It does not seem two years ago since many of us gathered in Amsterdam and made that unique decision to form the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Association (FEGGA).

For many years we had discussed whether there was a need to form an umbrella Association to represent National Associations on a European level. Many discussions had been made with no greenkeeping input. For this to continue we felt would be damaging to the industry and indeed the game of golf.

For some time, some of the National Associations had already started to form FEGGA for a place on the EGA’s Ecology Management Committee. With the formation of FEGGA a place was granted for one person to represent all Associations. We were obviously delighted with this decision and felt this would only benefit the progress of the Ecology Management Committee.

Education is something all Associations have been working very hard on for many years, and in most cases with much success. There was a definite need for all Associations to get together and learn from each other’s education, and then to aim for a minimum level within Europe.

There are many other aspects that affect our business in maintaining golf courses in Europe. It must be good to pool our resources, so we may learn from each other and benefit from each other’s experiences and resources.

The Board meetings we held served two purposes, one to obviously carry out Association business, and secondly to take FEGGA to National Association events. We feel that it is very important to support these events and so build up a closer relationship. During 1997, we visited Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and Spain, all very worthwhile visits.

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FEGGA has a policy of holding meetings around Europe, and this picture shows the Board on a recent visit to Estonia and the country’s only golf club, the Estonian Golf Club. L-R Board Members, Roland Favrat, of Spain; Per-Olof Ljung, of Sweden; Claus-Detlef Retjen, of Germany; Dean Cleaver, of the UK, and Elise Jarvenen of Finland. Also in the picture are the Federation’s two administrators, Neil Thomas and Tommy Lindolf, as well as, on the extreme right, Rein Panniberg, the Course Manager of the Estonian Golf Club.

Most enlightening. We all have different rules and regulations that we have to work to. It did prove how little we know about each other’s environmental affairs. FEGGA will help in this matter, as will our involvement in the Ecology Committee. Good communication is vital.

The conclusion of the conference was that there was a great need for FEGGA and we had all witnessed FEGGA working during the conference. We would now hope that the conference will be an annual event picking out different themes each year.

Looking ahead we would like to recruit more members, and help some of the countries that as yet do not have an Association, therefore we recruit more members, and help some of the countries that as yet do not have an Association, therefore we consolidate on what we have achieved already and not try to do everything at once.

I would like to thank the European Golf Association for their support of FEGGA, and I hope I have given you all a brief insight into the role of FEGGA, and its ambitions for the future. I certainly hope we can continue to work closely together in the future.