

The Azerbaijan 2013



IACM Annual Report

Official Journal of the International Association of
customs and Tax Museums



IACM ANNUAL REPORT 2013

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF CUSTOMS AND TAX MUSEUMS

www.customsmuseums.org

From the Caspian Sea to the Atlantic Ocean



Dear colleagues and friends of IACM.

Several months have already passed since we had our Annual Conference and General assembly in Baku. Up to now, our meeting hadn't been so far east and it was an excellent journey, we passed in Azerbaijan. We met a different culture like those we are used to see in our part of Europe and I think that it was for our association and for the members present a great experience. I must say that the meeting was a great success and brought our association again a step further.

We could admire the customs museum of Azerbaijan, assist at the opening of an exhibition about ancient cultural goods and learn a lot about the culture in general and the traditions of our host country. We discussed about the social media in our museums and could see that some members make big use of it and other not for several reasons like budget, technical problems and so on. The security techniques presented by our hosts to secure either museum rooms and items on travel to an exhibition were absolutely astonishing and will certainly be discussed in the future.












Concerning this Annual Report, my wish is that most of our members will send their contribution to our friends in Azerbaijan so that this brochure will be a big success.

Now we are looking forward to a new year, and the conference in September in Bordeaux / France. I'm convinced our members are already looking forward to meet each other near the Atlantic Ocean. Our French colleagues will surely raise an interesting program with a lot of subjects to discuss without leaving apart the well known French living style. The general assembly will be dominated by the elections for the new board. I'm sure we will get a new team with new ideas and actions that brings our association further on.

I wish you all the best for the coming year, all success in our museums and hope to see each of you in good health in Bordeaux.

Henri Nimax,
President IACM

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“WEB technology as a means of development of culture and art”

At the moment, the development of WEB technologies has reached a colossal level. Each month, the number of Internet users worldwide is increasing by 1-2 % * of the total world population. Almost all the information is now available in electronic form and more information exists only in electronic form. For example, more than a century 35mm film is used in Hollywood for films and subsequent screenings at movie theaters but the studios are currently moving to a fully digitized works * . This statistic shows that more people will receive information including about the cultural heritage and art in digital form.

At realization of projects related to the WEB technology, a special attention should be paid to the characteristics associated with the devices and browsers that are used by users. For example, the statistics on browsers at the moment are as follows: Internet Explorer - 9.0%, Firefox - 26.8%, Chrome - 55.8%, Safari - 3.8%, Opera - 1.9% ***. Statistics on operating systems: Win8 - 8.2%, Win7 - 55.9%, Vista - 1.5%, NT (server OS) - 3.1%, WinXP - 11.6%, Linux - 4.8%, Mac - 9.2%, Mobile - 3.8% ****.

The State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan Republic and its IT department realize more and more projects related to the WEB technology. One of the recent project that was presented at the 21st Conference of the Association of Museums of Customs in Baku was the portal "Museums of Customs Service of Azerbaijan» <http://museums.customs.gov.az/>. The portal has been developed using the concept of adaptive design, cross-browser layout and independent of operating system. While the portal was created a unique combination of technologies that enabled the performance of the portal simultaneously on conventional computers, tablet devices and smart phones is used. Among the key technologies the worth of noting is HTML5 and Flash. However, Flash is used only for older versions of browsers, and all modern versions including tablets and smart phones use HTML5.

The highlight of the portal is virtual tours on museums of Customs Service of Azerbaijan Republic. Thanks to a virtual tour the user can immerse themselves in the atmosphere of the museum and get all the necessary information about interesting exhibit. Each item that is added to the collection on the portal are passed through a special preparation and photo shoot. Special multiple frame shooting is held for selected exhibits. This survey allowed recreating the exhibit on the portal in 3D mode.

Every visitor of the portal, apart from moving through virtual museums and viewing a collection of exhibits can also get acquainted with the unique books that have been published in previous years within the framework of the educational activities of the State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan Republic.

Feedback forms allow interacting with the visitors and making any suggestions. Used backend technologies allow horizontal scaling of the project, thus practically without restricting the maximum number of concurrent users.

It is worth noting that not only a team of IT professionals but also art critics, artists, designers, photographers and museum professionals has worked over the implementation of the project.

* - <http://www.internetworldstats.com/emarketing.htm>

** - <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/envelope/cotown/la-et-ct-paramount-end-to-film-20140118,0,5666826,full.story#axzz2qw3hv5jK>

*** - http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_stats.asp

**** - http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_os.asp



First the website, later facebook ...

About a year ago we implemented a reorganization in our museum. Since then our curator works along with five – although voluntary - still specialized teams: Depot, Documentation Centre, Museum Displays, Education and last but not least Communication. Each of them is chaired by a coordinator.

Within the working group “Communication” we immediately agreed to renew our website, as we recognized that people are increasingly turning to the Web as a source of information... and, as important, we had to acknowledge that our first website could use a serious update. Primarily we believed the main focus of the museum's website, next to the basic information such as opening hours or accessibility, should be “accessible” but in-depth information about the collection itself rather than apps, blogs or virtual tours.

Because of our limited financial means, it was no option to look for a professional web designer. On the other hand this presented the first interesting challenge for the five members of our new working group.

We easily agreed that our website should be remarkably sober, with a homepage on which visitors are given limited choices: plan a visit, explore the collection or find out more about the museum itself.

Bert volunteered to search for web design software on the internet to work with. In the meantime Erwin thought about a design that matched the temporary style of the new museum and was helped by Ilse on this matter. Our curator Francis and I agreed to rewrite the articles and to add important information for the potential visitors of our museum website.

These may sound like rather basic, old fashioned demands for 2013, but it seems to work. Our web visitors are content and we gladly invite you to have a look at

[http:// nationaaldouanemuseum.jimdo.com/](http://nationaaldouanemuseum.jimdo.com/)

Nevertheless our team is already brainstorming for other adjustments. Whereas the Web of the 2000s was dominated by search, we are entering a time when more and more people are using social media as their gateway to the Web. On the homepage of young people Facebook, not Google, pop up on their screen. Therefore the presentations which were given on the theme of “Internet and social media” at the General Assembly in Azerbaijan came in very handy for our team. So thank you very much colleagues!



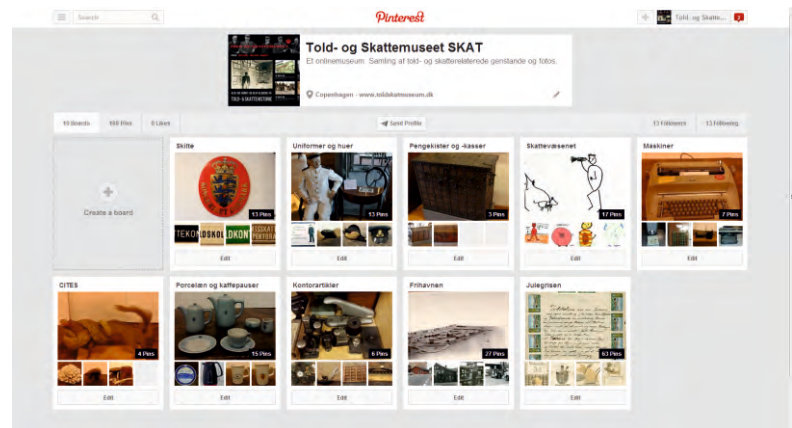
New artefacts in the Czech Customs Museum

The customs history exposition in the Czech Customs Museum located in the city of Pilsen has been recently expanded by new artefacts. In particular these were weapons and clothes used by Financial Guard and Customs Service Officers since 2nd half of the 19th century until today. New artefacts are divided into seven displays and are placed in chronological order starting with the oldest one. This involves monothematic exposition composed of approximately 40 artefacts such as shooting weapons and law enforcement equipment. The exposition will be soon expanded by other two short shooting weapons that are extremely rare (see the enclosed pictures).



A museum profile on Pinterest

The Danish Museum of Customs and Taxes has only existed as an online-museum since 2013. SKAT, the Danish tax authority, is a mostly digital solutions-based organization. It therefore makes sense to have a digital museum as well. The collection is of course still kept and images of the objects are used on the website. But that's not it. Since SKAT is present at social media as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook with different possibilities and different kinds of users and the museum delivers content to these profiles when it makes sense. But we still found it relevant to have a Pinterest profile as well with a main focus on different aspects of the history of the organization.



Pinterest is a social media where the users create boards with

images that relate to different topics, maybe the creator of a specific board wants to share images relating to his or her personal interests. If you are fond of cross stitching, you can make a board with patterns, examples of cross stitching you find odd, beautiful etc. Pinterest is a place where people can create their own exhibitions of images of objects that they like and want to share with others. It is a way to make museum exhibitions in a different way.

We made a Pinterest profile to show our objects that we cannot put on physical display at the moment. We made a board with examples of uniforms, one with signs and one related to a Danish Christmas tradition (Julemærket) and several other boards. People following us on Pinterest can now share our images with their own followers. It has a potential to reach more people than the ones that are just visiting our online-museum and it has a potential to reach people that might not be regular "museum visitors". We only had this profile for two months and do not have a lot of followers yet. It is possible to access our profile from "SKAT"s web page - a page visited by most of the Danish tax payers.

Tora Ribers

“Web 2.0” within the framework of the Public Relations of the German Customs Museum

The term Web “2.0” generally refers to an internet presence which enables interaction between user and website. Users are able to influence the contents of the website.

The customs museum benefits from this user interaction on the Web. It gets feedback from the visitors of the museum about the exhibit items and it enables it to inform the general public about the tasks of the customs administration and to improve its marketing policy as well.

But on the other hand there are disadvantages, namely the additional staff required. The customs museum has to ensure a competent communication with the users within a short period of time and to assure that the website does not contain any illegal or incorrect information.

German government authorities are very reluctant with regard to the presence in social media websites because of data protection regulations. The German Customs Museum, as an office of the Federal Finance Administration, does not intend to communicate via internet platforms like “Facebook”, “Twitter” or “You Tube” in the near future because of precautions and reservations with regard to data protection regulations and because of a shortage of staff.



Interaction with the users the German Customs Museum website is limited to booking guided tours and questions dealing with historical customs topics.

A special promotion activity is putting on exhibition the “old customs object of the month”. Users of the website are encouraged to send in interesting historical objects that were formerly used at a customs office or photos referring to customs activities in the past. Every month the staff of the customs museum selects from the received objects the “old customs object of the month” which is displayed on the website of the museum with a short story and description.

At the end of the year one of the “old customs objects” is selected as the “old customs object of the year”. The person who sent in the customs object of the year is awarded an attractive prize. The enclosed photos are the “old customs object of the year 2012” that were sent in by a lady, whose father used to work as a customs water guard officer.

"I came across the museum on the internet"

The internet and the social media as the new forms of the communication of museums

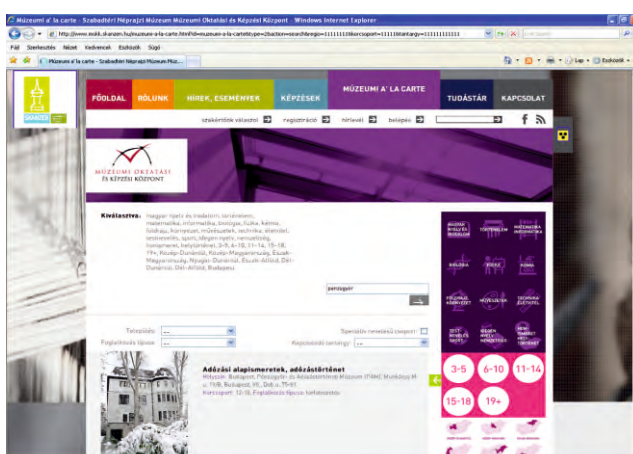
The use of the internet has been spreading fast in Hungary in the last 10 years. The daily change of the information society has a great impact on the every day communication of the young generations. People under 30 arrange everything from shopping and banking to entertainment online.

The museums had to react fast to the changes the challenges of the digital age and they had to find ways how to address visitors. In order to meet these requirements The Museum of Hungarian Customs and Tax History created websites where publications, information concerning the museum, photos and posters can be uploaded.

The museum is in a special position as it operates as an organizational unit of the National Tax and Customs Administration (NTCA) Institute for Training, Health and Culture. That is why the museum's menu item can be found on the website of NTCA. The visitor can reach information about cultural events, our calls for donating museum objects, can read articles written by our colleagues and learn about the history of the secessionist villa which serves as the home of the museum.

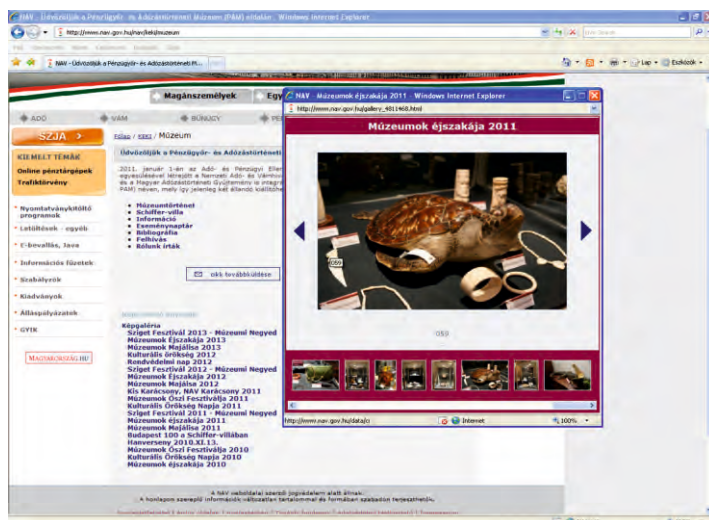
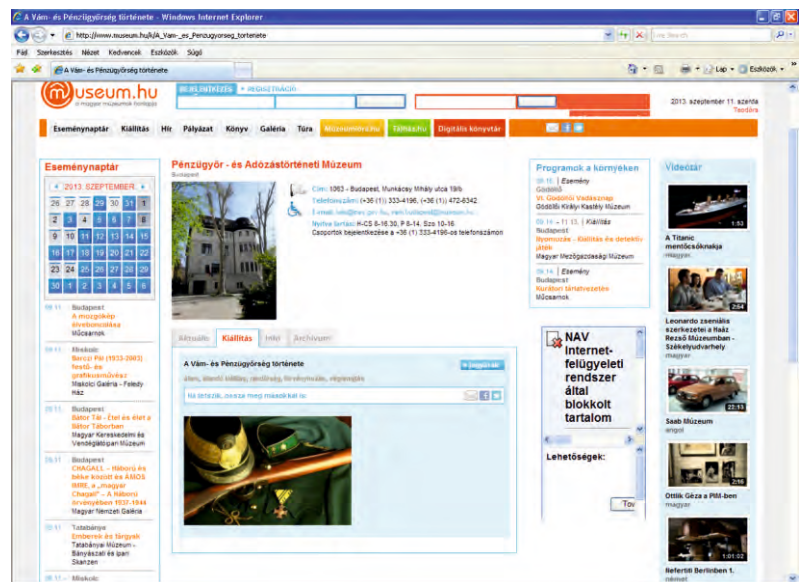
Most young people follow our programmes on Facebook and not on the website of NTCA. This is the reason why the NTCA created its own profile where the latest news is posted every minute of the day such as the events in connection with the life of the museum.

We are present on nation-wide known websites as for example the www.museum.hu, The Home Page of the Hungarian Museums or www.szeccsziosmagazin.com (which is about secessionist buildings), where photos and descriptions of the Schiffer-villa can be seen.



The Hungarian Museum Education Centre (MOKK) has been operating since 2011 to provide a link between educational institutions and museums. Visitors can browse the website of this institute where a wide range of museum pedagogical programmes of the Museum of Hungarian Customs and Tax History can be found. Every museum is responsible for updating the database by uploading materials of the temporary and the permanent exhibitions and the description of educational sessions. Due to this MOKK provides facilities for teachers to browse in the same place among services offered by museum institutes to students.

Keeping contact with subscribed visitors is also fostered by our newsletters. We keep them informed about our cultural events and new exhibitions regularly. We send messages of our programmes via our intranet mailing system to all NTCA employees. We plan to increase the number of ways in which visitors can reach the institution on the web and we would also like to develop our online



services.

We are already testing a new software which will enable researchers to have a virtual insight into the researchable part of the collection of our library and museum.

“Catch the Orange at Lithuanian Customs Museum!”

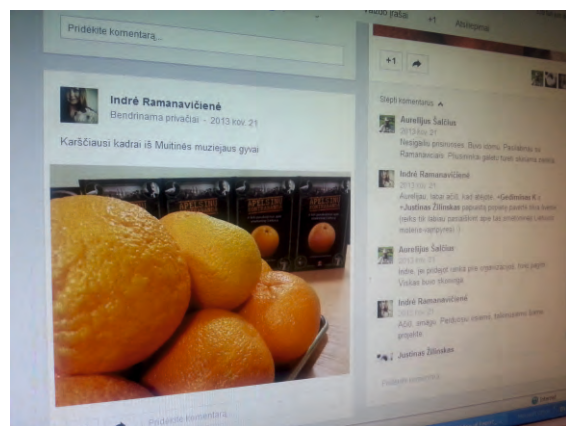
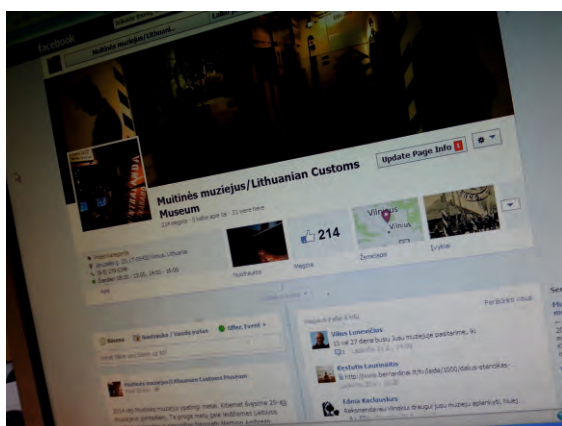
Contacts and dissemination of information in social networks is currently one of the priority areas of communication. Therefore, we developed in 2012 the Lithuanian Customs Museum's profile on the social network Facebook.

The profile of our Museum has over 200 followers and serves as an excellent tool to publish the announcements on events at the Museum, to inform about new exhibits and to share news from the museums of the Customs services of other countries, including those that belong to the International Association of Customs Museums (IACM).

After the publication in spring of the book “Smuggling of Oranges”, written by our fellow Lithuanian Customs officer, an educated historian Gediminas Kulikauskas, we decided to organise its presentation at the Customs Museum. The greatest part of the book tells about the challenging and sometimes curious peculiarities of the work of smugglers and customs officers in the twenties of the XXth century. Therefore, the presentation of the book at the Customs Museum, where you can learn more about the history of smuggling, attracted considerable public attention, though its advertising campaign was organised only on the social networks Facebook and Google+.

The title of the book “Smuggling of Oranges” prompted the code of the event. Everyone who came there was treated to oranges, i.e. fruits that had been a real luxury product in Lithuania in the twenties of the XXth century, and the smuggling of oranges had been though illegal, but highly profitable business.

Students, historians, even well-known Lithuanian writers, bloggers and the editors of popular magazines shared on the social networks the news on the presentation of the book written by the customs officer. The event attracted twice more guests than expected. 95 percent of the guests visited the Customs Museum for the first time. After the presentation of the book, they shared their experiences on the social networks and recommended their friends to visit the Customs Museum.



Customs museum Luxembourg

When the association of the Luxembourg customs museum was founded in 1989, a considerable stock of exhibitions objects was at the disposal, but there was no appropriate building for a permanent exhibition.

With the inauguration of the museum in 1996, a collection of objects from all the periods of the Luxembourg customs history could finally been presented, from the Zollverein in 1842 to the first years after 1993.

But the solution wasn't ideal. The site was very difficult to find for visitors, the rooms were not appropriate and personnel was missing. So the museum was only opened to guided visits. The visitors were welcomed in the hall of the customs office and after a short presentation, they were guided from object to object and received information and explanations and answers to their questions.

All the publicity for the museum was done by the national tourist office who just put the address of the museum in his brochures and publications. There was no special flyer and only the flyer of the IACM and a pen with the logo of the museum could be distributed to the public.

Due to the membership of IACM, the Luxembourg museum had the opportunity to visit other customs museums in order to compare and see the bad points of their own museum.

One of the first consequences was the projection of a film. A text was written concerning the history of customs and their museum. The text was initially in Luxembourgish and was later translated in French, German, English and Portuguese and served as the basis of the film. A translation in Dutch was also realized with the help of Anne-Marieke van Schaik from the Dutch museum, but wasn't unfortunately not incorporated in the film.

The film was produced by an amateur and assembled a multitude of photos and part of films. The result was of poor quality and the synchronization didn't work. However, this film was part of the guided visits. Later, the museum got new films showing customs and their new working areas. But in general, the film material wasn't adapted to the exigencies of the museum.

When the museum was closed for some time in 2012, all the material was placed in the cellar of the national museum waiting for a reopening of the customs museum, but when isn't to be foreseen. The association hopes that the museum will be reopened somewhere with another generation of personal, new ideas, new conceptions and the use of the new media like Internet, Facebook and so on.



Swedish Customs Museum – part of the future cultural heritage

The primary role of the Swedish Customs Museum is public relations and to be a keeper of our share of the Swedish cultural heritage. Swedish Customs was founded in 1636 when the Swedish administration was developed. The Customs Museum reflects our customs history in



two permanent exhibitions showing our development from the early years to the 1920s. A third permanent exhibition showing the modern period of Swedish Customs. This exhibition has been much too static, a little like everything ended twenty or thirty years ago. Due to this observation we started working with a carefully laid out plan for revitalization of the museum in order to bring the Swedish Customs of today into the museum.

We soon realized that the act of keeping cultural heritage from present days for the future is more difficult than displaying the older items. We could grab the opportunity to send any kind of message we would like to coming generations of customs

officers and to the future general public. Another way of doing it would be just collecting different items and other material to give future generations a rich material to work with and to form their own ideas of what it looked like in our days. Probably our way will be a little of both.

A real challenge when collecting customs related items from our organization, for example uniforms and other equipment, is to find the former generation of those items. Older items when found in the customs organization are sent to the museum by some unwritten routine, but when we are talking about the items of yesterday the situation is completely different. Just outdated uniforms and other equipment are in a great risk to be scrapped without any thought of the future need of them as part of the cultural heritage.

Åke Samuelsson
Customs Museum Manager

Pictures from the modern part of the exhibition showing customs uniforms and equipment of today



Social media and the Swiss Customs Museum

Swiss Customs has been active in social media since the autumn of 2013. It has two so-called administration profiles (Civil Customs and Border Guard). These are also accessible to users who are not registered with Facebook.

www.facebook.com/SwissCustoms

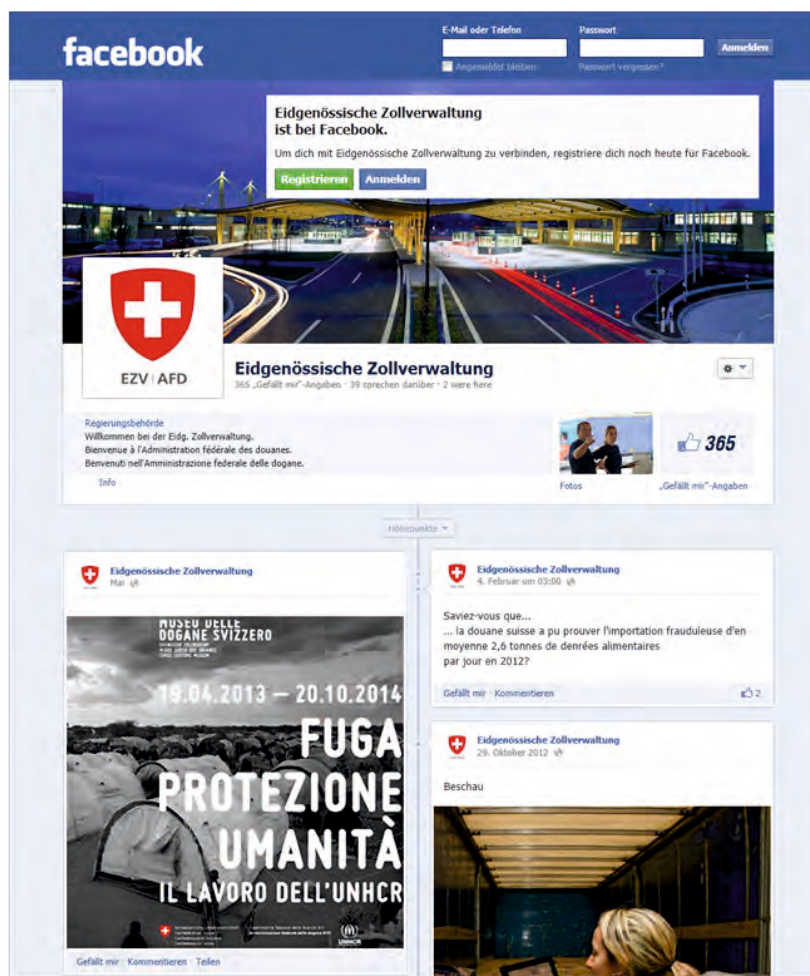
www.facebook.com/BorderGuard

The Swiss Customs Museum publishes information on both profiles. Specifically, the museum's management provides information on events and news. Moreover, two brief films on the Customs Museum can be found on YouTube. A third film is planned. Other activities in the area of social media will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Bern, 10 December 2013

Maria Moser-Menna

Director of the Swiss Customs Museum



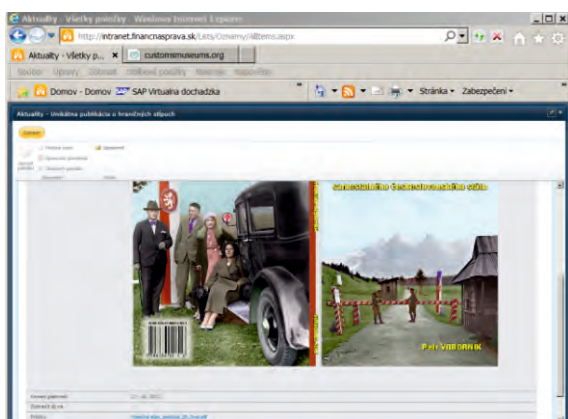
Customs Museum in relation to the media and the public

Relationships with the media are the most important part of public relations, although they may exist on their own as well. Their construction is a delicate and long-term process that can not be reduced only to preparation for press conferences or providing press releases. Museum's activities are fundamental and essential here. If a museum is active, it finds and gains access to specific information. Important role of the museum then lies in passing these ideas and facts on to the public through the media. The media and journalists all around the world had contributed to the success of a good idea before. Role of the media is undoubtedly of great importance – they often act as a catalyst for social and political development. Some people consider the media also to be an important tool for promoting certain opinions or line of thought.

The museum has to decide to what extent does it wish to use available resources and tools to present itself. Media activities can contribute to how the public perceives the activities of the museum. When the institution's image is appealing to people, this will be reflected in public financial support and sympathies. Powerful individual experience from an amazing event with lots of people will be multiplied by images from newspapers and TV reports. All outputs from the museum's work are significant and have effect on public. However, no conception of work with the media can replace the missing conception of the museum's activities.

The most important source of information is internet in the form of a website or Facebook page and also the intranet portal of the Financial Administration of the Slovak Republic. On the intranet, the Financial Administration's employees can learn about the latest activities of the Customs and Financial Administration History Society as well as of the Customs Museum.

Intranet page sample



There was a long-standing tradition of publishing articles with historical themes in Customs News of Customs Administration of SR Magazine until 2012. After transforming Customs Administration and Tax Administration into Financial Administration, the name of the periodical changed to Financial Updates and is currently published every quarter.

Sample from Financial Updates periodical

Activities of the Customs Museum of the Slovak Republic are very popular outside the museum's interior - for instance the Night of Museums 2013 or commemorations of the events from 1938, when the members of financial patrol were part of the mobilization. The reports of these activities and events were presented through various media such as TV stations, web pages of the Capital, internet blogs and news websites.



Baku, Azerbaijan

23-25 September, 2013

The 21st Conference of the International Association of Customs Museums (IACM) and meeting of the General Assembly

1. Opening

The 21st Conference of the International Association of Customs Museums (IACM) and meeting of the General Assembly were held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The subject of the Conference was “Internet and social media for customs museums. Using new media, QR codes, Web 2.0 in museums.”

Delegations from 20 countries – Turkey, Russia, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Macedonia, China and Kazakhstan, including Azerbaijan participated in both events.

The meeting of the representatives of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the International Association of Customs Museums (IACM) at the Qafqaz Baku City Hotel & Residences on September 23. **Sevil Akundova, Director of the Branch of the Customs History Museum of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan** greeted the guests and expressed her gratitude at their arrival in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. IACM president, **Henri Nimax** thanked their Azerbaijani hosts for organizing the conference in Baku and highly appreciated the development of the Customs service in Azerbaijan as well as the activity of the customs museums.

On September 24, a grand opening ceremony of the 21st IACM Conference was held at the Kempinski Hotel Badamdar. Prior to the opening ceremony, the conference participants viewed the exhibition “The Pearls of the Customs Museum” arranged by the Customs History Museum. **The Chairman of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Aydin Aliyev, IACM president-Henri Nimax, the Deputy-minister of Customs and Trade of Turkey- Fatih Metin, and Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan Sevda Mammadaliyeva** were in attendance.

SCC Chairman Aydin Aliyev who was the first to speak, welcomed and greeted the guests and participants to the conference. He then proceeded to talk to the guests about the history and subsequent development of Azerbaijani Customs up to the present. Next to speak was **IACM president Henri Nimax** who thanked the chairman of the Azerbaijani Customs Service for the attention accorded to them and expressed his admiration for the world-class organization of the conference. He spoke about the cooperation between Azerbaijan and International Association of Customs Museums.

The next speaker, **Deputy Minister of Customs and Trade of Turkey Fatih Metin** in his speech spoke about the importance of Customs in development of international relations, as well as in the protection of the political and economic interests of a country.

Later, the **Azerbaijani Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Sevda Mammadaliyeva** spoke about the importance of such cultural events in bringing nations closer together as well as foster the development of intercultural dialogue. She expressed appreciation that this event was a significant contribution to the enrichment of cultural diversity, and considered it as one of the positive steps taken in the road to growing relations between nations.

The 21st IACM Conference began its sessions right after the opening ceremony. First, the Azerbaijani delegation made a presentation. **Igbal Babayev, Major-General of Customs Service, Chief of the Head Office of Statistics and Information Technologies of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan** made a presentation on the topic “The Museum's Website – a new channel interaction with visitors and the media” and gave the conference participants detailed information about the website of the Museums of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (museums.customs.gov.az).

Roya Tagiyeva, Director of the State Museum of Azerbaijan Carpets and Applied Arts, Chairperson of the Azerbaijan National Committee of International Council of Museums (ICOM) spoke about the committee's activities whose aim is protecting and preserving the cultural heritage of Azerbaijan. For his turn, **Afgan Yusifov, General Director of the “Charkhfilm” Company** made a presentation of his documentary film on museums of the State Customs Committee. In this film entitled “Electronic board – a book for the new generation” he put the spotlight on the activities of the Azerbaijani customs museums, as well as cultural and economic development of Azerbaijan.

The following Conference officials and guests have taken the floor during the session:

Mr. Alexander Voloshuk (Azerbaijan) introduced the results of the project on museum cataloguing system. “The Azerbaijan Museum of Customs History spent two months on the preparatory work involving the development and launch of this challenging project entitled *A web-page for the museum: a new channel of interaction between the visitors and media*. It had two interrelated components: museum operations and IT function. Information posted on the web-site is updated and available in Azeri, English, and Russian.”

“As an open source score for the cataloguing system on the basis of Web 2.0, we benefited from the 9/11 Memorial Museum in the United States,” Mr. Voloshuk noted. “We just modified it in line with local expectations.”

He then opened the web-site of the museum to show how the system works – the entire collection of the museum displays was categorized into several groups (carpets; paintings, utensils, weapons, sculptors), with the accompanying images and detailed information (title, identifier, source, status, etc.), and physical description (dimension, etc.) of every single museum item. All the documented information is scanned.

The second type of information emanates from the results of the laboratory study, precisely, whether the item in question is in a good, fair, poor or excellent condition, and how much it might be worth of. Besides, he has made particular emphasis on the media, with every picture or image being accompanied by several views (front, back, etc.), including rotating appearances from different angles.

“So we can go to the summary section and look at the existing and updated information (price, condition, dimensions, etc.), whether it is accessible to the general public or not, the date of entry of the information thereof. It is a very scalable and user-friendly system,” Mr. Voloshuk said. “If some exhibits need to go abroad for the display, we enter the corresponding information in the relevant box.”

Several museum specialists can access the system at the same time, but access to the items can be restricted as well. “Let us say, three specialists manage our exhibition, so they should divide workload among themselves to know who is responsible for what, and what kind of information is available, how they manage it, how they edit the description of items, etc.,” Mr. Voloshuk added. “Every museum can integrate this system into their work, and our IT specialists, museum custodians, me personally can provide information and render consultancy services for you depending on your needs.”

Answering the question by Mr Francis Huijbrechts, the IACM treasurer, on whether seized artifacts should be priced on the basis of the insurance value or black market quotations, the representative of Azerbaijan said: “It is the laboratory analysis that let us fix the price (of the museum piece), so it is more like the insurance price which is also required if you agree to send the items to be displayed abroad.”

In reply to the question by Mr Jean-Pierre Reuter, a representative from Luxembourg, on who – everybody or the authorized staff only – was in charge of rectifying any mistake in the system, Mr. Voloshuk noted that the system had been equipped with a special function that controlled the level of access. “Access-control level is different for different positions such as a researcher, cataloguer, etc. But our system is not complete yet: we are entering the bar code function to easily manage the museum pieces physically. Every museum piece that has been entered into the system gets a bar code, so we can easily handle it.”

The next stage of the project aims to set up a GPS capacity to keep track of the museum pieces when then go abroad. “A GPS tracker reads the bar code and sends the corresponding message about the route of movement every five minutes. If the box/parcel is opened, the system will send an alert signal,” Voloshuk clarified. “Full results of the bar-code based movement will be available next year.”

- **Mr Albert Zammit (Malta)** made a presentation on museums and the social media

The presentation started with a series of challenging questions, such as: Why (is it important) to use social media? Why do we have them? What platforms are best to use? etc.

Mr. Zammit pointed out the statistical data about the frequency of use and number of users of social media in the era of computerization.

“One minute spent in the Internet can produce spectacular results: the entire video is downloaded, but you can spend five years to watch it. Also, six million pages are seen on Facebook alone in one minute. So can we afford not to include social media in what to exhibit in our museums? That's the question.”

He stressed the importance of interaction with museum visitors, admitting that “there are there are more questions than answers, since every country must find the right social media to use – Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Binq, or Google+ and whatever emerges in future.”

Mr. Zammit added that interaction, education and inspiration remained major internet use functions.

“We need social media because: 1) we need feedback from our visitors, to open discussion about different topics, to discuss the events in our museums, to ensure interaction among researchers and decorators; 2) through social media we will have a question to put it forward and get the answer, and a request can be informal, it even can break down the hierarchy (among users); 3) the majority of social media users are common people, and they do not need to be professors or gurus; and 4) we can pile up cultural layers – we use English on the social media, but we can use other languages as well.”

Referring to key social platforms, Mr. Zammit attached a particular importance to video, blogging, message boards, and social networking. “We definitely need more videos, but to instantly receive feedbacks, we need bloggers or social media.”

“Once we find the proper social media, we should consider what aspects we are going to make the focus on – events, exhibits, locality, or people? That would determine the platform we are going to use. So we should know our audience first, in order to have a better understanding of the issues to be considered at further stages.”

In the modern world, even businesses use social media to communicate with their respective customers through B2C or B2B formats. “Around 77% of businesses acquired new customers through social media in 2012, and 43% acquired contacts with new businesses through social media in the same year,” Mr. Zammit added.

“We are interested in attracting new people to get to know their likes and dislikes. I consider museum visitors as customers. If you need to acquire a customer, you have to know what type of customers you deal with; otherwise, you can forget your customers. Briefly, we have to manage our virtual community.”

He admitted that social media is a source of an extra work load, since accounts need persistent attention and immediate (response) action. “Time management is an issue: when you are online, the expected feedback and answers should be provided on time, without delay, so we need to set up a precise time frame for that.”

Chatting on social media is not recommended, since people say a lot of things, sometimes criticizing without expecting an answer. “We encounter tension and conflicts to be solved – this is what we might experience in and outside the museum environment. Therefore, some visitors would act as visual learners for who Youtube videos and/or Flickr photos could be a good reference point, while the others would use Facebook and other platforms to post blogs featuring their own opinions and feedback on what we write (on our web-page and/or social media accounts).”

In reply to his comment on the observation by Mr Christian Shaade, a representative from Germany, arguing that museums are no longer attractive for visitors, because social media has been improved so much, MrZammit shared some tips to get started. “Start small, focus on a specific aspect or function, since holding firm to the Facebook could be disguising. Know your desired audience and comment on their content to begin the conversation. Also, be personal, allocate your time effectively to when your audience is online, and consider giving your account opening hours. Post regularly, but do not overload. Set up a content calendar including both your events and important national holidays and anniversaries and plan your posts. If you use multiple platforms, use an aggregator to save your time. And in the end the social media will provide more room for further growth of your museum and, correspondingly, increase in the number of visitors who would definitely like to test the information they received from you.”

In response to the question by Mr.Janne Nokki, a representative from Finland, about the number of staff members to work on such challenging initiatives, particularly, if you have “only one person working” in the museum, Mr.Zammit said: “I need someone else to help me, to be better-versed in what is going on. If you start with LinkedIn, we could set up a network and share our experiences there. I found three closed groups on LinkedIn very useful.” For his part, Mr.Nimax noted that several IACM members were “already registered with LinkedIn, so we can invite them to join us.”

After a 15-minute tea/coffee break, the session was resumed with a presentation by a representative from Hungary.

- Ms Nora Benedek (Hungary) introduced the Introduction, Museum of Hungarian Customs and Tax History

The presentation started with the information about the establishment of the National Customs and Tax Administration (NCTA) following the integration of two public agencies, precisely, the national tax institution and financial administration.

“NTCA employs the staff of 22,000, and the employees are provided with opportunities to attend training courses, sports and cultural events, as well as enjoy recreational activities,” Ms.Benedek added. “Our museum is located in the close vicinity of the Palace of Art in the center of Budapest. In 2012, we had more than 10,000 visitors, the highest number achieved so far.”

NTCA raises the awareness of its employees about the museum collection. “Museum stands accompany our events. This was the case in the course of the water sports and fishing contest for NTCA employees in 2012, as well as other events to demonstrate art works of our colleagues, such as ornaments for Xmas tree,” Ms.Benedek noted. “Special events provide a good opportunity for visitors of all ages. Our most popular program is entitled *Join us and become a customs officer*. We organize a number of thematic events, such as armed forces, wine-tasting, drugs and their malaise, patriotism among younger generation, and a wide variety of topics concerning the history of taxation, etc.”

In addition to a chemical research laboratory, the scope of museum activities includes the collection, restoration, storage of museum pieces, and the issuance of relevant publications and arrangement of exhibitions. “Our standard exhibition occupies three rooms in a 101-year-old villa, a property that belongs to the Hungarian state. But we organize lessons for students, and do some creative work in the museum too.”

Due to its excellent location, the museum is listed in Budapest city guides. Information about the museum, including articles by researchers and other technical and learning materials, can be accessible through the web-site www.nav.gov.hu/nav/keki/muzeum.

Summarizing the results of the first day, MrNimax informed the audience that the general assembly would continue its work the next day.

On September 25th, 2013, Mr.Nimax welcomed the audience to the final session of IACM in Baku, Azerbaijan: “Dear colleagues. Welcome back to the most important event for the association.”

He also expressed regret at seeing some members of the association standing aside from important events, including the exhibition hosted in WCO headquarters in Brussels.

2. Expression of interest by some countries to join IACM

Bulgaria, Kazakhstan and Macedonia expressed an interest in becoming members of IACM. Speaking on behalf of his colleagues from Kazakhstan, a representative from the Kazakh Customs Service seconded to the WCO Regional Office for Capacity Building for Europe in Baku, said that the Kazakh side would soon request familiarization documents to move ahead with membership procedures.

3. Commemoration of the deceased colleague

Session participants commemorated Mr Jan Berggren, the former head of the Swedish customs museum who passed away recently, in a minute of silence, and welcomed Mr Samuelson, the new head.

4. Moldova membership issue

Moldova has failed to pay membership fee for three successive years and has not answered the corresponding requests by IACM, according to Mr.Francis Huijbrechts, the IACM treasurer.

Malta: It is clear they are not interested.

Referring to the IACM statute and rules, Mr.Nimax, the President of IACM Board, stated that Moldova “will not be a member of our association anymore.”

5. Financial report

Mr Francis Huijbrechts, the IACM treasurer, provided financial highlights about the Association. “A number of members did not pay the fee for this year; I sent the second invoice in July,” he said. “19 members have paid (for this year), but eight have failed to pay for the next year.”

He added that 10,755 euros were “on our bank accounts as of July 1st, 2013,” following the finalization of 31 transactions (24 times in, and 7 times out).

Malta: Your attachment did not open, so I could not send it to our financial department.

The participants were asked to provide direct museum address and other contact information, including bank details, in order to ease the payment of membership fee rather than settling the accounts with their respective agencies (through the customs/taxation headquarters).

Concerning the annual report for 2013, Mr Henri Nimax, the President of IACM Board, asked all participants to send their respective country information, to be composed of a maximum of 300-350 words, to MsSevilAkhundova by December 1st, 2013. “The topic is social media like the topic of the (Baku) conference,” he added.

In the end, the participants were requested to check the previous annual report (2012 Netherlands) against the accuracy of the information about their respective administrations (museum address, names, telephone numbers, etc.) for the sake of avoidance of any misinformation for the entire year, and clarify the situation with Mr. Jean-Pierre Reuter from Luxembourg.

6. Exhibition at WCO

Mr. Nimax gave the floor over to Mr. Huijbrechts to provide an update on IACM exhibition at WCO.

“Mr. (Kunio) Mikuria (WCO Secretary General) officially announced the opening of the exhibition on the World Customs Day in January this year. The total budget of which we were weary was formed of a substantial contribution in the size of 4,000 euros by WCO, and additional 750 euros from our own money. Netherlands and France helped with the texts and photos. Mr. Meyer, a WCO representative, and his staff helped to arrange the premises for the items on the display,” Mr. Huijbrechts said. “The texts were prepared in French and English.”

He added that the exhibition was on till 30th of November, and was not open to the general public, but to a restricted circle of stakeholders. “The theme is *20 years of IACM: common destiny and heritage*. We have not occupied any room in the WCO building, but the items are over the premises of WCO.”

On the side of IACM, the event was coordinated by three focal points. Two of them – Ms Susanna Merkel from Hamburg (Germany) and Mr Francis Huijbrechts from Antwerp (Belgium) – are in charge of the exhibition itself, while the third person, representing the Tax and Customs Museum in Rotterdam (Netherlands) dealt with promotional materials.

“Before the start of the exhibition we held a number of meetings. On 6th of November we had an important meeting with WCO staff members,” Mr. Huijbrechts noted. He admitted that the preparatory work was really challenging. “We had to adapt our logo, since it was not possible to find the original one. Nevertheless, we manage to finalize the catalogue on time.”

In the end, Mr. Huijbrechts showed the new logo of IACM, as well as photos depicting the exhibition, and the items on the display related to border protection, smuggling, organization of the customs service, etc. A participating IACM member had to prepare a two-page memoir, one page to the museum, and the other page to explain the objects on the display. “19 out of 25 museums, from New Zealand to Finland, provided museum pieces, as well as descriptive photos and objects. We thank Jean-Pierre (Reuter) for a customs motorcycle. The German museum team showed a very high level of professionalism, and colleagues from Luxembourg were helpful as well.”

7. Venue for the next assembly meeting

With regard to future conferences, Mr. Nimax said that Bordeaux (France) will host the assembly meeting in 2014. “In 2015, it is expected to take place in Denmark, but the country has not given the definitive confirmation yet. After 2015, there is no clearly set agenda.”

Slovakia: We would like to host, but not earlier than 2017. By that time some major infrastructure projects would have been completed in Bratislava, so you will be welcome.

Switzerland: We are interested to host, but not earlier than 2017. The year 2018 is more likely.

Lithuania: We have to discuss this issue with our management.

Then Mr. Nimax gave the floor to the representative from France who said the following: “Bordeaux is city of around 250,000 (while the metropolitan area has a population of around 1,150,000), nor far from the Atlantic Ocean. We will be happy welcoming you there. There is a nice 18th-century square, the museum of fine arts, the museum of decorative art in Bordeaux. I want to thank the Azerbaijani team for their hospitality and excellent arrangement of the conference this year, and congratulate them upon their achievements, and would like to note that unlikely we would organize something better.”

The Czech Republic: How soon will you inform us of the exact dates of the conference in Bordeaux?
France: Next week (first week of October).

Germany: So, could we say that no precise time frame has been set up for the conference in Bordeaux? Shall we expect it to take place in the end of September 2014?

France: Yes, you shall.

Concerning the subject of the 2014 IACM conference in Bordeaux, the Board asked participants to express their respective views and opinions.

The Czech Republic: Weapons used by the customs officers could be a good topic.

Slovakia: Restrictions and prohibitions sound good too.

Belgium: In Belgium, we show weapons, drugs in our museum, but for the French (colleagues) it would be a bit problematic.

Germany: We should not show the present only, but to connect it to the past too. I would suggest counterfeited medicines and toys as topic for the upcoming conference.

Belgium: We could also think about public safety as a would-be topic, because we need to focus on what the customs have been missing nowadays.

The Czech Republic: Indeed, there should be a linkage between public safety and the history of customs service.

The Board concluded that members would send their proposals in writing, while at the next stage the proposals thereof will be circulated among members to arrive at the final decision on the topic.

8. Upcoming elections

Mr.Nimax informed the Board of the upcoming elections, and the inevitable change of composition. “Francis (Huijbrechts) is very helpful. Jon (AgustEggertsson) was in hospital, our best wishes to him. Elections are taking place next year. Jon and I will remain with you, but not on the Board.”

Germany: We have statutes and rules, so the amendments to them should be discussed and agreed upon. Please send those amendments on time so we will have time to discuss them.

MrNimax: Yes, you are right. We have introduced some minor amendments, and you will receive them soon; maybe it is better to send them by December 1st, so you will have time to become familiar with them.

9. Miscellaneous

Mr Jean-Pierre Reuter gave a high appreciation of France for monthly submission of reports. “But the others fail,” he noted admitting, at the same time, that “the web site (of IACM) is not updated to meet current expectations. Changes will be introduced after I receive the corresponding inputs from you. By the way, our web site is viewed by more than 2,000 users per month.”

Mr.Nimax added that web site “postings are free of charge.”

Malta: We need to be equipped with additional capacity to better handle e-mails and web-sites. Yesterday I said that you should not overload the content. There are some basic rules, such as refraining from personal abuse, finding a proper place for museum promotion initiative (do not post about museum in a football forum), zero tolerance to spams, etc. Let us following one simple, but important rule: write clearly and concisely, since the modern web audience are largely non-native English speakers. Ask some questions about a particular Internet address (web page, etc.), and do not post copyrighted material without reference to the source. Use e-mails extensively. CAPS mean shouting, so do not use them. It is better to use underscores. Check spelling, watch your tone, quote back only what is relevant, and use an automatic signature. Do not send unsolicited file attachments, use a descriptive subject line, do not use all e-mail addresses while applying the “reply to all” function, and it is better to get the hand of sticking to 'Bcc' rather than 'Cc' function. Also, do not be afraid to ask a question – the beauty of the Internet and social media is that all participants talk at the same level. Acknowledge what the others are saying: if you do not agree, provide your arguments. When presenting a controversial point, state whose view you refer to or comment upon. While posting a question, make it as easy as possible for others to understand. Stay calm and do not get offended easily. Do not “flame” the others on the discussion board. When quoting, edit out whatever is not directly applicable to your reply. Remember! Emotions are to express feeling but in the context of friendly e-mails, and are not allowed for use in formal communication. Remain a human being, be kind about spelling or other mistakes, such as a stupid question.

10. Closing of the assembly meeting

Mr Henri Nimax, the President of IACM Board, thanked the customs administration of Azerbaijan, and Ms.SevilAkhundova, the head of the Azerbaijan Museum of Customs History, for getting everything arranged for the assembly meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan. “I express my gratitude to the host for what they did to make us feel at home, hope you will have a safe return trip and am looking forward to seeing you in Bordeaux.”



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