

The European migration institutions meeting in Turku



The Association of European Migration Institutions (AEMI) had its annual meeting and conference at the Institute of Migration in Turku on September 26–29, 2007. The title of the conference was "From Immigration to Integration; Documentation and Research". AEMI was officially founded in 1991, but already in the 1970's and 1980's the Scandinavian migration institutions had cooperated in arranging conferences and joint research projects. Eg. in 1980–81 we had a joint project to study Scandinavians in Australia including fieldwork, with good results. Since those days AEMI has grown to an international organization of about 40 institutions in Europe and some partner-members outside Europe. The President of AEMI is Dr. Brian Lambkin from the Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh Northern Ireland.

The guest speaker of the Turku conference was Mrs. Astrid Thors, the Minister of migration and European affairs. She brought the greetings of the Government of Finland and spoke of the current immigration issues in Finland and Europe.

After the opening the first session was Documentation, starting with papers of Archives, Libraries and Emigrant Registers. The General meeting of the Association of the European Migration Institutions took place in the afternoon. After the Report of the Board some new members were accepted into the association.

The next day started with a session of Emigrant Museums. There were many presentations including one from the new Emigrant Museum in Seinäjoki, Finland. In the whole of Europe there is a boom in building Migrant Museums. In Paris the "Cite Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration" was opened officially in October two weeks after the conference. In Rome and many other cities in Europe there are plans to establish national Emigrant Museums to preserve the history of European migration.

The last session was titled "From immigration to integration" with many interesting presentations, starting with a presentation on "Immigration in Europe – Good or Bad?" and ending with "From Immigration to Integration: the case of Japan".

There were also social activities for the participants, starting with the reception of the City of Turku in the City Hall hosted by Pauliina de Anna, Vice Chair of the City Board. The conference also visited the medieval Turku castle and the maritime museum Forum Marinum telling the history of the Turku as a seafaring town. The farewell party took place in the Koivukangas house in Kaksikerta by the Baltic Sea.

The papers of the Turku conference will be published in the AEMI Journal edited by Hans Storhaug, Stavanger Norway. The next AEMI meeting will be arranged at the International Study Centre of Italian Immigration in Genoa Italy in 2008.

Olavi Koivukangas



Reception of the Turku City at the City Hall at 27.10.2007. Photo: Satu Löppönen.