

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BARCELONA

## Overview

The General Assembly (GA) is a meeting to which all countries of Servas are invited to send a representative. Countries with more than 10 hosts, who have been registered with Servas, have a right to have a delegate who can vote on matters discussed in the GA. The GA is held every 3 years and moves round different countries. The main purpose of the GA is to: 1) Elect EXCO (Executive Committee) for the next 3 years; 2) Discuss and vote on matters pertaining to the functioning of Servas. Going together with this there are often workshops to discuss matters in greater detail, local visits, informal discussions, networking and the large amount done with socialising.

The 2004 GA was held in Barcelona in July. Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, I was unable to attend. However I have read about it in various sources, discussed it with participants, reviewed plenty of comments and listened to what people had to say.

Some of the aims were achieved. EXCO was elected, see page 3. There were some very constructive discussions away from the main room. There were a number of decisions voted on. These can all be seen in the minutes of the meeting. However a rather full agenda, together with a number of participants who were not in full agreement with what was going on, meant that not all that was planned was covered and that there were quite a large number of disappointments. This seemed to generate a quite un-Servas like attitude in some participants. However it was not all doom and gloom. When pressed people could come up with good points.

Barcelona is over. We are moving on. The new EXCO is looking at the problems that arose and they are trying to deal with these problems. At the risk of the wrath of some I am taking the view that we will generate a positive future if we concentrate on the good things that have happened while the negative points are quietly sorted out. So, although some of the negative aspects will be shown, the items on these pages will be generally on the good that came out of Barcelona.

*Jane Giffould, SI News Editor, England*

## ..... some negative points

*These are a variety of comments that were given to me:*

- very sad, my main interest is burn out of ExcOs I can think of 12 at least
- very cross because no-one would listen to him
- **no-one mentioned development, no-one mentioned the word--host, even less traveller**
- *It was a pity our agenda was so full we hardly had time to speak to some of them*
- *I was proud of being a 'troublemaker' by that point though.*
- Servas sorely lacks a coherent and clear statement of core values
- *I do not need forced interaction and fake bonhemie with 250 strangers.*
- appear to have forgotten the peace building purpose

## An opinion from India

I Mr. Abhay Shaha represented myself as an Indian delegate in the Barcelona Conference-2004 & Vipul (my son) was a volunteer in youth project. We (I & Vipul) came back from Barcelona-Conference on 1<sup>st</sup> of August. It was indeed a wonderful event & I got a very good experience there. Some of them were so friendly there that they have become like my family member. Now I am missing them. Really, Servas have opened the doors of world & brought the people of different countries closer.

There are many things which I liked very much & I would surely like to describe. There I met the wonderful people like our new peace-secretary Mr. Gary Sealey, Youth coordinators David & Ann, Sensitive & hardworking person like Mr. Frits, I liked the hard work taken by Amir, Guido & their team for the betterment of Servas. The experience of Turkey by Omer & Evren & tour organized by local volunteer of Servas of Girona was unforgettable. The thing I liked the most there is the democratic way of working & equal respect to all delegates.

Also, there are few things which I didn't like, such as misunderstanding, criticism, rude behaviour of few people without communicating with others. Still I would like to ignore such things as a true Servas member & I hope from the bottom of my hearts that they should communicate & try to understand for the betterment of Servas.

I invite you to visit my place whenever you come to India.

*Abhay Shaha, India*

## .. a mixed point

In spite of a lot of bitterness and open hostility, the conference rejected proposals [S3] to amend the constitution of Exco and to change Exco structure as a result, in an open democratic forum. I believe this was a mature decision by people who DID understand the issues.

## .. and 10 good points

1. Greeted with a warm smile and very helpful volunteers when I arrive in Barcelona. (My first time)
2. Nice weather (expected it to be very hot!)
3. Beautiful view from the dining room.
4. Wonderful fellowship through out the conference especially during meals.
5. Had a noodle party one night for 6 people but ended up with 12!
6. Met many new friends - especially from Norway ( I now have a reason to go there - just to see them!)
7. Putting a face to the many names I see on the net and having the opportunity to say "Thank you"
8. The opportunity to visit Gerona and Barcelona city.
9. A youth coming up to me and said "Thank you for speaking up for us"
10. A lovely French lady with these encouraging words "thank you for speaking up at the conference, I see hope for Servas"

*David Chai, Malaysia*

