The Stadhuis at Oudenaarde, venue of the EPOCH Assembly at VAST2004

Turning around the first mark

EPOCH recently reached its first milestones, completing the first semester and delivering the first batch of reports to the Commission. Activities are also starting to produce impact on the partner integration and results of collaboration and sharing resources are emerging. Whilst in the first stages much of the effort has been put into organization, we now see outcomes starting to be produced, adjustments made to deliver the JPA objectives more effectlively and to improve the speed of dissemination inside and outside the network.

The next milestone is the **VAST2004 Conference** (page 6) taking place in Brussels from 7 to 10 December, but beginning on Dec 6th for EPOCH activities.

At VAST2004 many of the deliverables for year 1 will be either be available in preliminary form or preliminary results will be discussed to help shape the deliverables due late in the first year.

Most notably the EPOCH **showcases** (page 4-5) will be available for display and presented by teams involved in them. The area where showcases will be on display will be open to the public and it is hoped that VAST delegates coming from outside EPOCH and local professionals will visit and realize the potential of the applications dealt with by EPOCH.

At VAST all the activities of the first semester will come together. Amongst others, the preliminary version of the **stakeholders needs** report will be available for discussion. This represents a starting point for EPOCH, moving away from the "technology-push" which has characterized mush ICT research in the past to seeing basic technology research as needing to be user-driven. Having the **Review College** in place will allow EPOCH to develop an agreed Research Agenda to help define next year's priorities and goals. These will underpin the design of the **NEWTON**s plan, with work starting in year 2, to plug the gaps and reduce bottlenecks in the communication pipeline. Such issues will be dealt in EPOCH's meeting during the pre-conference stage.

In parallel with them, tutorials on standards and usability will take place, continuing a **training activity** which has already started during the Summer (see page 3) and addressing an important topic as **standards**. The standard issue has many facets which must be all taken into account. On one side there are the technical standards (two tutorials will deal with them) or the documentation standards (EPOCH is committed to refer to the CIDOC-CRM as the basis of its proposal for documentation); on the other hand there will be questions related to methodological standards that require attentive consideration as well.

Finally, the EPOCH assembly will take place at VAST.

So the conference will be a lively event that partners should not miss.

However, the world does not end at VAST: the Network's **diary** (page 7) already lists forthcoming tasks, with lots to follow on from VAST. The event **calendar** (page 8) shows that an active presence in the scientific community needs continuous commitment. In the first six months EPOCH has attended several international **events** and has disseminated its perspective and the roadmap to its goals (page 2).

From now on, the presence must remain at a high level with the first achievements giving evidence of the excellence that is in the Network's name.