

Biography of Gerhard Ermischer

Born in Salzburg (Austria) in 1963 I lived in Salzburg until the end of school and then went to Innsbruck to study medicine and later changed to history and pre- and proto-history (regional archaeology) with terms in Southampton (UK) and Rome. After some small contracts in Austria I settled in Aschaffenburg (Germany) in 1991 as a museum curator and city archaeologist.

In 1997 I co-founded the Archaeological Spessart-Project (ASP), an association dedicated to the research of the regional landscape with citizen engagement, a very early citizen science project. Since then more than 10,000 volunteers have participated in our projects, creating cultural paths, participating in archaeological excavations and getting empowered to participate in planning processes. Since 2010 the ASP is recognized as a research institute at the University of Würzburg, specialized in citizen science. In 2007 I left the civil service to dedicate my time and energy fully to the ASP and to have more freedom for my European engagements.

I started my civil society engagement during my time at University as a students' representative and came into contact with various professional associations of archaeologists at the end of my term as a student. I engaged in several national organizations as well as in the European Association of Archaeologists. My main interest was advocating for the cultural heritage and civil society at the European Union and participating with these associations in consultation processes for European laws and standard setting as well as for the implantation of the conventions on cultural heritage of the Council of Europe at home.

My first direct contact with the Council of Europe was in 2000 through the European Landscape Convention and since then I have been active with the convention, its conferences and workshops as well as the inter-governmental steering committee (CDCPP) linked to it. My association was a co-founder of Civilscape, a European umbrella organization for NGOs dealing with civil participation in landscape management. Civilscape gained participatory status in late 2009 and I have represented this organization in the Conference of INGOs since January 2010.

For the last three years I have had the privilege of serving the Conference of INGOs as Vice-President of its Committee for Democracy and was a member of its Standing Committee. I chaired the drafting group for the revision of our Code of Good Practice on civil participation in the decision-making process in co-operation with the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities, which also helped to re-establish our good relations with the Congress. I was also a dedicated member of the drafting group for the revision of our Rules of Procedure.