldwide.

Sincerely,

Paolo Di Croce,

Secretary General, Slow Food International.