



Dear Skålleagues,

It is hard to believe we are already nearly half way through the Skål year! Time is certainly flying by but I assure you the Executive Committee and I have been ensuring we have positive results on our tasks! It is very important we have action and not talk. We must ensure our organisation moves forward and not only becomes a Trusted Voice in Travel and Tourism, but is also relevant in today's business world.

Firstly I would like to wish all Skålleagues "Happy Skål Day". On April 28th we celebrated our 80th Year. Following the creation in 1932 of the first Skål Club in Paris, 12 clubs were founded in other countries and that prompted the idea of an international organisation. The 'Association Internationale des Skål Clubs' (AISC) was launched on 28 April 1934 with Florimond Volckaert appointed as founder President.

It was my pleasure to attend a special mass and gala dinner in Panama with Skål Panama to celebrate the event.

We will be celebrating the event more formally in Paris from the 11th – 14th July with a special gala dinner etc. More details will be circulated over the next few weeks so Skålleagues who wish to attend may work on their travel arrangements.

Since my last message the Executive Committee, led by Vice President Salih Cene and Director Lou Conkling, has been revising the Congress Manual to bring it up to date and make it more in line with the feedback we have received from the membership.

The Secretariat with guidance from Directors Nigel Pilkington and David Fisher have been updating the new website and ensuring the back office systems, particularly those to do with membership and invoicing are made easy to use and seamless. This is an ongoing task and we are determined to have all working correctly by the middle of May. Once this has been completed the Members Benefits, Greeters areas will be revised to ensure all the information is up to date and relevant.

Vice President Marianne Krohn has been working closely with Young Skål and attended the recent Young Skål International symposium in Bucharest. You will also be aware that we have now divided Young Skål into two sections – Young Skål Student and Young Skål Professional/Future Leader for those who have finished their studies and have started their careers in the travel and tourism industry. They are the future of Skål and the Executive Committee is working hard to grow this vital area of our organisation.

In terms of communications we have increased the number of E-newsletters and contact with members and have published another positioning paper - *Why do Governments Marginalise the Benefits of Tourism?* to the wider travel and tourism industry. It is important Skål take a position on matters that affect the wider industry and voice the concern of our membership where necessary.

We have had a number of clubs celebrate anniversaries over the past months including Skål International Tokyo who celebrated their 50th Anniversary, having been formed in 1964 to coincide with the '64 Tokyo Olympics. Director Nigel Pilkington

attended on my behalf and reports Skål Tokyo, and Skål International Japan, are in great heart and the event was attended by over 150 Skålleagues, local industry people and government officers as well as the Ambassador to Japan for Croatia, who attended to celebrate the twinning between Skål Zagreb and Skål Tokyo.

Upcoming events include the NAASC Congress in Halifax, Nova Scotia where Snr Vice President Marianne Krohn will represent the Executive Committee on my behalf as I will be attending the Latin American Congress in Bogota on the same dates. I am looking forward to meeting with as many South America Skålleagues as possible during the Congress and sharing ideas on how we can move our great organisation forward.

The World Congress in Mexico City (25-30 October 2014) is fast approaching and Congress Coordinator Daniel Cervera and I will be meeting with the organising committee in the next two weeks to finalise the details to ensure it is our best congress ever! I will then be travelling to Cancun, Mexico to visit the three clubs in the region before returning to Paris.

Kindest personal regards & Skal

Karine Coulanges
President