

Manifest 1991

First brochure of the Network

"To the textile art, unconditional precedence is due, because it is revealing itself, as it were, as the Original Art and seems to be quite a natural phenomenon, whilst all the other arts are borrowing their types and symbols from textile art."

Gottfried Semper, architect, 19th century

Foreword

The European Textile Network is an organisation which accompanying the political and economical integration undertakes supplementary tasks on a cultural sub-sector.

The Network associates scientists, experts, artists and technicians across professional, geographical and social borders to achieve united action.

The ETN members are aware of the necessity, considering the accelerated processes of civilisation, to strengthen modern cultural developments in Europe and to preserve and increase life's quality through textiles.

Why Textiles

Textile is a structural principle borrowed from nature. Textile forms draw their inspiration from comprehension of the world. They are changing and developing within the process of civilisation.

Textile is not a fabric, but a necessary human repertoire in the metabolism of nature; such as agriculture and architecture - a medium of human life organisation, such as language, music and mathematics. Its forms and contents, its technical and ritual use reflect like them the level of development of a culture.

With increasing civilisation the cultural meaning of textile has decreased. Textile is not a discipline of science and art - and is, despite of its fundamental cultural importance, only handled like substance for technical and artistic processing.

After thousands of years of human experience we are again at the threshold of new textile developments and openings of the world. On the eve of the third millennium we experience a further revolution in the application of textile techniques: The so-called "technical" textiles today are the most important growth factors. Thanks to intensive studies of nature, of the abundance of the forms and functions of its microstructures, highly innovative and useful products are being invented. This field which within a few years to come, will be covering worldwide half the industrial textile production, is one of the hardly disclosed cultural fields of design. - In fact, there are neither "technical", "decorative" nor "artistic" textiles, but only practical applications, accordingly motivated.

In order to ensure that in the textile field the innovative forces may act for the welfare of humanity and for the adaptation of civilisation to the natural environment, all technological and economical developments must be culturally processed, as the ecological crisis brought about by modern civilisation reflects the crisis of human culture.

To accentuate textile more distinctly as a constitutive element of human existence, to work out its characteristics more precisely and to bring to consciousness more clearly its fruitful interactions with other cultural fields, can be furthered by an interdisciplinary and international effort. Expert judgement assembled out of science and practice, art and technology, historical knowledge, regional, ethnic and ideological forces must work in unison, so that there may be possible textile impulses for modern cultural development.

That is why textile - because the development of textile-cultural consciousness is helping to find understandings and ways for a livable future.

Why Europe

Europe is facing change-overs and old ideological ideas lose their meanings. Far older political ideas are experiencing revival. New and independent states are emerging, old states unite into supra-national economical systems.

New guiding ideas, so far, have not shown any power of attraction, or remained diffuse, de Gaulle's "Europe of Fatherlands" as well as Gorbatshev's "European House".

The experience of two world wars was needed to establish at all a type of European conscience which is being represented by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg since 1949. The first Chapter of its "London Statute" says: The first objective is to establish a closer union between the member states to safeguard the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and to further economical and social progress. This should be achieved "by reviewing questions of common interest, conclusions of contracts and resolutions for cooperation in the following areas: economy, social conditions, culture, science, administration as well as preserving and developing of human rights and basic liberties". A so-called second birthday the Council of Europe looks at the 4th November 1950, when the European Convention of human rights was ratified in Rome. - Since 1965 the Council of Europe has a comprehensive Social Charter including the guaranteed right to work.

Unfortunately, in Europe and elsewhere the basic rights have not been realised yet, notwithstanding the Council of Europe and UNO. The separation of the world into the Poor and the Rich, outlawed and privileged people goes through all areas of life; in international relations as well as internally in the states themselves. The silent conflict between Poor and Rich is an everyday experience in all the nations. The individual accumulation of material goods and resources at the expense of our fellow-beings is hindering the unfolding of a peaceful culture of co-existence individual and international. There is a lack of convincing ideas of compassionate humanity, a lack of respecting the natural basics of life and a lack of life perspectives beyond individual death.

For our continent, institutional strengthening of the Council of Europe will, for the future act as an indicator of the will of agreement between Europeans. This also applies to the cultural force of integration of states and nations.

In the past the Council of Europe had managed with English and French as official languages. Since the opening of the borders to Eastern Europe and to the Slavic linguistic area holding of 35% of the European population, the demand for communication has been increasing considerably. This development must be taken into account.

That is why Europe - as the Textile Network, developed from the European changes, can only become a credible institution of textile-cultural co-operation, if it be first seizing the problems and chances of our own continent which are resulting from a total population of approximately 700 million people.

Communication Problems and Chances

The Network members are overcoming great language barriers to the interest of their common objectives.

Other than in North- or South America, Australia, China or India, they do not have a generally ruling language or writing, although English has been accepted by all as the correspondence language.

There is a total of 60 languages spoken in Europe which partly reflect most diverse cultural experiences and in addition to this include even more regionally and religiously affected traditions.

The communication problems can be bridged as the corresponding great variety of textile forms offer refined means of expression and often transmit opinions and knowledge more clearly than words.

ETN Languages

English - because it has developed into a worldwide communication language being the leading language of the European 30 % Germanics.

ETN Brief History

by Beatrijs Sterk

Between the constitutive ETN-conference in Erfurt held in June 1991, and my initial reflections as regards an international network for textile, nearly a decade has gone by. As a Dutch woman living in the Federal Republic of Germany, I had been missing for a long time the international atmosphere of my native country and its interest for textile culture popular there. The far larger German-language area and the exposed political situation of my host state, on the other hand, were sensibilising me for global problems.

In 1980 I founded, with others, the international Association Textilforum e. V. In 1981 we published the first edition of our magazine of the same name; for the time being in German only.

As early as 1984 we discussed with colleagues in Paris and London the publication of a trilingual handbook for a (West)-European Textile Network, at that time still with negative results.

When, in 1989, our old continent suddenly started to change its political face and it became noticeable that political/economical questions would overshadow social-cultural problems, I had hardly any other choice, considering my grown consciousness of problems, than to take immediately the necessary steps to devote all my energy to this new Europe threatened by speechlessness. Because in my opinion, culture is also a matter of capability of language and expression, the textile forms of which had been of importance to me since my youth.

In February 1990 I sent a call-up to 255 institutions in 25 European countries, encouraging them to take part in the European Textile Network. The positive echo was of an amazing extent. Spontaneously, 85 addressees from 23 countries replied, among them many former Eastern block states.

It was important to me, in the first instance, to find emotionally committed partners who, like myself, were affected by the social changes and on their part were willing to play an active role in the difficult process of agreement on concrete objectives and programmes for ETN. - The present list of our ETN-partners reflects the success of this search after one year and a half of correspondence.

Since June, 1990 thanks to the help of Textilforum e. V., a Newsletter could be published quarterly in English providing information between ETN-partners.

Very soon, it became necessary to come to initial opinions and resolutions regarding the future structure of co-operation and the possible status of ETN. This purpose was to be served by a constitutive conference which, thanks to the assistance of the European Community Committee in Brussels and of the German Ministry of the Interior, was rendered possible at short notice.

As the first conference place I selected the German town of Erfurt. Being the capital of the new Federal State of Thüringen (Thuringia) it is an interface of East-West cultures, comparable to well-known towns like Prague, Vienna or Budapest. It is also the town staging the new object art-Triennale "Configura - Art in Europe", which, parallel to the ETN-Conference, celebrated its premiere. Erfurt, moreover, has the ambition to revive the 1150 years old history of its university, where already Martin Luther had been studying, as a European University as from 1992.

The genius loci did work: The "European Textile Network" changed, within three days, owing to the committed co-operation of all the conference members, from a hopeful idea to a concrete project of future institutionalised co-operation.

ETN will be more than an agency of international culture interchange. ETN will reflect the world-openness newly-won by Europeans and will act as a model for future initiatives for cultural integration.

The First ETN Conference

Erfurt, June 23rd - 25th, 1991

The most important results

The conference was held within the framework of the "Platform Europe" under the protectorate of the European Community Committee. It was also supported by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and realised in co-operation with representatives of the Council of Europe.

The conference had the character of a working meeting. Its objective was to come to an agreement on tasks, structure and future programme of ETN, as well as to take initial corresponding resolutions:

1. An executive Committee *) was established which will, until April 1992, take over the following tasks:

- Securing the next working meeting, programme-planning.
- Working out papers to be submitted for decision regarding member structure and status of ETN.
Determinations of basics for project and institution funding (Pending clarification of ETN's financing itself independently, Textilforum, e. V. will be carrying on the current ETN business within its limited possibilities).

2. The 2nd ETN Conference is to be held in connection with the opening of the Textiles Biennial in Lausanne/Switzerland in April 1992. The host will be Philippe Jeanloz, Director of CITAM (Centre International de la Tapisserie Ancienne et Moderne - International Centre of Ancient and Modern Textile Art), in co-operation with the University of Lausanne.

3. The 3rd ETN Conference will take place at the Textile Museum in Tilburg/Netherlands in 1993. For this occasion Director Fred van Oss is suggesting a first exhibition of the works of ETN partners. - Comparable offers were made for Budapest/Hungary by Aliz Torday and for Lodz/Poland by Marcin Oko for the following years.

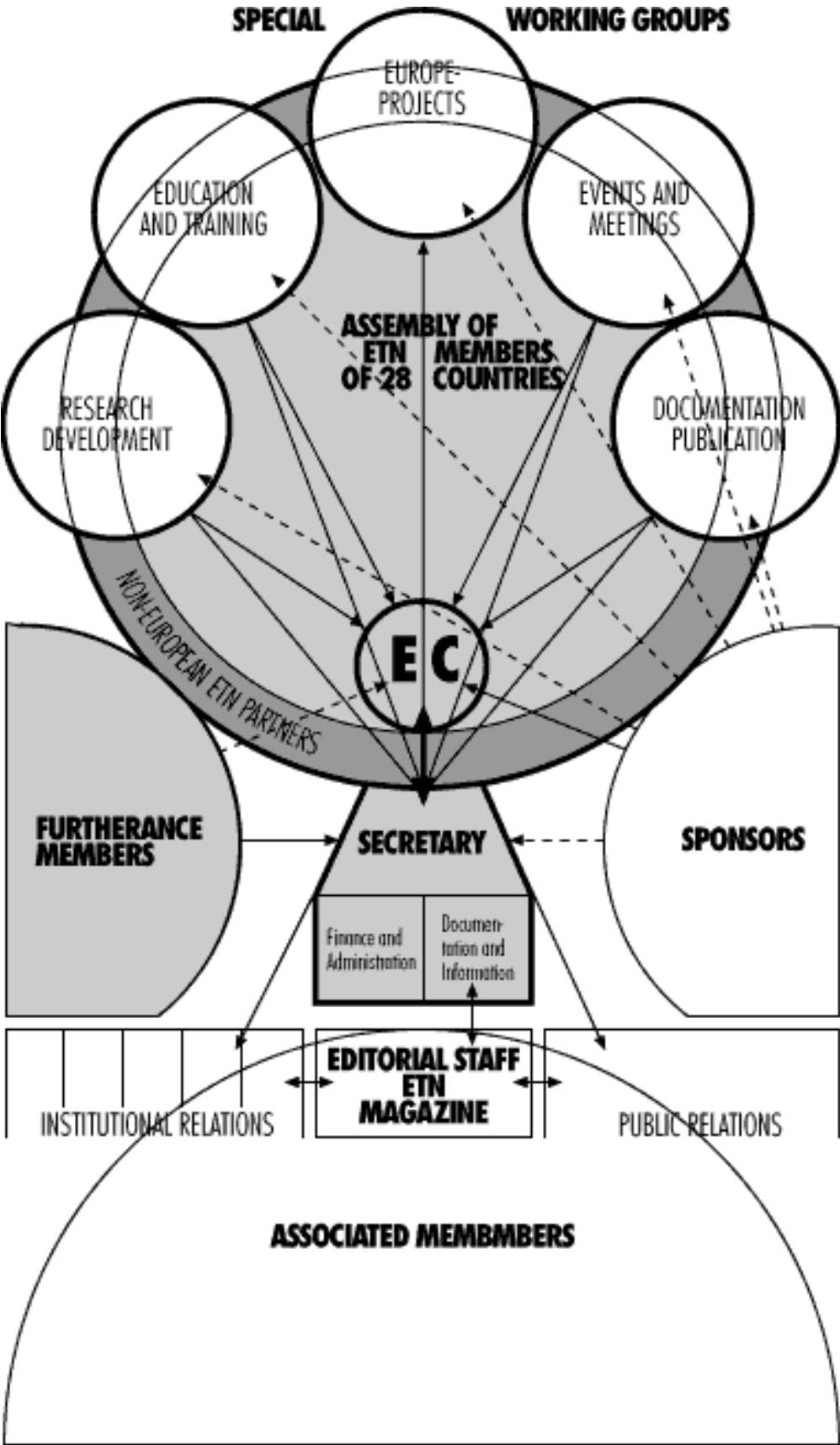
4. A resolution to be submitted to the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) of the Council of Europe was prepared, requesting that ETN be accepted as an "Associated Group" (AG). This resolution will be handed over to the members of CDCC at the first opportunity.

5. Beatrijs Sterk and Dietmar Laue, Textilforum e. V. Hannover/Germany have committed themselves to prepare an ETN-Manual which will form the basis of an informative and documentational infrastructure of the Network. They are furthermore considering the possibilities for the publication of an English-language periodical to serve for ETN communications.

6. The initiator of the Erfurt Conference, Beatrijs Sterk, is preparing an ETN Brochure for public relations purposes.

Structural Model

Concept of European co-operation within the framework of ETN (Provisional version)



Special groups

Active, passive members and external experts - Working programmes in the framework of ETN resolutions on the following targets:

Europe-Projects, e. g.:

- "Textile-cultural regions"
- "Silk Routes" (participation in programmes of the Council of Europe).

Research/Development, such as:

- Design Theory
- Historic Textiles
- New Technologies
- "Art and Industry" - Projects

Education and Training, such as:

- Professional Training
- Professional Advanced Training
- Adult Education
- Furtherance of young talent

Meetings

- Exhibitions/Shows, Competitions
- (Professional-) conferences, Symposia etc.
- Participation in events (such as Trade Fairs)

Documentation/Publication, e.g.:

- ETN data bank
- (Professional-) books, catalogues, instruction material
- Documentation of events
- Contributions both in script and pictures (audiovisual media)

Assembly of ETN Members

Annual meetings at alternating locations - Resolutions on ETN Programmes both short-term and long-term

EC-Executive Committee

(Formed by active ETN members)

Committee to consist of at least five institutional representatives.

Preparation and execution of general meeting resolutions; Programme and finance planning

Secretariat

Finance and programme administration (programme coordination). Keeping contact with promoting members, sponsors and external institutions. Central service for documentation and information, public relations.

Objectives

1. Development of European co-operation to intensify textile- cultural interchanges, to accentuate regional identities and to strengthen the idea of Europe.
2. Promotion of East-West integration within all the fields of ETN activities.
3. Development of common interests and co-operating experiences for the co-operation with partners outside Europe.

These objectives will be achieved by:

- Interlacing of existing local and regional activities (exhibitions, professional meetings, competitions, education and training events, publications, etc.), in order to make their supra-regionally relevant significance accessible.
- Development of joint European projects focusing on themes, methods and publicity. Completion of a central documentation and information service with decentralised basic data registers to improve professional co-operation of the ETN member institutions; Publication of the ETN Newsletter.

The European Textile Network is, above all, a co-operation partnership of supra-regional active representatives of Museums, Design Centres, Designers' Associations and training colleges/institutions for textile professions. - Already today (1991) the ETN Partners represent a major part of the potential textile-cultural organisers in Europe.

ETN is furthered by: International cultural institutions, regional corporations, public and private societies, business enterprises and private persons.

Members

Active Members

The activities of ETN are the result of the work performed by its active members. Their contributions consist of:

- A. Providing information and experience,
- B. Participation in collective projects,
- C. Canvassing for new ETN partners and promoting members/sponsors as well as participation in public relations work for ETN.

Passive Members

Thanks to its promoters the Network will financially be able to realise special programmes.

I. Promoting Members will assist ETN objectives by annual payments fixed at a minimum rate.

II. Sponsors commit themselves in the promotion of special ETN programmes.

Associated Members

(Status in preparation)

The activity of ETN in the fields of information and documentation will be supported by associated members who, by subscribing the ETN Magazine, contribute their financial part to the ETN data bank. - Associated membership is open to everyone.

ETN and International Institutions

The European Textile Network is attaching great value to the close co-operation with all supranational public and private cultural institutions.

In the year of its establishment, the first ETN conference was awarded the prize "Kulturbühne Europa 1991" (Platform Europe 1991) of the European Community in Brussels.

Since 1991 ETN has been participating in the consultations for the realisation of the "Silk routes", a programme in the frame of the European Cultural Routes - projects realised by the Council of Europe.

The national representatives in the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) are included in our dialogue. - The member states of the CDCC are: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Vatican, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Turkey, Great Britain, Soviet Union, Yugoslavia as well as Roumania and Canada (as observers).

In 1991 contacts were made to the following institutions:

Council of Europe - Parliamentary Committee for Culture and Education/Heerlen, Netherlands, and for Science and Technology/Burg, Dillkreis, Germany.

European Parliament - Committee for Culture/Luxembourg

European Council Committee - Departments of Culture, Education, Youth and Social Matters/Brussels

European Cultural Foundation - Executive Board/Amsterdam

UNESCO - Executive Board/Paris

Museums/Galleries

Museums are places of memory. They collect, arrange, curate and provide information, too, on textile-cultural history. Museums are indispensable partners of the Network.

According to the types of museums their staff employees are important co-operators for ETN projects in the fields of: art/fashion, crafts, trade, industry and historic textiles. Generally, they are active in all the working groups of ETN:

1. They decisively co-operate in the Europe-projects and are regional information centres on the theme of Textile-cultural Regions.
2. For many ETN projects in the fields of historic textiles, socio-economic history, art (history) substantial basic knowledge is provided by the research results contributed by museum staff.
3. The textile/fashion- (costume-) departments of museums are inherently facilities for advanced training. Moreover, many museums are offering educational services for schools and adult education. Training projects in the frame of special ETN-programmes are relying on this potential.
4. Galleries and museums are classic locations for events to be held in connection with international cultural interchange. They organise, also for Network projects (travelling-) exhibitions and conferences.
5. Museums and galleries are specialised documentation centres and important supports in the decentralised information net of ETN. They work out media contributions for public use and for use within the profession.

For the last few years, an increasing number of (textile-) industrial museums of a new type are being organised which, in addition to the collection of regional industrial objects and facts, are carrying on real experimental workshops of contemporary art and design production. They belong to the central project supporters of the "Textile cultural Regions" and in the frame of the European Textile Network will enter into a closer co-operation.

There is quite a number of problems and tasks specifically facing professional museum staff that will find easier solutions under the ETN umbrella, including restorative practice, thesaurus and inventorial problems, exchanges and loans, interchanges of staff and information etc.

Finally, increased supraregional co-operation will lead to new considerations concerning the profiling and centring on specific themes in individual museums and to a clearer division of work and tasks, internationally.

Schools

The schools and colleges are providing educational and training facilities for professional newcomers in the various textile areas and on various levels of qualification. There, the future textile and clothing engineers, textile and fashion designers, artists and craftspeople finish their studies in order to participate in the economical and cultural process in industry, crafts, trade, commerce, and other service lines, or in free-lance activities.

In the countries of Western Europe, textile-teacher academies are of a great importance, too, because their graduates will familiarise their own pupils in elementary and secondary schools with subjects of textile culture.

There is further a number of specialised training facilities and of advanced professional training courses, and the lecturers active there are aiding ETN with valuable contributions.

Finally, course instructors in adult education are important multipliers of textile-cultural knowledge and experience.

These professors, lecturers and instructors are represented too, in almost all the ETN working-groups:

1. They represent the professional newcomers within the still existing "Textile Cultural Regions" and maintain contact with their regional textile trade and industry.
2. At university level, they contribute to academic research and development in the field of design and methodology, as well as in the application of new technologies.
3. College and university staff are ETN's most important partners, where professional training and advanced training are under discussion.
4. Most of the (professional) conference referees, jury members and experts in specific fields of technique and design are lecturers.
5. The documentation and information facilities (such as institution libraries) of the schools support the decentralised information net of ETN and allow access to the most actualised professional sources. Besides, the authors and editors of standard professional publications and text books are university members.

The supranational interlacing of informational and manpower resources, is more and more growing in importance, as education and training are being internationalised, in particular within the European Economic Community. In this connection, ETN can take up an important role in speeding up the integration of East European partners in education and training.

In Europe, in the field of design, there is a lack of sufficient offers for professional training. This is one of the problems on which future ETN activities are to be concentrated!

Associations

Associations are representing the largest share of ETN membership. Their commitment is rooted in the professional and/or vocational self-organisation of these Associations' members.

Artists associations are thereby prevailing in this connection, partly because most of their members are workers to free-lance whom facilities of an exchange of experiences are not open other than within this form of organisation, and partly because artists - more than, e.g. designers - are depending on contacts with the public, and to support their professional existence, are in need of presentation and exhibition facilities.

In the world of object relations, the designers, artists and craftspeople are, in fact, the true producers of culture. The products of their work determine the esthetic level, the differentiated character of the visual language and thereby, too, mankind-object relations of a cultural society.

A civilization which is failing to integrate its object designers into the economical process, will loose its cultural face in the long run.

A major task for the European Textile Network is to increase the integration of textile designers and artists into the social process of reproduction and, within the political and economical field, to stand up for a more productive co-operation climate.

Designers' Enquête

In almost all European countries, associations of designers, artists and craftspeople are in need of more favourable economical conditions, legal and fiscal support, a well as improved market prospects.

The Network is in possession of a "Nine-Items-Programme" set up in 1986, for a European Enquête, the realisation of which may lead to quantifiable results and to decisions towards immediate relief.

In view of the access now opened to the former Iron Curtain countries, this project is gaining new actuality and increased urgency.

Co-operation in Working Groups

Designers', artists' and craftspeople associations provide the basis of ETN activities:

1. They are part of the "Textile cultural Regions" and widely determine the picture of contemporary textile art production.
2. Many members of these associations are carrying on systematic esthetic and technological research, the results of which are of the highest value for industrial textile production, or act as criteria for interior decoration or clothing designs.

3. The associations are active organisers of advanced training courses, exchanges of information and experience, workshop days and programmes for self-instruction.
4. A major part of textile art exhibitions and competitions is organised and realised by the associations. They initiate numerous international activities such as professional meetings, symposia, designers' exchanges and participate in trade fairs and markets.
5. Many designers are active in publicity; they publish books, participate in catalogue publications and are represented as performers in the audiovisual media.

There is no need for the European Textile Network to activate designers' associations. Rather, it is a matter of leading their members out of the side-scenes of culture routine into the European cultural stage limelight.

Institutions/Media

A wide variety of institutions, differing from designers' associations, but mainly acting in their interest or functioning as links to other cultural or economical areas, are welcome and sought-after ETN-members. They include regional or national design centres, fashion institutes, municipal or private centres of art and culture, professional libraries, foundations, etc.

In future, the Network will canvass, too, for the membership of federations and associations of the textile and clothing industry, as well as of specialized trade - as far as those institutions, beyond their immediate business advantage, are actively interested in cultural tasks and responsibilities.

The editorial staff of professional periodicals for textile designers, for the textile departments of schools and museums, as well as of the journals of designers' associations and of comparable institutions have a decisive role in active co-operation with ETN. Their contributions are essential for keeping the professional public up to date on the Network's activities, and they assist in finding people interested in participating in ETN group work; they are also ready for looking after partial tasks in the field of documentation/publication.

Active ETN membership will not be available to media destined for the general public nor to commercial media specialised in the trade. To them, passive ETN membership is possible to assist in furthering ETN objectives.

Key Persons

ETN is an association of institutional representatives. In exceptional cases individual persons without direct institutional linkage may also become active members. Being, in most cases, active key persons for specific professional fields, or particularly involved with the ETN-objectives. These are, first of all:

- Publicists,
- Art and culture critics,
- Organisers of meetings and events.

Unfortunately, there are but few specialised journalists, publicists and art critics who regularly handle textile-cultural themes and who, free of business interest in their special sector, will make independent reviewing their constant task.

The Network intends to gather and, if possible, to enlarge this important circle.

Independent organisers of meetings and events who, with great commitment, organise exhibitions, symposia, conferences, are also hard to find. It must be a matter of course to win their energy for the network.

Often, practising designers, artists and craftspeople are discerning, with much distance and excellent judgment, what is going on in their professional or regional environs, which means that, for ETN, they also are valuable observers and transmitters of information.

Non-European ETN Members

Europe is only a small part of our world, being neither its centre nor the cradle of textile culture. Already the population of Europe is exceeded behind that of India. Remembering, too, the historic influences of the cultures of Asia and North Africa, makes it clear that, without the impulses coming from the richer textile heritage of other continents, we would have far less substance of our own to contribute.

The European Textile Network will, in its own interest, be on the look out for non-European partners. - For them, there will be advantage in having a competent address in the Network, through which demands for co-operation on specific occasions and concerning long-term projects can be transacted quickly and reliably.

Within the coming years, ETN will set up a supplementary Partner Network, to assist its own members, too, in looking for contacts with non-European partners in the line of information and work.

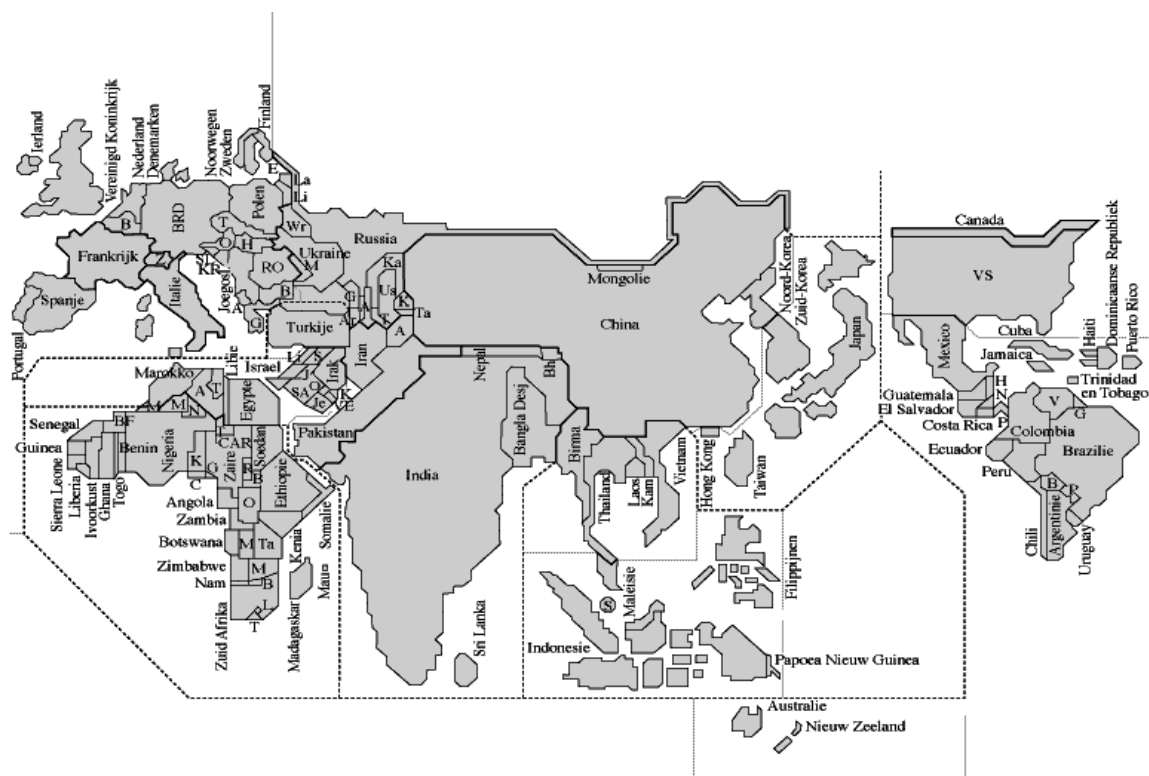
The inter-cultural dialogue is a must

We Europeans, but members of other highly-civilized societies, too, must look out for world-wide dialogue, as we are in a stuck dilemma from which possibly we cannot escape, if we remain isolated. Our Western way of life does offer no model that would be fit for the future of mankind.

This way of life is losing attractivity at the same rate as, more and more, it turns out to be globally destroying life's social and material foundations. - In our civilization, most textile products are involved in the accelerated changes of fashion, and are a lot quicker morally worn-out than they would be physically. - The moral wear and tear of products is correlative with the fading of cultural values which cannot last unless determining in a credible way that, in the interest of life's transcendence, can be classified as good and beautiful, or as bad and ugly.

ETN is standing up for the respect and protection of existing cultural traditions. To honour the values and inherent qualities of such traditions, to learn from them and to further them to the best of ability, will be in the well-understood own interest of ETN members.

The Network's View of the World



Map in accordance with percentage of world-population (only States over 1 Mio. Inhabitants, Situation as at 1977)

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