



Annual Report-2009/2010

As we all know 2009 was a very challenging year for everyone, and certainly was a time of reflection and looking at new strategies for the future, which I believe will be once we come out of this period a lot more stable and realistic.

I think that FEGGA has remained reasonably stable during this time and with its limited resources tackled the challenges quite well.

With the economic downturn in mind, we decided to include this subject within our Conference last year. We introduced a variety of subjects that could be affected and also focusing on areas that organisations could create some solutions to potential problems. We had great feedback from most of our Members and our group leaders worked hard during the Conference to ensure we got the most from the group work that took place during this important session. I think that this helped a lot of organisations and individuals in their focus during this period, helping them to remain focused in a positive way.

I think for FEGGA the frustration has been that we were ready to take further steps in our development and this has not been the right year to do this. We see this as only a delay until the economic situation regains confidence and we are able to justify new initiatives.

Country Support

As FEGGA grows and more of the new emerging Countries join and start their new journeys in growing industries to support the game of golf, the expectation and support that is required from FEGGA grows. To be able to offer guidance in growing their association and setting up education and environmental programmes means a great deal and allows them to achieve things much faster than the larger and more established associations did in their early years. It's this wealth of collective experience that creates the information bank that FEGGA has.

At the beginning of 2009 FEGGA introduced its revised business plan, with the objective of creating something that was not leggy and something that could influence every decision that we make in the future. One aspect was that we certainly feel that during the next 5 years we will have a further 10 Associations that will become members of FEGGA.

With this in mind and our focus to assist new Countries when they need it most, we have revised our Membership fee structure and made it much easier for these organisations to take advantage of what FEGGA offers at very reduced costs.

During the last 12 months we have had Bulgaria and Hungary join as Members.

FEGGA Scholarship Programmes

Our year long programme based in Spain continues to offer a unique opportunity to greenkeepers looking to further their knowledge and experience. We have added additional areas of learning this last year and one of these areas is to give them all live projects that they will oversee on their respective golf courses and produce a report and present their findings at our forthcoming Conference.

We are also close to finalising a new Scholarship programme that will allow a greenkeeper to gain Technician experience during a 4 week period. This will be both on a golf course site and also through workshop experience.

European Greenkeepers Education Unit (EGEU)

Much work has been done during 2009 with regard to the further development work of the European Greenkeepers Education Unit (EGEU).

The development work of the EGEU was presented at the FEGGA Conference and the EGA AGM in 2008 and 2009. Many countries and associations are very keen for the launch of the EGEU to help them introduce robust greenkeeper education and training within their countries using the EGEU standards.

What will the EGEU do?

The EGEU will:

- Promote quality education, training and qualifications using approved standards that can be adopted by countries throughout Europe.
- Provide qualified greenkeepers with a certificate and passport that will allow an increase in the mobility of skilled greenkeepers across Europe.

How will the EGEU do this?

- The EGEU will engage countries who:
- Have an established greenkeeper education system
- Have little or no formal greenkeeper education
- Who will the EGEU work with?

The EGEU will work with:

- Greenkeeping and Golf Associations to establish a recognised standard of greenkeeper education within their country
- Training providers or colleges within countries to establish its own system of education and training that meets EGEU standards

The EGEU has recently launched its own website which can be found at www.egeu.eu The website gives an outline of its work and presents the strategy, Standards, and proposed quality assurance process.

The EGEU is now ready to take its next steps, but needs industry funding assistance in taking these next steps.

Leonardo Project

This project, Green-E has now been approved by the EU and the first meeting was held in Scotland at Elmwood College. This project was put together by Kao College in Finland, with partners coming from colleges from Scotland, Czech Republic, Lithuania, and FEGGA.

The aims of the project are to create education in colleges in Czech Republic and Lithuania, based on the Pan European Standards and delivered as pilot projects through E Learning. FEGGA's role is to assist with their expertise and to disseminate this information, to allow other Countries to benefit from this work.

New FEGGA Website

During 2009 FEGGA launched its new website, creating a very modern and easy to use site. As part of our work with GEO, we have introduced a very informative environmental page which allows quick access to specific resource pages that can assist both Greenkeepers and industry.

It would be good if everyone checked that they have links to all of our web sites.

www.fegga.org

New Environmental Certification Programme

Finally following much work and discussion from GEO and its industry Partners, a new and dedicated Environmental Certification programme was launched. This has been a long time coming, but finally we have something that is dedicated to golf specifically, something that Europe should be encouraging all golf Clubs to sign up to, and sending out a clear message of our responsibility to the land that we manage.

I am pleased that FEGGA has always been a leader in this area and played a significant part in steering this environmental ship to its present position. This has been done through our development sessions at our Conference, where essential feedback has come from our Member Countries in determining the right strategy and also through our representation at the industry meetings through the years.

My hope is that we now get behind this programme and encourage its success, which can only be good for golf.

www.golfenvironment.org

Board meetings

During the year the board met in London during the early part of the year and more recently in Sweden at the Ljunghusen Golf Club, home club of Stig Persson. These minutes I have attached for your information.

The board also communicated quite intensively during the year by electronic form, which ensured we were always able to discuss any relevant matters as they arose during the year.

European Golf Association Golf Course Committee

As you will be aware Stig Persson represents FEGGA on this committee and certainly the feedback that we have had from Stig is that he is very positive with the path it has taken to date. During the year Stig attended the Green Week on behalf of the committee and indeed Golf. You will have all seen the feedback that was sent to you all, but it certainly again illustrates the negativity golf has and much is through misunderstanding about golf and the land it uses and how it is maintained.

The next big issue that golf will face through the EU will be water. The EU now is concentrating its efforts on the Water Basin Directive and through this committee we are and have been advising you on the next steps and what you can be doing nationally to be part of the decision making.

Harradine Trophy

This year the Harradine Trophy was held in GC Bled, in Slovenia. The event went very well, with some 85 people in attendance.

Both during and after the Harradine Trophy we have been discussing the possibility of holding a European Team Championships during this event. This is based on feedback that we have had during the last number of years from associations wanting to participate in such an event.

The Harradine Trophy is held for all the German speaking Countries and also Slovenia and rotated within these Countries. I have spoken with some of these Countries up to date and have had a positive response from them all.

Mid European Rasen Conference (Merk)

This is an initiative between Austria, Germany and Switzerland, which came about from the last FEGGA Conference. The aim is to combine their Conferences and exhibition and form one big event that will take place every 2nd year. During the last year they have held several meetings to look at potential venues and the costs that are involved. This is a great example of associations working together and greenkeepers benefiting.

They have now agreed a name for this event, and also created a logo which has been agreed by all 3 associations.

Newsletter

The Newsletter was produced and sent out twice during the year. The Newsletter now has a circulation of 7000 in some 25 Countries.

World Golf Foundation

Stig Persson and Dean Cleaver met with Steve Mona, CEO of the World Golf Foundation and discussed areas of mutual interest and to look at how we could disseminate information from them through to our member Countries.

It is also important that Europe is part of this structure and not just becoming part of an American lead organisation.

Financial Summary

Despite the difficult year, I think we have been able to come through the year better than expected. In terms of industry support received, this has very much remained the same, we lost four Patron members and gained four new patron Members.

We gained one additional Conference Patron for this Conference, which is a real positive and will certainly help us.

Where we did suffer was our Conference last year in Copenhagen. This was an expensive venue for us to visit and rather than ask you the Members and our Patron members to pay more we subsidised the event more than normal, meaning the profit made was zero.

We also took some decisions last year to change the membership fees to help the smaller associations and to encourage and make it easier for new associations to join. In the first year this has resulted in a small downturn in revenue, but feel that this year it will correct itself as more associations join. The other affect was that both Russia and Poland did not pay their membership fees. Poland has gone through some major challenges and in effect had to start again. The Russian Golf Federation, of which the Greenkeeper Association came under has also gone through some major challenges and had to make huge reductions in personnel and budget. This has not helped the Greenkeeping industry in the short term and now the Greenkeepers are looking to establish their own association independently.

Finally as seen in the business plan FEGGA has limited areas to source income from and we need to continue to look at new opportunities that can produce more sustainable core funding. We also need to look at levels of reserves as at present FEGGA has nothing in reserve which at times leaves itself vulnerable. This has to be a focus for the future.

The board would like to acknowledge the support of its associations, Patron Members and industry Partners during the last year and look forward to working with them during the next twelve months.

*Dean Cleaver
Executive Officer*

On behalf of the FEGGA Board