

Issue 21
April 2014

**International
Tourist Guide Day
Pages 8-14**



***Guidelines
Internation @ I***

Message from the President

Dear Colleagues and Members,

We plan to launch a new service for members called **Guideapedia** shortly. This was previewed at our convention in Macau. It will enable members to update their own entries on the website and also to have an enhanced page that will give information about their members, licensing requirements and their country. It can also have a link to whatever service they have for potential clients to find guides. Full instructions will be sent to members who are fully up to date with their membership fees once the pages are ready to go live.

The World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations celebrated **International Tourist Guide Day** around the world and you can read about some positive results in this newsletter. I am sure most of you check our website www.wftga.org regularly and have immediate access to reports and photographs. We received 7,000 'like-it' clicks within five hours! Please do continue to check and distribute our news. It is vital for spreading the WFTGA standards and ethos.

Today WFTGA membership includes 82 countries representing around 200,000 guides. Non-members also participate in the WFTGA ITGD initiative, celebrated on or around 21st February, promoting the Tourist Guide as the professional Regional Ambassador for Cultural and Natural Heritage.

Globalisation positively enables tourism for many, if still not for all. **The Travel Fair ITB** in Berlin together with the UNWTO once more brought various important politicians together in order to encourage the removal of visa restrictions. I took part as an observer during the prominent Silk Road Session under the Presidency of the UNWTO's General Secretary Taleb Rifai from Jordan. As promoters of cultural understanding, tourist guides can



Executive Board members meeting in Vienna. From left: Roger Rajah, Esther Banike, Ruth Turanicz (not a member of ExBo), Maria Aristidou, Wilja Siebe and Felicitas Wressnig

push and vote for freedom of travel. And with quality interpretation we will help develop world-wide tourism and the appreciation of specific and distinct areas.

National Heritage seems to be the opposite and yet is an additional aspect to globalisation: to respect the past and evaluate the contemporary within an area. WFTGA is a member of the **International Coalition of Tourism Partners (ICTP)** and therefore support Cultural Diversity and Understanding, Green Growth, Sustainability and Peace-Keeping Initiatives. The ICPT website can be found at: www.icptg.org.

WFTGA cooperates with the **International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT)** which this year celebrates its 25th anniversary. We contributed to the publication of the "International Handbook for Tourism and Peace". Past President Rosalind Newlands contributed an article on the WFTGA project in the South Caucuses, where Felicitas Wressnig worked as Lead International Trainer for a cross-border training of tourist guides in 2010. Publishing details: Yearbook Culture of Peace 2013, edited by the Centre of Peace Research and Peace Education, Universitaet Klagenfurt, Austria and UNWTO at DRAVA Verlag – Zalozba Drava GmbH: ISBN 978-3-85435-713-1)

This is the Credo of the Peaceful Traveller from the IIPT website: www.iipt.org.

Grateful for the opportunity to travel and experience the world and because peace begins with the individual, I affirm my personal responsibility and commitment to:

- Journey with an open mind and gentle heart
- Accept with grace and gratitude the diversity I encounter
- Revere and protect the natural environment which sustains all life
- Appreciate all cultures I discover
- Respect and thank my host for their welcome
- Offer my hand in friendship to everyone I meet
- Support travel services that share these views and act upon them
- By my spirit, words and actions, encourage others to travel the world in peace.

With the world experiencing troubles due to weather disasters and political disturbances, sadly affecting several of our member countries, the Executive Board of WFTGA wishes you all Peaceful Development Of Your Tourism And Continued Professional Successes!

Felicitas Wressnig
WFTGA President

Seatrade Middle East Cruise Forum



Photo: ©Jasem Zaiton

187 delegates from 11 different countries attended the Seatrade Middle East Cruise Forum conference, hosted by the Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority. The conference encouraged open and honest discussions about the cruise industry in the region, including significant port expansion plans to enable the region to grow its share of the lucrative cruise market.

A presentation on the Status of Shorex Programs offered in the Gulf area was delivered by Jasem Zaiton. These include tours to Doha, tours about Arabian Stallions, or the Caravansaray over Arabian Sands, or the Merchant City Dubai. On offer there is even a Tom Cruise Dubai tour! The actor filmed the last Mission Impossible franchise in Dubai, and the tour follows the best scene sites from old Dubai to the world's tallest building.

Over 300,000 shore excursions were delivered last season in the region. Jasem explained that tourist guide licensing procedures and qualification programs were being developed to protect the ambassadorial role of the tourist guide while guiding Shorex.

Guidelines Internation@1

is produced by WFTGA two to four times a year.

The deadline for the next issue is **9 June 2014**. Please send words and pictures (ideally 300 ppi) to: wftgaguidelines@gmail.com Please send text without any formatting and name photos so that they are easy to link to text files. Please do not paste photos into text documents.

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Cover photo: Felicitas Wressnig with UNWTO Silk Road organizers Alla Peressolova and Johanna Devine with ICOMOS Representative Li Tongxian in X'ian, China, during visit to Kazakhstan.

Editor: Tina Engström

WEBSITES

A small team consisting of our WFTGA Secretary Esther Banike and WFTGA Past President Rosalind Newlands have been working on updating the WFTGA website. WFTGA Area Representative Jasem Zaiton has also been helping with updates on Facebook. All the latest news can be found on the website so it is good to check it regularly.

www.wftga.org

16th WFTGA Convention in Prague – you can register now online!

www.wftga2015.org

Keep in touch with friends and colleagues around the WFTGA world via Facebook.

www.facebook.com/wftga

This is a website with extensive country profiles which may be of use when welcoming a group from somewhere you know little about! (Recommended in New Zealand's ProGuides, the newsletter of the Professional Association of Tour Guides of New Zealand.)

www.indexmundi.com

Message from WFTGA Area Representatives International Coordinator

In this issue of *Guidelines Internation@l* you can read short bulletins and enjoy some of the photographs we received from our Members with news about their activities, especially on the International Tourist Guide Day! I wish to thank all those who took the time to let us share the ways they chose to celebrate ITGD 2014!

In addition, I would also like to mention the valuable work carried out by the WFTGA Area Representatives and the important role they have in achieving the WFTGA goals. Following the 2013 Macau Convention, the WFTGA Executive Board appointed the 2013-2015 Area Representatives for 22 Sectors that now cover the entire globe and you can find them all on the WFTGA website.

In 2013/early in 2014 we had two new Full Members added on the WFTGA Members list, ProGuides New Zealand and Iran Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (IFTGA), plus a number of 'Individual Members' and 'Affiliate Members'. WFTGA now represents nearly 200,000 tourist guides in 82 countries!

As WFTGA continues to grow, both in size and profile, we need to maintain close contact with our members and keep them involved and regularly informed, and learn about their activities and needs. We also wish to encourage more associations and professional tourist guides to join WFTGA. Without the help of WFTGA Area Representatives, familiar with different regions and languages, the WFTGA Executive Board cannot do either of these tasks on their own.

I want to take the opportunity to sincerely thank, on behalf of our President and the Executive Board, all hard working Area Representatives for volunteering to do this task

and for sending us regular reports and updates on developments in their regions. Some of our Area Representatives are outstanding! They attend conferences and exhibitions and always promote WFTGA. They liaise with Members and keep ExBo well informed on tourist guide matters in their area.

I would like to invite the less active Area Representatives to intensify their efforts and bring the Members of their Region of responsibility closer to WFTGA. We, the WFTGA Area Representatives, are the goodwill ambassadors of our Federation and we are proud to serve our outstanding profession and work towards promoting the aims and achieving the goals of WFTGA.

Let me just remind you of what the WFTGA AIMS are:

- to establish contacts with tourist guide associations throughout the world and reinforce professional ties.
- to represent professional tourist guides internationally and to promote and protect their interests.
- to enhance the image of the profession.
- to promote a universal code of ethics and skills.
- to raise, encourage and establish the highest standards of professionalism.
- to develop international training, and improve the quality of guiding through education.
- to facilitate the exchange of information between members.

Let me also remind you of what the missions of the WFTGA Area Representatives are:

- to make contacts with tourist guide associations and maintain contact with them regularly.

- to check information pertaining to the Tourist Guide profession and tourism in general.
- to inform ExBo on developments and happenings in their area.
- to make suggestions with regard to participation in distinguished meetings for themselves and/or ExBo members, and to copy information to the International Area Representative Coordinator as well as to ExBo.

The WFTGA Area Representatives are also expected:

- to encourage increased WFTGA membership and participation in their area.
- to promote our activities, including our biennial Conventions, the WFTGA training programme, the celebration of the International Tourist Guide Day and participation in the WFTGA Cultour Card Programme.
- to promote the aims and ethos of the WFTGA through their direct contact with tourist guides, Convention and Visitor Bureaux and all local industry partners.
- to promote qualified guiding locally through the promotion of WFTGA members in their area, and encourage the support of their aims and causes.

Looking forward to working closer with ALL our Area Representatives in the months to come, promoting our WFTGA Convention in Prague, 26-30 January, 2015. I hope we will all meet there!

Maria Aristidou
WFTGA Executive Board
member responsible for the
Area Representatives portfolio



Members of RMGA (front row) pose with historic First Person Interpreters Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley, Prospector Pete and (the Titanic's) "unsinkable Molly" Brown, back row. Conference Chairman Larry Foos is on far left. NFTGA President Barbara Foos is fourth from right.

National Federation of Tourist Guide Associations Conference Attendees Experience the Old West in a New Way

Conference attendees expect insightful keynote speakers and quality education sessions that provide new ideas. They also look forward to experiencing a new culture in a spectacular setting – otherwise one might as well stay home and watch it all via webinar.

The January 2014 National Federation of Tourist Guide Associations – USA (NFTGA-USA) conference in Denver, Colorado, met these expectations and more. Organised by the Rocky Mountains Guide Association (RMGA), the conference attracted guides from across the USA – and two from the Dominican Republic. RMGA Vice President Larry Foos headed the organising committee to present the mostly-urban visitors a

chance to "Experience the Old West in a New Way."

President Barbara Foos presided over the NFTGA Board Meeting and a Delegates Meeting that preceded the main conference. Tour Guide Liability insurance and other topics critical to the members were analysed and next-steps plans were set in motion.

A number of receptions and excursions to major Denver-area tourism sites followed daily professional programs held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. Among them: the History Colorado Center, where First Person Interpreters in full regalia represented Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley, Prospector Pete and (the Titanic's) "unsinkable" "Molly" Brown.

The cultural highlight for most was a visit to the National Western Stock Show and rodeo. Tickets were at a premium for the once-a-year event. Have you heard the saying, "This ain't my first rodeo?" For most NFTGA attendees, this was their first rodeo – a first time to see live bucking broncos and bull riders!

Waving their "cowboy hats" to the cheering crowd, WFTGA Secretary Esther Banike and NFTGA Vice President Harvey Davidson were honoured to ride a VIP buckboard in the rodeo parade while an announcer paid tribute to the RMGA and NFTGA.

Esther Banike, CTG, Chicago, USA & WFTGA ExBo



NFTGA-USA at the National Western Stock Show rodeo.

7th Convention of Iranian Tourist Guides 19-21 February 2014

Over 600 tourist guides, 100 reporters and guests of honour gathered for the 7th Iranian International Tourist Guides Day celebration under the theme of "Tourist Guide: Narrator of water, Protector of Land".

WFTGA President Felicitas Wressnig was invited by Iran Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (IFTGA) to visit Tehran, Isfahan and Yazd before continuing to Kerman. During this trip, she had meetings with officials including the Governors of Yazd and Kerman, as well as WFTGA members (the President of Iran Tourist Guide Association [ITGA] and the Vice president of IFTGA) and the manager of Eavar travel agency, the sponsor of the first WFTGA courses in Tehran which took place in December 2013.

The opening ceremony began with Mrs Wressnig's lecture in which she mentioned that she is hopeful for more cooperation between Iranian tourist guides and the WFTGA. She also reminded everyone about the Ethos and Code of Conduct for tourist guides.

Visits took place to the Jabalieh Dome, Shahzadeh Garden, the Shah Nematollah Vali Shrine, the Bam Citadel and the Ganj Alikhan Complex where a statue was unveiled to mark the 7th Convention of the Iranian Tourist Guides. Trees were also planted in the desert area.

Most impressive was a human chain we all created in front of the Bam Citadel to illustrate the motto of "BAM IS ALIVE". It symbolised that Bam is still alive having survived the disastrous earthquake ten years ago.

On the last day of the convention leading authorities attended including the Deputy of President Mr Soltanifar, Head of Tourism in Iran Mr Rahmani, the Governor of Kerman, the Head of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization of Kerman and Yazd, the writers Houshang Moradi and Terence Ward and Representatives of the Chamber of Commerce.

The high quality and standard as well as exuberance of this gathering as demonstrated by the positive feedback from authorities and guests, was due to the active participation of tourist guides.

*Mohsen Hajisayeid
Yadz TG Association President
(translated by Hamide Behboozade
and Ali Kazemi)*



Tourist guides gathered at the Jabalieh Dome in Kerman, Iran.



WFTGA President Felicitas Wressnig (fifth from left) with colleagues at the Zoroastrian Fire Temple Yazd Atash Behram in Yazd, Iran

Photo: ©Reza Bahadory



"BAM IS ALIVE" is spelt out in front of the Bam Citadel as a symbol of Bam having survived a powerful earthquake

Photo: ©Majid Erfanian

International Tourist Guide Day is Celebrated All Over the World

Professional Tourist Guides around the world have been observing International Tourist Guide Day (ITGD) since its inauguration by WFTGA in 1990. Traditionally, ITGD is observed on 21 February, the anniversary of WFTGA's founding, but members who find it difficult to participate on that date are encouraged to plan activities for any appropriate date, such as the UNWTO's World Tourism Day, 27 September.

Activities vary according to each WFTGA Member Association's plans, usually in cooperation with local tourism authorities. For many, whether the tourists are visitors or locals, this means the opportunity to enjoy free tours led by qualified local Tourist Guides. This helps toward one aim of WFTGA: to enhance the image of the profession while promoting the use of area-specific tourist guides.

AUSTRIA, VIENNA

With help from 130 guides, the Vienna Tourist Guide Association organized ITGD on 23 February, with guided tours and lectures centred at Vienna's Museum of Applied Arts. At the opening ceremony, museum Director Mr. Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, emphasized the role of Tourist Guides as interpreters of culture. WFTGA President Felicitas Wressnig, just returned from Iran, highlighted the role of the WFTGA in international projects and its work with UNESCO and UNWTO.

An award was presented to two employees of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna's Fine Art Museum, in gratitude for their excellent co-operation. With a bouquet, the President of the Vienna Tourist Guide Association, Christa Bauer, expressed her gratitude to Berta Major, who participated in the foundation of the WFTGA in 1985 and was one of the initial promoters of an ITGD.

Throughout the day, 3,500 people attended six different tours inside and outside the museum. 14 tours were held in foreign languages and 10 members of the Vienna Tourist Guide Association gave lectures about applied arts and commemorative dates of the year 2014. "Kulturmagazin" was also published to mark ITGD. This is a comprehensive brochure of more than 100 pages with articles about applied arts and special dates for 2014; almost 40 guides contributed to this publication. Admissions, tours and lectures were offered for free, and all guides volunteered their services. However, guests were asked for donations for a future Literature Museum in Vienna.



Poster celebrating International Tourist Guide Day in Armenia

On 22 February, Viennese guides invited blind and visually impaired people on tours in the Museum of Military History. Within a beautiful 19th century building, the collection ranges from medieval to 20th century objects. Chosen objects were allowed to be touched. Guests were also allowed to try on medieval armour, taste and smell products used as provisions during polar expeditions in the 19th century and listen to a storyteller. Medieval music was played too. More than 80 people attended, guided expertly by 36 Viennese guides.

We are looking forward to next year's activities. In 2015, Vienna's University, founded in 1365, will host the International Tourist Guide Day!
Regina Macho
Vienna Tourist Guide Association

CANADA, MONTREAL

Our members were invited by the Cinématique Québécoise for a cocktail and visit. We showed the mini films that APGT Montreal prepared for the 1997 WFTGA Convention bid in Singapore 1995. The films, created by Jean François Perrier, were about a day in the life of a guide, scripted in a humoristic way.

The New Mayor of Montreal was invited as well as the New President of Tourisme Montreal. As past President of the WFTGA, I explained the significance of ITGD and described the 2014 marketing projects planned for APGT-Montreal members.

Ruby Roy
Association Professionnelle des Guide Touristique, chapitre de Montréal APGT-Montréal

CANADA, TORONTO

The Canadian Tour Guide Association of Toronto observed International Tourist Guide Day 2014 by inviting Gabriele Kotz of Tourism Ontario to make a presentation to our members on Tourism Ontario's programs to promote foreign travel to Ontario and to inform potential tourists of the history, attractions, venues, etc. She told us which nationalities favour Ontario, the types of touring they prefer, their age demographics and much more. It was a very informative evening that opened our eyes to the extensive tourism promotion that is done and how it benefits us as tourist guides. It also opened a communication channel between our association and the government sponsored activities which promote tourism in our province.

Jim Toms, Canadian Tour Guide Association of Toronto

CYPRUS

The Cyprus Tourist Guides Association (CTGA) celebrated ITGD by offering free guided tours around the island in the framework of the "Get to Know Cyprus Week – 2014", an annual event that began in 1978 and inspired the introduction of the ITGD in 1990. The licensed tourist guides of Cyprus aimed to create more public awareness about the importance of "Get to Know Cyprus with a qualified Cyprus tourist guide"! The official opening of the "Get to Know Cyprus Week – 2014" was held on 11 February at the Cultural Centre "Archbishop Makarios III" of the Cyprus Holy Archbishopric. The ITGD celebrations were concluded in the same venue with a half day seminar organized by CTGA on 26 February.

*Maria Aristidou
Cyprus Tourist Guides Association*

CZECH REPUBLIC

In Prague, free guided tours for the public began on Charles Square. This year 450 people participated and they enjoyed beautiful sunny weather in Prague.

I have also been busy promoting the next WFTGA Convention in January 2015, which will be hosted by the Czech Republic tourist guides in Prague. Promotion extended to the Winter Olympics in Sochi where volunteer guides from Russia were busy.

As Area Representative, I also attended two association conferences abroad in Russia and Germany, again promoting the WFTGA 2015 Convention and encouraging new WFTGA membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

*Stanislav Voleman
Chairman of Asociace Pruvodcu
Ceske Republiky*



*450 people enjoyed free tours
as part of ITGD celebrations in Prague*



Photos: ©Hubert Palan



Photo: ©Walid El Batouty

Walid El Batouty (fifth from left) spoke about WFTGA and challenges facing the tourism industry at the Euromic Tourist Convention in Cairo

EGYPT

Egypt has been going through very difficult times for almost three years now. The country is patiently waiting for new presidential elections and a new parliament. After that we all hope for more peace and stability. Tourism has been affected badly by the uncertainty. The tourist guides of Egypt have never lost hope that tourism will recover and visitors will flood the great sites of Egypt again.

To celebrate ITGD, I invited the press to promote our profession and I was hosted on TV shows to talk about ITGD and what it means to the industry. Tours were also conducted to sites around the city in a concerted effort to keep knowledge and skills updated. A ceremony was also held to congratulate two Japanese-speaking Egyptian tourist guides who were recently chosen by an official Japanese travel authority as the best foreign Japanese-speaking tourist guides in the world. I also attended and lectured at the Euromic Tourist Convention in Cairo to speak about the challenges of the tourism industry and the WFTGA.

Walid El Batouty
WFTGA Area Representative

FINLAND

The guides in the oldest city of Finland, Turku, celebrated ITGD by organising virtual guided tours in the local old people's homes. Tourist guides showed them photos on a video screen and related stories. In this way they were able to participate in the delights of tours not usually accessible to them.

Suomen Opasliitto R.Y.
Finlands Guideförbund R.F.

GERMANY

The theme of ITGD 2014 was "Fire and Flames", which in German also means "to be enthusiastic for something". Numerous committed tourist guides of the 85 BVGD-member associations participated and offered a multifaceted programme to more than 10,000 guests. The tours were free but many colleagues collected donations for special social or cultural projects.

The great variety of events took place at special locations in the presence of local politicians, tourism and cultural representatives, with a programme focusing on each town or region and on the particular topic.

On 14 February we were invited to Gelnhausen, and that event, too, clearly showed the esteem of BVGD, of its members and of ITGD itself. In 2015 there will be a wonderful programme throughout Germany: at the 2014 AGM, "Stones" was chosen as next year's ITGD theme.

Ingrid Schwoon, CEO of the National Federation of Tourist Guides

GREECE, ATHENS

Celebrating ITGD, the association of qualified tourist guides organized the 4th "Treasure Hunt" in Athens, inviting the people of Athens to discover the monuments and treasures of our city, on 23 February.

The participants, after signing in, received a list of the monuments of the city that they had to discover, together with a list of questions related to the monuments. Our colleagues, the tourist guides, were at the site to give them a short guided tour, with the answers to the questions included. Finding all the answers concluded the hunt. Those finishing the task were awarded with free guided tours by our colleagues, on 2 March.

Efi Kalamboukidou, Panhellenic Tourist Guide Federation

GREECE, THESSALONIKI

The Union of qualified Tourist Guides Thessaloniki organized several free city tours with well-known themes, such as a Byzantine heritage walk, Ottoman heritage walk, Jewish heritage walk, gastronomy and entertainment walk. The new theme walk this year was called “Ladadika-Valaoritour St – in a different way”. Colleagues also offered free tours in the towns and sites of Xanthi, Dion, Pella and Kavala, while hundreds of people attended them on 23 February and some of them were awarded with a tasting treat along the way.
Efi Kalamboukidou, Panhellenic Tourist Guide Federation

INDIA

ITGD was celebrated by our Tourist Guide Association and Tourist Guide Federation of India jointly in Jaipur on 21 February with a plenary meeting and get-together. More than 80 members of the Association participated in the event.

TGFI President Narendra Singh and TGA Jaipur President Devendra

Singh greeted all members on the day and had a fruitful discussion about the guiding profession. Many guides were involved in discussions about issues concerning our profession. A common consensus was to pursue and continue with our efforts for the betterment of guiding and guides. The event was followed by dinner.

*Govind Agrawal
WFTGA Area Representative*

ISRAEL

Every year, ITGA holds its annual General Assembly around the time of ITGD. This year we also held the general elections for the new board and a week later the election for the new executive and the chairperson that will head the organization for the next two years.

Our GA usually attracts 300 active tourist guides out of our 2,000 members. We have all the usual reports and also some academic or thematic presentation – this year on “Fair tourism” with a panel that included a Catholic Nun from the “Sisters of Zion” convent at Via Dolorosa, a

Jewish member of the Association, an archeologist and a guide doing sustainable Eco-Tourism and a Muslim Palestinian member of the East Jerusalem Tourist Guide Association. This was very inspiring and thought-provoking of our challenge as guides with sometimes conflicting narratives in holy sites and the challenge of “objective and objectivity” in guiding religious pilgrimage groups.

Every year, we honour people with a certificate of recognition for academic contribution to our knowledge base, and others for their activity as tourist guides. This year, the recipient was a 96-year-old active tourist guide.

We also choose “Friends of the Tour Guide”, usually local service providers at sites and locations that we come into contact with and acknowledge their smiles and service. This year, we recognised the vendor at the National Israel Museum Kiosk as well as a Palestinian who runs the tourist rest stop near Jericho.

*Yoni Shapira
Acting CEO
Israel Tourguide Association
(ITGA)*



TGFI and TGA Jaipur meet up as part of ITGD celebrations in India

LATIN AMERICA

Associations from most countries in Latin America, including a few who are not yet WFTGA members, published colourful, sometimes funny and sometimes witty greeting cards, some of which have already been posted on the WFTGA website. Also hundreds of greetings were exchanged between tourist guides as well as between well-wishers.

In Peru, ASGUIPA organised a three-day study trip to the coast of Arequipa. The first day was in Catarindo, the second took the coastal road to Ramsar de Lagunas de Mejia, and on the third day everyone enjoyed a summer day on the beach!

In turn, the guides from Adegopa, offered a Belle Epoque tour of Arequipa, following a welcome from ASGUIPA in Arequipa's Municipality to explain the significance and ideals of the WFTGA ITGD.

The Arequipa association is celebrating its 15th year, and to mark this anniversary, several courses for guides have been developed. These include excursions for neighbouring Chilean visitors to Moquegua and Pisco, and the Loncco fertile lands in the midst of a desert. A First Aid course is also planned in March.

In Uruguay, a colleague and I did a city tour for a group of children that live in little villages deep in the countryside and they were visiting Montevideo for the first time, with their accommodation set up in a school.

*Anita Saulite,
Head of the Geology
Department,
Museum of Nature
in Riga, and a
LTGA guide,
explains the
amber collection.
The yellow cloud
above is made of
amber thread*



Photo: ©LTGA

The following morning a couple of buses were waiting for them and we took them on a city tour. They were inquisitive, and extremely well behaved.

Tamara Levinson
WFTGA Area Representative

LATVIA

The guides of the LTGA marked ITGD at the Museum of Nature where we saw the new exhibition "Amber during centuries", one of the five exhibitions "The Amber Way" in Riga. Soon there will be another one: "Tutankhamon's Amber".

This year Riga is the European capital of Culture and these exhibitions are part of cultural events. Latvia is often called "Amberland" and amber is one of the national symbols. You can find information about all events at the website: Riga-European Capital of Culture 2014.

Vijtauts Bruvelis
President of LTGA

MALTA

Our ITGD events this year included a visit at the Malta National Aquarium. There was also a weekend on Gozo, and an event at Villa Bologna.

Jennifer Attard, President Malta Union of Tourist guides

PORTUGAL

Free guided tours were offered in part of Lisbon and the importance of quality guiding for a good visitor experience was emphasised.

Portuguese Association of Tourist Guides and Tour Managers (AGIC)

SOUTH AFRICA, WESTERN CAPE

Cape Tourist Guides Association held a meeting titled 'Keeping Up with the Changing Trends' as part of their ITGD celebrations. Several guides wore blue shirts with the message 'I am a legal tourist guide. Are you?'
Cape Tourist Guides Association



Photo: ©Rhonda Savage-Julie

Cape Tourist Guides Association celebrating ITGD in DelVera



SPAIN

The Spanish Tourist Guides celebrated ITGD all around the country. Regional associations organized various events in order to celebrate our profession, to gain visibility and to defend the qualification of the Tourist Guide. From North to South and East to West, we, the professional Tourist Guides, did what we do daily: we acted as ambassadors of our cities and regions and as custodians of our area's traditions, history, culture and environment. Cultural and natural heritage was freely interpreted and explained to our visitors in many interesting tours.

During the month of February, local associations planned different courses for guides, because we believe that continuous learning is the best way to achieve high standards of service and contribute to society.

It was a lot of fun to meet dozens of Tourist Guides in Madrid taking part in their annual scavenger hunt. Our National President, Almudena Cencerrado, attended the Gala Dinner organized in Madrid. During that

meeting, the Casa de Alba Foundation, was rewarded with an Honorary Award.

Throughout the week the Tourist Guides, members of CEFAPIT, were requested to change their personal logos on Twitter, Facebook and Whatsapp and replace them by the official one of our Confederation. It was a successful initiative.

Gerardo Rapazzo Amura
Vicepresident APIT-Madrid
Vocal CEFAPIT

UK SCOTLAND

As part of the ITGD celebrations, students from North East Scotland College Travel and Tourism courses enjoyed a city tour of Aberdeen. The tour gave students a first hand visitor experience, being guided around a few of the city's highlights. Members of the local branch of the Scottish Tourist Guide Association volunteered to be involved in the day.

A walk through Fittie and Old Aberdeen and a visit inside Kings College provided new appreciation of what a great place Aberdeen is. Built in gran-

ite, Aberdeen has a unique feel which makes it special in Scotland with accomplished architecture old and new. The urban centre has all you would want of a city with a breadth of music and cultural venues, a surprising civic art collection and several well-appointed museums.

Over the last 100 years or so, the city has proudly marked out its parks and green spaces and more formal garden areas and has been multiple winner of the City category of Britain in Bloom. This commitment to managing the green stuff has led to the city's best kept secret – its wildlife. Red squirrels, badgers, red kites, peregrine falcons, harbour and common seals, in addition to many different bird species, can all be seen in or close to the city. And Aberdeen is the best place in Europe to see bottlenose dolphins.

This event was a joint venture with North East Scotland College, Aberdeen, Dundee & St Andrews Branch of the STGA, Aberdeen City Council and Whytes Coaches.

Pauline Corrigan
STGA Blue Badge tourist guide



Tourist Guides at Gala Dinner in Madrid (Royal Opera House)



Photo: ©Kevin J. McCormick

Guides gathering in New York's Times Square

USA, NEW YORK

Due to weather conditions in our area, we decided to celebrate International Tourist Guide Day on 13 March this year. We had hoped that by that date most of the snow would have melted and the temperature would have been warmer, but unfortunately it was still several degrees below freezing, which meant that the turn-out was lower than expected. We had 15 tours scheduled, including one in French and we offered tours in four of the five boroughs making up New York City (Brooklyn, Manhattan, Staten Island and The Bronx).

Some of the places visited included the Brooklyn Bridge and Brooklyn Heights, Central Park, Columbia University, Grand Central Terminal,

Grant's Tomb, historic St. George in Staten Island, Lincoln Center, Little Italy in The Bronx, Millionaire's Row on Fifth Avenue, Rockefeller Center, subway art, The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Devine, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Times Square and the Ultimate Greenwich Village ghost tour.

Harvey Paul Davidson
WFTGA Area Representative

USA, WASHINGTON

A snowstorm, bitter cold, and a small tornado visited the Washington DC metro area on 21 February 2014. The Guild of Professional Tour Guides was unable to hold any International Tourist Guide Day events.

However, in December 2013, Guild members decorated and filled 124 shoeboxes with gifts of toiletry essentials. These were donated together with \$1000 to the So Others Might Eat (SOME) organization that serves the homeless.

And in January 2014 various guide members of the Guild answered the call of the US Capitol Historical Society to serve as judges for young students' "We the People" area contest presentations about the US Constitution. These are examples of the service activities Guild members engage in throughout the year.

Joe Steinbock
President
the Guild of Professional
Tour Guides of Washington, D.C.