SPANISH SOCIETY

of
The Hague

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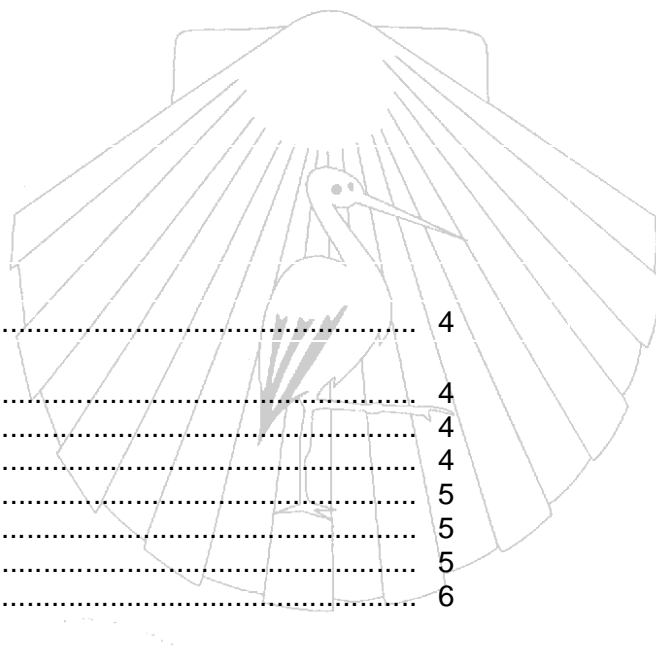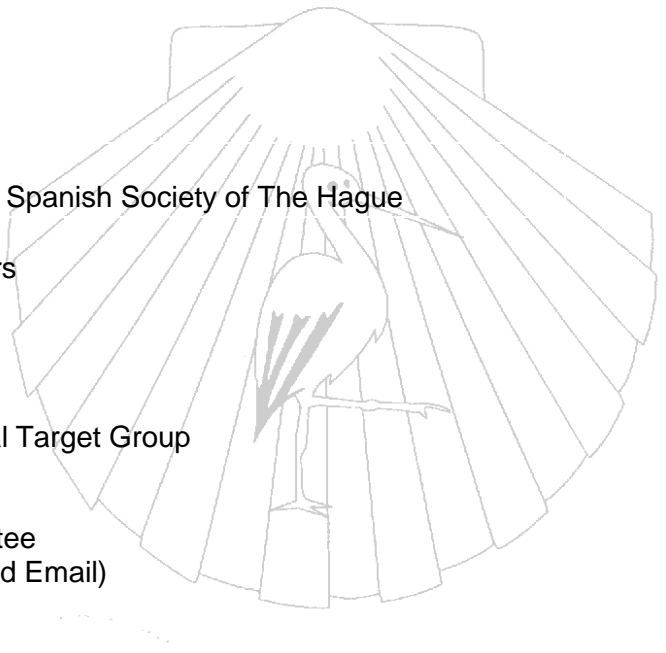**The Hague University, The Hague, 20th June 2007**

Table of Content

Appendix 1   : Rules and Regulations of the Spanish Society of The Hague

Appendix 2   : Survey Amongst the Members
- ✓ Questionnaire
- ✓ Results
- ✓ Graphs

Appendix 3   : Survey Amongst the Potential Target Group
- ✓ Questionnaire

Appendix 4   : Survey Amongst the Committee
- ✓ Questionnaire (Post and Email)
- ✓ Answers

Appendix 5   : Article
- ✓ "Asociación Hispánica eert Don Quichot"
  Haagse Courant - February 21st 2005

Appendix 6   : Leaflet
- ✓ Europe Calling Project 2000
- ✓ Committee 2003

Appendix 7   : Bulletin
- ✓ Europe Calling Project 2000
- ✓ Committee 2004
- ✓ Committee 2007

Appendix 8   : Website
- ✓ Spanish Society of The Hague - Europe Calling Project 2000

Appendix 9   : Search Engines
- ✓ Dutch Search Engines
- ✓ Meta Tag Analyser

Appendix 10   : Website
- ✓ Asociación Belgo Ibero Americana - Antwerp, Belgium

Appendix 11   : Website
- ✓ Asociación Iberoamericana Eindhoven - Eindhoven,
  the Netherlands

Appendix 12   : Website
- ✓ Las Lanzas Breda – Breda, the Netherlands

Appendix 13   : Website
- ✓ Spanish Society of The Hague - Committee 2007

Appendix 14   : Website
- ✓ Division Current Website
- ✓ Division New Website

1. The Spanish Society of The Hague

1.1 Background

The current society is a continuation of the Society Holland-Spain, which was founded in 1920 in The Hague by people within prominent culture clubs and in political circles around the Binnenhof.

Initially, the society was the only one in the Netherlands during the nineteen twenties. Gradually, more and more local departments were founded, which were new independent societies even before the Second World War, for example in Amsterdam.

Therefore the society, originally in The Hague, changed its name into The Spanish Society of The Hague (Asociación Hispánica de La Haya) after the war.

Even today, the same name is still mentioned in the rules and regulations, article 1. *See Appendix 1, Rules and Regulations of the Spanish Society of The Hague.*

> *Name and seat*
> *<u>Article 1</u>*
> *The society carries the name Asociación Hispánica de La Haya and has its seat in The Hague.*

In 2000, the year in which the society celebrated its 80th anniversary, the Dutch name Spaans Genootschap van Den Haag was introduced in order to avoid confusion for those whom were unfamiliar with the Spanish name.

1.2 Objective

The objective of the society is also recorded in the rules and regulations, article 2. *See Appendix 1, Rules and Regulations of the Spanish Society of The Hague.*

> *Objective*
> *<u>Article 2</u>*
> *The objective of the society is to promote the knowledge of the culture and language of Spain and Latin-American countries. It tries to achieve this objective by holding lectures and meetings, organising courses in Spanish, offering opportunities for conversational Spanish and providing information about Spain and Latin-American countries. Furthermore, legal promotions can be used to achieve this objective.*

To accomplish this objective, the society organises events; these include lectures, debates, film viewings and trips to various exhibitions. The society also offers a limited number of language and culture courses. Most of the above-mentioned activities are offered in the Spanish language.

1.3 Members and Committee

The society has approximately 180 members of which 70% is represented by Dutch citizens from the Haaglanden and 30% by people originating from Spain, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Uruguay, Peru and Venezuela who live in the Netherlands.

Until 2006, approximately 100 members were so called 'qualitate qua' members (embassies, international organisations, et cetera), which brought the total number of members to 280.

The new committee, set up in 2006, decided to drop this distinction and now the society has 180 paying members.

The committee of the society now consists of five members; the positions held are chairwoman, vice-chairman, secretary, vice-secretary and treasurer.

1.4 Funds

Financial means is mainly contributions and with 180 paying members, this is sufficient in order to cover the costs of the annual programme. Some of the members donate a larger contribution. Occasionally, the society receives extra income for example, course fees.

The Jornada of 1998 and the 80th anniversary in 2000 were financed by a separate budget. Ways of sponsorship (1998) and savings (2000) have been the solutions.

Even though the society has a capital reserve, which is more than the annual expenses, it still intends to raise the annual contribution in 2008.

The rules and regulations state the following about the funds. *See Appendix 1, Rules and Regulations of the Spanish Society of The Hague.*

> *Funds*
> *Article 8*
> *The funds of the society consists of contribution of the paying members, entrance fees, course fees and income received by means of subsidies, inheritance, legacies and donations.*

1.5 Promotion

The society uses various means of promotion, both internal and external, to promote itself. All means of promotion are written in the Spanish and Dutch language.

A bulletin is used by the society to publish news and various activities. This bulletin is mainly written in Spanish and members receive this four times a year via email or post.

On a regular basis, the chairwoman of the society sends emails to inform the members of current events and news.

The society promotes itself externally towards potential members through a leaflet and a website (www.asoha.nl). The leaflet provides the following information: the objective of the society, organised activities, the annual contribution and the location. The leaflet includes a sign-up form for membership.

The website provides the reader with more detailed information about forthcoming and past activities, courses, committee and web links. The website gives the reader the opportunity to send an email to the secretary if more information is required.

1.6 Problem

The society believes there are more people interested in the Spanish language and culture than the total number of members reflects, e.g. many students are interested in the above-mentioned items, but few of them are or want to become a member of the society. The total number of members does not show an increase.

Reason being the majority of the Dutch people may have not mastered the Spanish language, both verbal and written. Although the society started to use its name in Dutch and developed the website in Spanish and Dutch, these changes did not have the intended effect. The total number of members did not increase and therefore the society still has the same problem.

The existence of other Spanish associations in the area could be another problem, e.g. Sociapb. This national association for Spanish speaking women is located in Wassenaar and has approximately 200 members. Many women join this association as it organizes daytime activities and therefore these women do not feel the need to join the Spanish Society of The Hague.

Another association is Club Iberia, employees from Spain and Portugal of the European Patent Agency in Rijswijk have united themselves within this association. Throughout the year, they organize cultural activities.

1.7 Final Thesis

This thesis is divided into four elements:

- ✓ An overview of past research about how the society should promote itself via means of the bulletin, leaflet and website (chapter two).
- ✓ Survey amongst the members of the committee (chapter three).
- ✓ Analysis of how the students of the Europe Calling project 2000 changed the leaflet, bulletin and website and how the society has applied these recommendations (chapters four, five and six).
- ✓ Based on the outcome of the previous elements, make new recommendations for the bulletin, leaflet, website and other external communication and promotion (chapters four, five and six).

The objective of this paper is to discover, whether the society has used the past recommendations to improve the leaflet, bulletin and website in order to increase its number of members and familiarity amongst potential members and how various means of promotion can be improved.

Ways to achieve the objective:

- ✓ Conduct two surveys, one amongst the members of the society and the other amongst the potential target group, consisting of students of The Hague School of European Studies, The Hague University (Europe Calling project 2000);
- ✓ Conduct a survey amongst the committee members of the society;
- ✓ Analysis of past recommendations to increase the number of members and how these recommendations have been applied;
- ✓ Using the above-mentioned results make recommendations for the current website, leaflet and bulletin;
- ✓ Offer recommendations for other external promotions, e.g. cooperation with other associations and attract more students (both Dutch natives and people originating from Spanish-speaking countries who study in The Netherlands, etc.).

2. Past Research

As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, the first element of this thesis consists of an overview of past research on how the society should promote itself. This chapter provides an overview on which the research is based.

In 2000, the first important research was held by students of The Hague School of European Studies (or Hogere Europese Beroepen Opleiding: HEBO), The Hague University, which is named Europe Calling CM 15.01[1].

In order to provide a good insight, the aspects of this assignment will be discussed first.
The Europe Calling project is held every year amongst third-year-students at The Hague School of European Studies (or Hogere Europese Beroepen Opleiding: HEBO). Dutch students have to work together with international students who study in The Hague. Working together as a team, these students have to write a report about a subject that is given to them by an assignment provider within one of the three disciplines of HEBO: Business Management, Communication Management or Public Administration.

The Europe Calling project discussed in this chapter, is based on Communication Management and is divided into two parts:

- ✓ Investigate the image of the Spanish Society of The Hague using two surveys. One amongst the current members of the society and one amongst the potential target group;
- ✓ Improve the promotional material of the society (bulletin, leaflet and website).

The objective of this project is to attract more members by:

- ✓ increasing the familiarity of the society in general.
- ✓ increasing interest amongst Dutch people.
- ✓ increasing interest amongst Spanish people.

The students have achieved this objective by:

- ✓ holding a survey amongst current members of the society to find out what these members would like to change about the society and its promotional material;
- ✓ holding a survey amongst a potential target group, consisting of students who study Spanish. These students are already interested in the Spanish language and may be interested in culture as well;
- ✓ using 'Spaans in Nederland'[2] and the Europe Calling project CM 14.02[3] to make a selection of institutes where one can study Spanish;
- ✓ improving the bulletin, leaflet and website using the results of the surveys.

2.1 Survey Amongst the Members of the Society and Results

The objective of this survey was to gather the opinions of the members about the Spanish Society of The Hague, e.g. offered activities and promotional material in order to improve the latter.

As the existence of the society primarily depends on the number of members, it is very important to know how the members feel about the society.

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[1] Europe Calling CM 15.01, Investigación del material promocional de la Asociación Hispánica de La Haya de imágen y desarrollo, 2000
[2] Spanish Section of the VLLT, Spaans in Nederland, 1996
[3] Europe Calling CM 14.02, Investigación de las actividades del idioma español en las Universidades e Instituciones de los Paises Bajos, 1999

This survey consists of 25 questions and was sent to 180 members of the society of which 42% returned the survey. *See Appendix 2, Survey Amongst the Members.*

Results

Firstly, the students wanted to find out how the members were introduced to the Spanish Society of The Hague. 60% of the members were introduced to the society through friends and relatives. This proves that verbal advertising is very important and therefore the bulletin should be improved. When members are content with the society, it will be spoken about to family, friends and relatives. 18% of the members were introduced to the society through advertising, such as the leaflet, announcements and written articles. *See Appendix 2, Survey Amongst the Members, Graph 1, How were you introduced to the Spanish Society of The Hague?*

Secondly, it is important to know why the members wanted to become a member of the society. For 28% the offered cultural activities were the main reason to become a member and for 50% other aspects were as important. For 86% the cultural activities offered were sufficient and 91% of the members have a strong interest in various fields. Lastly, 75% of the members found the Spanish language and culture the main reason to join the society. *See Appendix 2, Survey Amongst the Members, Graph 2, Why did you become a member of the Spanish Society of The Hague?*

It is very important to know whether the offered activities meet the expectations of the members. 15% have complaints about the activities. One member suggested that the announcements of activities should be available in the Dutch language. 78% of the members were satisfied. *See Appendix 2, Survey Amongst the Members, Graph 3, Do the offered activities meet your expectations?*

The students questioned members over their familiarity with the bulletin. 78% were familiar with the bulletin. In spite of the fact that every member should receive the bulletin, 19% were unfamiliar with it. *See Appendix 2, Survey Amongst the Members, Graph 4, Are you familiar with the bulletin of the Spanish Society of The Hague?*

12% of the members said they were unhappy with the layout of the bulletin, 50% would like the size of the letters larger and 86% of the members were unaware of the society's website.

2.2 Survey Amongst the Potential Target Group and Results

In 2000, the average age of the members was above 51 years (81%), so the students tried to target a new group with younger people.

Students studying Spanish may have a strong interest in Spanish culture, literature and music. Therefore, the Europe Calling project focussed on students who study Spanish at various institutes by using the book 'Spaans in Nederland' and the Europe Calling project CM 14.02. This book and project contain addresses of schools and universities where one can study Spanish.

The group addressed institutes and asked them to complete the survey and return the results as soon as possible. Of all institutes addressed, only two responded but did not return any results.

Because of this lack of response, the group decided to hold the survey amongst students of The Hague School of European Studies (HEBO) who study Spanish.

For the Europe Calling project, the students selected the five most important questions:

- ✓ How do you study Spanish?
- ✓ Why do you study Spanish?
- ✓ Do you know any Spanish association?
- ✓ Are you interested in more than the Spanish language?
- ✓ Do you like meeting Spanish people with the same interests?

The surveys were handed out in the canteen, put in mailboxes, etc. For the survey, I would like to refer to *Appendix 3, Survey Amongst the Potential Target Group.*

Results

98% of the students who completed the survey studied Spanish as part of their education and 25% studied Spanish for their exchange project or internship. 64% expressed the importance of being able to speak more languages.

Students had never heard of the Spanish Society of The Hague, or other similar associations and 83% showed an interest, not only in the Spanish language, but also in the culture of Spain and Latin America.

The fact that the questioned students had never heard of the Spanish Society of The Hague, made this a perfect target group to promote the society.

Half of the students questioned felt it would be beneficial to interact with people from different backgrounds at the Spanish Society of The Hague.

The group realised that the survey held is not a good representation of all the students who studied Spanish.
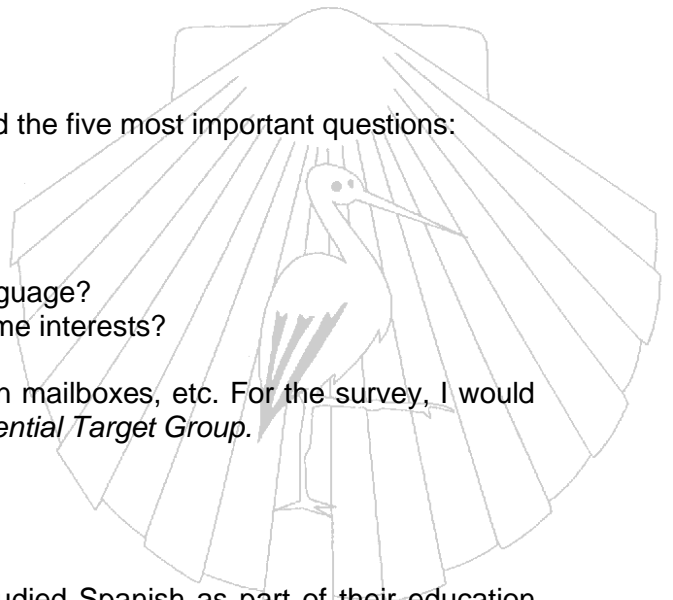
3. Survey amongst the Committee Members

The second element consists of a survey amongst the committee members of the Spanish Society of The Hague. *See chapter 1, section 1.7, Final Thesis.*

Besides the surveys amongst the members and the potential target group, I wanted to find out the opinions and ideas of the committee members of the society.

The members and the potential target group see the society from a different perspective. Members and potential members focus on the activities offered. They judge the society from the "outside". The members of the committee see the society from "within" the organisation. They have a better and clearer perspective about how the organisation functions.

Listing the ideas and opinions of the committee, I wanted to compare its ideas and thoughts to those of the members and the potential target group.

To gather the above-mentioned information I held a survey amongst the six committee members (in 2006 the committee reorganized and now has five members). The functions within the committee were: chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, secretary, vice-secretary and "webmaster".

Before I could sent the survey to the members, I had to write a brief account including the following information:

✓ This survey is conducted as part of my final thesis;
✓ Reason for selecting the committee members and what kind of information I want to gather;
✓ Who provided the addresses of the members of the committee.

Primarily, I sent the survey to all members via email, as this is the most efficient way of communication nowadays. Some members requested the survey to be sent by email.

The email addresses and mailing addresses were provided to me by Mr. Nigten, chairman at that time and my assignment provider. It was also stated that the addresses would be used anonymously and confidentially for the purpose of this survey.

Two different versions were provided, one sent by post the other via email. *See Appendix 4, Survey Amongst the Committee Members - Questionnaire (Post and Email).*

Four out of six surveys were returned, therefore I feel I have a good insight to what the committee feels about several subjects.

3.1 Results

Due to the fact that I have received four out of six surveys, I decided not to use relative figures and numbers to reflect the results but to write a summary of the answers.

Reading the questions and answers given by the committee, you will see that I have used some marketing concepts to formulate my questions. *See Appendix 4, Survey Amongst the Committee Members - Answers.*

Target group
According to the committee, the target group of the society focuses on all people living in the region of The Hague (also Leiden, Delft and Zoetermeer) who are interested in the language, culture, history, etc. of Spain and the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America. Dutch

people or Spanish-speaking "expatriates" regardless of age want to share their common interests during activities.

Position
The position of the society can be seen as a small-scale hobby club, operating with a firm position on a small market. They are interested in strengthening and intensifying the bonds with Spain and Latin America. Although there are a few individual groups in the same field, the committee does not see them as a threat in keeping potential members away.

Competitors
Two out of four members of the committee believe that competition only exists in the region of The Hague and other similar associations, Instituto Cervantes, Sociapb (women's club in Wassenaar), Club Iberia and the social club of personnel of the embassy of Spain are to be seen as competitors. For those members the social aspect is of high importance and therefore they stay within their associations instead of joining the Spanish Society of The Hague. The damage to the Spanish Society by means of losing potential members amounts to very little.
The other two members do not believe that the Spanish Society of The Hague has any competitors, only people and associations to cooperate with, especially in The Hague. Similar associations have originated in The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, all of which have joined in the Union of Spanish Societies within the Benelux. They communicate together and support each other instead of being competitors.

Member
According to the committee the reasons one becomes a member of the Spanish Society of The Hague are, interest in the language and culture of Spain and Latin America, to practise Spanish within a social atmosphere, as many of the members have lived in Spanish-speaking countries and have bonds with these lands.
One member became secretary as her native language is Spanish and she has worked at the embassy of Uruguay for ten years.

Corporate image and corporate identity
The committee would like the society to be seen as a meeting place that offers information, readings and trips for interested parties, preferably in cooperation with native Spanish organisations. It also tries to respect the wishes of the members and to maintain their interest in Spain and Latin America related subjects.
According to the committee, the society is seen as a local social club of amateurs. One member explained that the corporate identity depends on the committee. She finds the society a bit snobbish and is more interested in contemporary subjects, e.g. music.

Strengths
The entire committee believes that the strength of the society is based on a large variety of interesting Spanish activities in the region "Groot Den Haag" and it can rely on a tradition of more than 80 years. It shows a great amount of accuracy and diligence towards carrying out attractive, well-documented and diverse programmes.
Besides these activities, other strengths of the society are the flexibility of the committee, a dedicated group of regular attendants of meetings and its welcoming and open attitude towards new members.

Weaknesses
Due to the fact that the Dutch name "Spaans Genootschap van Den Haag" was not introduced until 2000 and the official name "Asociación Hispánica de La Haya" is hardly known outside the society, the committee sees its unfamiliarity as a weakness.
The high average age of the members is seen as a weakness too.
One of the members believes that the posh high society element and dull readings are seen as a weakness and therefore some of these readings should be a bit more light-hearted. The

committee could pay more attention to the every day life in Spanish-speaking countries, e.g. games played in those countries, living standards, level of education and family values.

Interested people and/or members are often let down by the committee and drop out because of expectations that have not been met.

The last weakness the committee recognizes is that the society does not have its own accommodation where the members can gather to read books and newspapers, to have coffee and maintain frequent contact with other members.

Threats

Age is seen as a threat amongst the committee, this may lead to a loss of members and potentially make the society less attractive to future members. Creating more familiarity and membership recruitment amongst youngsters should reduce this threat. Therefore, a lot of publicity by means of public relations is needed, but the society needs to have enthusiastic members who have enough time and are willing to achieve this.

One member believes that being a small-scale social club and having no sponsors are threats to the society. Being a large-scale club and finding sponsors should be the solution to reduce these threats.

As interested people and members are fairly often let down by the committee, raising the level of participation in creating the annual programme concerning activities, language courses and excursions should prevent members from leaving the society.

Opportunities

As many Spanish-speaking embassies are located in The Hague, the society should use its location to its advantage approaching the embassies to propose cooperation. This opportunity has been there for years, unfortunately has not been used.

Another opportunity is that the society can have a dominant and monopolistic position within the region of The Hague as it has a strong and hardly threatened position.

Cooperation with other associations, developing the website, finding sponsors, increasing the number of activities and not ignoring the importance of communication by means of radio, television and papers are seen as opportunities to increase familiarity and to intensify the interest of the public.

Desired position

The society wants to position itself within the region of The Hague, give a good impression of itself and increase familiarity. As long as the society does not expand, it should adjust its criteria.

Stable phase

A small and loyal group of people in the region of The Hague with a strong interest in the Spanish language and culture, who can meet and share their interests within the society, is the main reason for the society.

Besides the above-mentioned reason, sociability and stable committees led by good chairpersons that are sufficiently active in pleasing its members, are seen as other good points.

Changes

According to the committee, the most important change would be the introduction of the website in September 2002. Introducing the website should increase the familiarity of the Spanish Society of The Hague.

Since 2000, the society has its own bulletin and offers alternate activities in order to create attractive programmes, introducing more music and meeting the various needs of the members.

Internal communication

The committee members agree that the internal communication between themselves via phone, email and meetings is strong.

The bulletin, produced for the members five times a year, is a very good source of information and it is made clear whom one should address.
The committee gathers to discuss the details of the bulletin before it is published.

External communication
The external communication between sister associations, embassies and organisations is also strong. These external associates receive a free bulletin, which is very much appreciated.
Local newspapers were approached to publish special occasions like the 80th anniversary of the society. The society should approach the press more often in order to publish its activities and information frequently.
The contacts Mr. Nigten has with The Hague University, in particular with The Hague School of European Studies, are very important. The evenings he has organised with the help of exchange students, were always well attended.
Together with HOVO (Hoger Onderwijs Voor Ouderen), a course is offered every year. This course is mentioned in the HOVO pamphlet, which is spread widely across the city and provides good free publicity.

Public relations
To date, we do not have a public relations coordinator. The secretary is the key person concerning external communication. The secretary coordinates the activities, but another member of the committee deals with the other aspects of public relations.
As this position is vacant some questions still arise. Spanish natives visit Spanish movies at the Haagse Filmhuis. How to get them interested in the Spanish Society? The society has addressed the embassies of Latin America to offer cooperation in organising programmes, but the response was moderate, only the embassy of Spain showed sympathy and support. How can the committee arouse the embassies interest in the society so they can work alongside?

3.2 Recommendations

Although I have focussed myself primarily on the leaflet, the bulletin and the website of the Spanish Society of The Hague, I would like to make some recommendations based on the previously mentioned results.

The committee should take a different approach against its competitors instead of seeing them as a threat. They should not only think about how to get members from other associations interested in switching to the Spanish Society, but the committee can think of addressing other associations, like Sociapb and Club Iberia proposing cooperation. The society has already done this by cooperating with the Instituto Cervantes in the field of offering language courses. Find out how each association can profit from a possible cooperation and how each association can benefit by using each other's knowledge and programmes.

As the committee of the society believes that it is seen as a local social club of amateurs, I recommend it to professionalize its image towards the potential target group by means of improving its leaflet, but most important of all its website. For more details on how to improve these means of communication, I would like to refer to chapters four and six dealing with the leaflet and the website.

To prevent members from leaving because their expectations have not been met, I would recommend the committee to provide up to date information about the programme it offers. It should also involve members in a more active way when it concerns different aspects of the society. Ask members what they expect from the society, what they want themselves and what they would like to see happening.

Regarding the fact that the society has no accommodation of its own, the committee could do some research to find a suitable venue. As financial means is mainly contributions and 180 paying members are sufficient in order to cover the costs of the annual programme, having its own accommodation might be too expensive at the moment. *See chapter 1, section 1.4, Funds.* The committee may want to explore the possibilities of hiring a suitable accommodation within The Hague University or share an existing accommodation with another association, in order to provide the members or interested people with a place to have coffee, read the newspaper or maintain frequent contact with other members.

To improve the external communication towards the media, the committee may consider approaching local newspapers asking them to publish the summary of activities. In February 2005, the society placed an article in the Haagse Courant that is a local newspaper. *See Appendix 5, Article, "Asociación Hispánica eert Don Quichot", Haagse Courant, February 21st 2005.* Some local newspapers might advertise for free. Many people read these local papers, which would increase the familiarity of the society.

Another aspect of the external communication concerns the current contacts Mr. Nigten has with The Hague University, in particular The Hague School of European Studies. In cooperation with exchange students, he has organised some well attended evenings. The committee should spread its leaflet and bulletin amongst exchange students, primarily from Spain and Latin America and invite them to join the activities offered.

As the society does not have a public relations coordinator, I recommend the committee to fill this function. It does not necessarily have to be a person within the committee, but the committee could approach current members and inquire if there are members willing to fill this position. Sharing aspects of public relations amongst members might avoid the fact that one person should be in charge as I can imagine that this task might be too demanding for one person.

Besides the recommendations I have made concerning the leaflet, bulletin and website, I do believe that the above-mentioned recommendations will contribute to achieving the objective of the Spanish Society of The Hague.

4. Leaflet

As mentioned in chapter one, the third element of this final thesis consists of an analysis of how the students of the Europe Calling project have changed the leaflet and how the Spanish Society of The Hague has applied these recommendations.

Based on the outcomes of the first, second and third element I have formulated new recommendations about how the bulletin could be improved, but even more important, how the leaflet could be widely distributed in order to reach potential members and therefore increase the familiarity of the Spanish Society of The Hague.

4.1 Europe Calling

The most important change made by the students of the Europe Calling project has been introducing the Dutch language into the leaflet. Until 2000, the leaflet was written entirely in Spanish and because the potential target group may not have mastered the Spanish language, adding the Dutch language was seen as a big improvement. *See Appendix six, Leaflet, Europe Calling Project 2000.*

The information of the leaflet has been divided into two parts. One part deals with the objective of the society and the other part with its activities. By doing so, the reader knows what the society is all about and what it offers to its members. Both parts have been divided into two languages; only the Spanish part is written in Italics. The used font is called Arial and in the next chapter you will read that I have recommended the same font to be used for the bulletin to create similarity.

The content of the leaflet has been adjusted. The students have made the content clearer and easier to understand. For example, they have specified the contribution that has to be paid for singles, couples and students.

Important information about the committee was placed on the front page of the leaflet along with the logo; on the other side of the leaflet, you can find the names of the members of the committee. The information about the society, like the address, telephone number and account number, are written in larger and bold letter types and framed to attract the attention of the reader.

Originally, the leaflet was printed on plain white paper, but the students advised to print the leaflet on red paper. When you read the next chapter about the bulletin, you will see that the students also advised to use the same colour for the bulletin in order to create similarity. The students have also changed the type of paper; it is now thicker.

The objective of the Europe Calling project was to make the leaflet clearer and easier to read. Looking at the above-mentioned recommendations and changes, they have improved the quality of the leaflet.

4.2 Current Leaflet and Recommendations

Since 2000, the original design of the leaflet made by the students of the Europe Calling project has been changed once. At the beginning of 2003, the committee decided to change the original leaflet and this version is still being used. As this section deals with the latest leaflet, I would like to illustrate this updated version referring to *Appendix 6, Leaflet, Committee 2003*.

Reading the leaflet, I feel that the information provided is sufficient. The leaflet gives a brief summary of what the society stands for and what kind of activities are offered. However, there are some recommendations I would like to make.

When it concerns the information about the committee and the Spanish Society of The Hague, I would advise to keep the address of the website and the email address of the secretary in the leaflet. Nowadays, more and more people are surfing the internet to find information. Providing these addresses makes it easier for people to access additional information and contact the secretary when needed.

The leaflet includes a sign-up form for membership and filling in this form, you automatically agree to pay the contribution to the society.

The emphasis of the leaflet should be the availability of more information, rather than having to pay the contribution. This should gain confidence of the reader and by doing so, the reader is then willing to pay the contribution.

In my opinion, the biggest problem is not the content of the current leaflet, but how often and where the leaflet is being distributed, if it is distributed at all. If the society wants to reach a wider range of people, it should be distributed on a regular basis.

One of the members of the committee visited "Het Haagse Filmhuis", a cinema in The Hague, and recognised some Spanish film viewers leaving the cinema. She was wondering how to get those people interested in joining the society or joining in some activities. *See chapter 3, section 3.1, Results.*

Public places like cinemas and libraries, as well as universities, schools, language institutes and organisations that have connections with Spain or Latin America can be approached to distribute the leaflet. For a list of useful places, I suggest the committee to use the book "Spaans in Nederland", which contains a lot of information about various institutes and organisations concerning Spain and Latin America.

I strongly advise the committee to make a list of all the public places where it can distribute the leaflet, in order to attract potential members and increase the familiarity of the Spanish Society of The Hague.

5. Bulletin

In this chapter I will explain how the bulletin has been amended by the students of the Europe Calling project, using both surveys amongst the members of the society and amongst the potential target group.

Secondly, the current paper and email version of the bulletin are analysed to see whether the society has used the changes made by the Europe Calling project. As a result, I want to give some recommendations about how the bulletin could be improved.

5.1 Europe Calling Project

Until 2000, the bulletin consisted of a couple of loose-stapled pages and therefore the students of the Europe Calling project decided to create a real bulletin. Dividing the pages into two parts gave the bulletin more of a book-like image. *See Appendix 7, Bulletin, Europe Calling Project 2000.*

According to the survey amongst the members of the society, 12% of the members did not find the layout of the bulletin attractive and 50% of the members wanted the size of the letters to be larger.

The students wanted to apply more colour to the bulletin. As using more colour inside the bulletin was too expensive, they have recommended the society to replace the white cover with a red one in order to create similarity with the leaflet. *See chapter 4 for more detailed information about the leaflet.*

The size of the letter type used in the bulletin was made larger. The students decided to use font Arial and size 9. This font and size are small enough to fit a large text on each page and is large enough to read with ease.

The front page of the bulletin contained too much information and therefore a lot of the information is placed inside the bulletin. Only the logo, the name of the society in both Spanish and Dutch and the number of publication remained on the front page.

Besides moving the above-mentioned information, the students changed the layout in order to create a clear and well-organised overview of the various themes and data of activities.

All these changes have been made in order to create a new bulletin, which should provide a better presentation of the society and should be easier and enjoyable to read.

5.2 Current Bulletin and Recommendations

Nowadays, the bulletin is sent to the members of the society via post and email four times a year. Do all the members of the society receive a copy of the bulletin? Do the members of the society want to receive copies via post and email?

Because the bulletin and the interim emails inform the members about the offered activities and important information, the committee needs to be sure that every member receives the bulletin. The result of the survey held amongst the members showed that 20% of the members were not familiar with the bulletin. Meaning, one out of every five members did not receive copies of the bulletin and therefore was not informed about important information. *See Appendix 2, Survey Amongst the Members, Question 19.*
Although the committee believes that the internal communication between its members is good, the above-mentioned result shows the opposite. *See chapter 3, section 3.2, paragraph about internal communication.*

In contrast to the bulletin designed by the students of the Europe Calling project of May 2000, the paper version of the bulletin of January 2004 contains pictures and photos. *See Appendix 7, Bulletin, Committee 2004.* The front page of this bulletin contains too much information and the committee moved the summary of the activities to the last page of the bulletin. As I did not find any other major changes, I have decided to analyse the current email version of the bulletin of April 2007. *See Appendix 7, Bulletin, Committee 2007.*

Regarding the layout of the bulletin, quite a few members made clear that they find the bulletin chaotic and unclear. The result of the survey held amongst the members showed that 18% of the members did not find the layout of the bulletin attractive**.** *See Appendix 2, Survey Amongst the Members, Question 20.*

Looking at and reading the bulletin, I find that the layout of the bulletin is indeed unclear. The committee uses different fonts (Times New Roman and Monotype Corsiva) and different letter sizes (varying from size 11 to 14 within the information texts). Besides these fonts and letter sizes, the committee uses too many different ways of highlighting or emphasizing certain parts.

If the committee wants to create a clearer text, it should not use different fonts and letter types. I would recommend to use a different font, for instance Arial. This font looks much more modern than the old-fashioned Times New Roman font. The Arial font is clear and distinctive, making the text easier to read. As 50% of the members requested a larger letter size, I would recommend size 11. This size is not too small and not too large and therefore it meets the wishes of the members. For highlighting or emphasizing certain parts in the text, I would suggest using bold letters only, not combining italics and capitals as previously seen.

On the first page of the bulletin, the name of the society is written in the Spanish and Dutch language. Using both languages, the committee implies that the bulletin is written in two languages. However, reading the bulletin you will see it is only written in the Spanish language. For those members who master the Spanish language this certainly will not be a problem, but for those who have not, the bulletin may not be easy to read. Therefore, I would recommend adding a brief summary in Dutch about the activities and background information that is given in order to create a readable bulletin for every member.

The other problem concerns writing about more than one activity on each page in two languages, as this may lead to confusion. Therefore, I suggest one activity on one page enabling the reader to focus on the content.

During the Europe Calling project, the students found that bringing colour into the bulletin by means of pictures would be too expensive. However, as the bulletin is sent to the members by email, the committee could decide to add more coloured items. It would not cost the committee extra money and will brighten up the bulletin, making it less formal. It also creates the idea that the amount of text the members have to read seems less. The committee should keep in mind though that the total size of the bulletin is not too large for the members to receive by email.

Concerning the information about the committee, I recommend not to mention this on the first page. For the members this is not the most important information, as it is already known. The students of the Europe Calling project removed this information from the first page as well. Instead of this information, the committee could think about placing pictures or drawings on the first page reflecting the activities mentioned on the following pages. The reader of the bulletin may be curious and then read further. If the information about the committee has to be in the bulletin, I would mention it on the last page.

Finally, I would recommend the committee to keep the address of the website on the first page. Because of the same survey held amongst the members of the society, 86% of the

members have not visited the website. If the society wants to increase the number of members who visit the website, it should emphasize the address on the first page.

If the committee wants to create and publish a bulletin that meets the expectations of the members, it has to involve them. Hold a survey amongst the members to find out if they would like to receive the bulletin via email, what they would like to change about the layout and if the information meets their expectations. Ask if the offered activities meet their expectations and what kind of activities they would like to be involved in. This in turn should make the members feel more important, the bulletin and activities should then meet their expectations.

By doing all the above, I hope that the committee will see a decrease in the number of members who do not receive the bulletin (20%) and who do not find the bulletin attractive (18%).

6. Website

In this chapter, the third element of my final thesis will be discussed as well. I will explain how the students of the Europe Calling project have changed the website of the Spanish Society of The Hague and how their recommendations have been applied by the society.

To formulate new recommendations about how the website could be improved, I decided not only to use the first, second and third element of this thesis but also to make a comparison between the current website of the society and three websites of other associations.

6.1 Europe Calling Project

As part of the Europe Calling project, the students had to improve the existing website at the time. They made some drastic changes. *See Appendix 8, Website, Spanish Society of The Hague - Europe Calling 2000.* These changes can be specified as follows:

- ✓ Basic division of the website, the so called frames;
- ✓ Different information;
- ✓ The layout of the website (the division of texts, use of colour, fonts, etc.).

The students divided each page of the website into three parts. At the top of the page you will find the banner, which is used mainly for the name of the Spanish Society of The Hague. The logo of the society is placed to the right and left of the banner.

On the left hand side, vertically, there is a part on the content of the website. Six buttons, which are placed vertically, represent the different pages of the website where one can find specific information. The six buttons used are: general, committee, activities, courses, hyperlinks and contact. The remaining space is called text or main. This part shows the actual information of the website. To give you a clear idea about this division I have made the following diagram:

1	
2	3
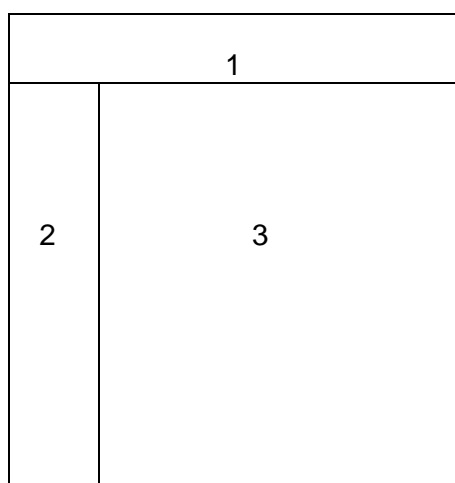
1. Banner
2. Content
3. Text or Main

After the splash page, the visitor will see the homepage. This page provides a brief summary of the different pages that are related to the buttons.

General
Information about the society in general, like history, objective, logo, members and committee. The students found it very important for the visitor to find out more about the society.

Committee
Information about the committee by using a picture and stating the names of the members. For future reference, a brief biography about each member could be interesting.

Activities
Information about the activities the society organises for its members.

Courses
Information about the different courses it offers in the field of language and culture of Spain and Latin America.

Weblinks
Various links to other websites about topics concerning the language and culture of Spain and Latin America. The students introduced this information because they believe that members, potential members as well as visitors are interested in a wide variety of topics, e.g. arts and music.

Contact
This page provides the opportunity for the visitors to contact the secretary of the society. Because the committee wants to know what the visitors or members think about the website, it invites them to react and to give their opinions, suggestions and recommendations. Of course, they can receive more information about the society or become a member. The visitors can easily fill out the form by entering their personal data and there is room for their comments, suggestions, recommendations or questions.
The visitor is also given an opportunity to contact the society in writing as the postal address of the society is provided.
In general, it is obvious that the information on each page should be adjusted every time new information is available. The main aim of the Europe Calling project was to change the layout of the website by entering, for example, the frames. The students wanted to make the website more attractive to visit.
Furthermore, the students adjusted the division of the texts, the use of colour and the fonts.

Division
When people first visit the website, they will notice that the banner and content are visible on every page. Simply by clicking the icons on the left hand side of the page, people can pull down information without constantly returning to the homepage. The society's name and logo are visible at all times. As people continuously encounter the above-mentioned items, the students believe it is a constant reminder and therefore people will not forget the Society's name.
At the top of each page you can find the title of the page and therefore the visitor knows which page he or she is visiting. Besides these titles, all text is divided into sections and every section has its own title. The texts are well-organised.
The homepage consists of clearly written text and therefore easy to read. The pages with the general information, the activities and the courses contain photos and drawings that represent the specific information on each page. These pages are more attractive and leave a lasting impression.

6.2 Increase Familiarity

First of all, I would like to point out that it is very important for the website to be familiar amongst people, not only members but potential members as well. In order to create a popular website, I have a few ideas on how to achieve this objective.

Leaflet

In chapter four, I recommended the society to keep the address of its website in the leaflet. None of the questioned students had ever heard of the Spanish Society of The Hague or surroundings. *See Appendix 3, Survey Amongst the Potential Target Group, Question 9.*

When the leaflet is distributed on a regular basis, people will read that the society has its own website. Creating more awareness about the website amongst people who read the leaflet increases the possibility of the website being visited more often.

Bulletin

In chapter five, I recommended the society to keep the address of its website on the first page to emphasize the fact that the society has its own website. 86% of the members have not visited the website at all. *See Appendix 2, Survey Amongst the Members, Question 22.*

Giving the members the option to answer this question only with yes or no, I do not know whether they do not want to visit the website of the society or they do not know about its existence. The students of the Europe Calling project should have asked if the members were aware of the society's website. Even though the society wants to increase the familiarity of the website, I find it should assume that 86% of the questioned members do not know about the existence of the website.

Other Organisations and Associations

The society should approach other organisations and associations, asking if they are willing to put a web link of the Spanish Society of The Hague in their bulletins, leaflets and maybe on their websites. Organisations and associations who are not a threat to the society will be easier to approach. One could think of various embassies in The Hague and other associations like Instituto Cervantes (the society already cooperates with Cervantes by means of offering courses). Other associations outside the region of The Hague can also be approached. Analysing the website of the association of Eindhoven, Asociación Iberoamericana Eindhoven (see section 6.3, other associations), I found that it has a web link to the website of the society. The website of the Spanish Society of The Hague was the second best visited website out of six. This may be a good opportunity for free publicity and therefore I think the committee should research into expanding this list of organisations and associations.

Search Engines

The most frequently asked pages on the web are those of the search engines. People who surf the web are using these services to find and select information they need out of billions of pages available. Therefore, I believe that it is of major importance that the society submits its web link to many search engines, especially because submitting to most of the search engines is a free service.

Below are some examples of websites where the society can submit its web link to several search engines:

- www.aanmelden-zoekmachines.info
- www.submit/it.com
- www.metasubmit.nl

Using such websites, the society can submit its web link automatically to many search engines simultaneously. In spite of the fact that these websites tend to save time, they do not guarantee that the web link of the Spanish Society of The Hague is actually added to every single search engine. Some search engines refuse to add a web link that is submitted using the above-mentioned websites. I would advise the society to submit its web link manually to one search engine at a time. The society can submit its web link to national as well as international search engines. As the national search engines are of major importance, I have listed the most important Dutch search engines. *See Appendix 9, Dutch Search Engines, Search Engines of the Netherlands.*

Nowadays, many search engines submit web links as soon as they encounter a link to your website. Therefore, it is very important that other organisations and associations mention the society's web link on their websites. *See section 6.2, paragraph about Other Organisations and Associations.*

Submitting the web link of the Spanish Society of The Hague to search engines and how the society wants its website to be found, can be quite technical. So called Meta tags are listed in the HTML code of the website. For example, the page title of the website is the most important factor that influences the ranking of the website within a search engine. Besides the page title, the keywords and description tags are very important too. For the technical details about submitting web links to search engines and how to use Meta tags, I would like to refer to a specialised website. These technical guidelines can be found at http://www.whitelines.net.

On the above-mentioned website I have performed a test to analyse the results of the website of the Spanish Society of The Hague, which can be used by the webmaster of the society. This test contains a title tag analysis, META description Tag analysis, META keywords tag analysis and a basic example of a Robot Search engine listing. For the results of this test I would like to refer to *Appendix 9, Search Engines, Meta Tag Analyser.*

I am unable to find the web link of the Spanish Society of The Hague within some search engines; I found that none of the search engines refer to the homepage. When a web link to the website of the Spanish Society of The Hague is found, it refers to a different page within the website, for example to the page with the offered activities. I believe it looks more professional to link the homepage to the search engines, as this is the first page of the society's website.

6.3 Other Websites

In order to be able to provide the committee of the Spanish Society of The Hague with ideas and recommendations on how to change its website, Mr. Nigten advised me to analyse and compare some other websites of Spanish associations. He recommended the next three websites:

- ✓ Asociación Belgo Ibero Americana, Antwerp, Belgium
  http://www.abia.be/
  See Appendix 10, Website, Asociación Belgo Ibero Americana, Antwerp, Belgium.

- ✓ Asociación Iberoamericana Eindhoven, the Netherlands
  http://www.aie-eindhoven.nl/
  See Appendix 11, Website, Asociación Iberoamericana Eindhoven, the Netherlands.

- ✓ Las Lanzas, Breda, The Netherlands
  http://www.laslanzas.nl/
  See Appendix 12, Website, Las Lanzas Breda, Breda, the Netherlands.

For the analysis of the above-mentioned websites, I decided to analyse and compare the positive and negative aspects regarding layout and content of each website. Of course, I have made this list to my own opinion. Listed below are the results of my analysis when visiting these websites on May 6th 2007.

Asociación Belgo Ibero Americana, Antwerp, Belgium

Layout-Negative
- ✓ Many different colours, fonts and letter sizes on the homepage.
- ✓ Besides the homepage not much colour.
- ✓ Many parts of the text in italics, bold or in capitals, or even a combination.
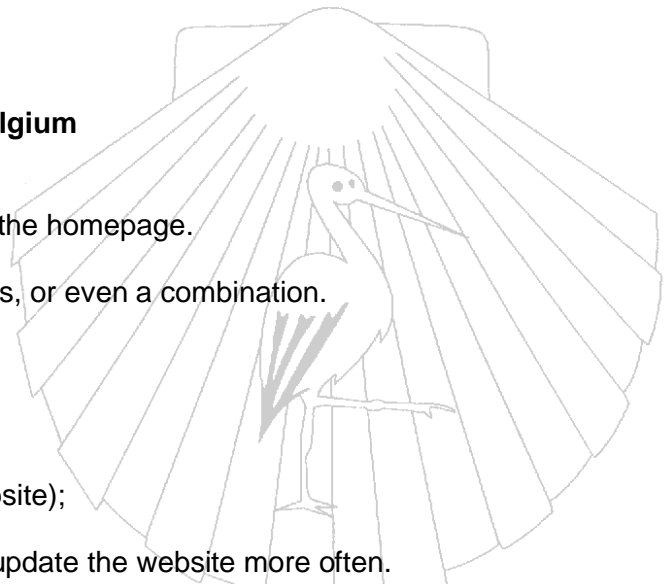
Layout-Positive
- ✓ None

Content-Negative
- ✓ Old news (activities of April 2007 still on the website);
- ✓ Hardly any texts in Dutch;
- ✓ When using "updated 13-04-2007", one should update the website more often.
- ✓ Only the telephone number of the association is found on the homepage, the postal address can be found on a different page about the members of the Union.

Content-Positive
- ✓ Background information about the association, the committee and the objective.
- ✓ Opportunity to practise Spanish, for example having a drink together after meetings and trips.
- ✓ Mentioned web links;
- ✓ Clear information about the various activities;

Asociación Iberoamericana Eindhoven, the Netherlands

Layout-Negative
- ✓ The column in the middle of the homepage looks chaotic using different fonts and letter sizes.

Layout-Positive
- ✓ Red and yellow colours related to Spain and Latin America;
- ✓ Same font, except for the column in the middle of the homepage;
- ✓ Different fixed menus at the left and right hand side of every page;
- ✓ Modern style and look.

Content-Negative
- ✓ No negative aspects.

Content-Positive
- ✓ Very well extended website providing interesting information;
- ✓ Division between members and non-members, possibly increasing the visitor's interest to become at least a free member of the website;
- ✓ Many Spain and Latin America related topics on the website, like news, articles, etc.;
- ✓ Involvement of members in providing ideas and activities and holding surveys.

Las Lanzas, Breda, the Netherlands

Layout-Negative
- ✓ Pink letters and background colour, in my opinion not related to Spain and Latin America;
- ✓ No consistency in using the same font;
- ✓ Not many photos, drawings, etc.

Layout-Positive
- ✓ Use of fixed banner and content. *See section 6.1 of this chapter, Europe Calling Project*;
- ✓ Colourful and related pictures to Spain at the end of the homepage;
- ✓ One font and colour to create a clear and easy to read text.

Content-Negative
- ✓ Only the homepage is bilingual, Dutch and Spanish. No consistency in using these languages;
- ✓ Old news;
- ✓ The page about current events contains information about 2006;
- ✓ Information about trips is outdated, only one trip to Cuba is mentioned;
- ✓ Information is not always related to the selected button.

Content-Positive
- ✓ Background information;
- ✓ Specified contribution for singles, couples and students;
- ✓ A separate page for contacting the association;
- ✓ Fixed buttons to indicate the different information pages.

Keeping the above-mentioned positive and negative aspects regarding layout and content in mind, the next section deals with my analysis of the current website of the Spanish Society of The Hague using the same aspects.

6.4 Current Website and Recommendations

For the analysis of the current website of the Spanish Society of The Hague, I have used the same negative and positive aspects regarding layout and content as I have used to analyse and compare the previous mentioned websites of the other associations. *See Appendix 13, Website, Spanish Society of The Hague - Committee 2007.*

Listed below are the results of my analysis when visiting the current website on May 6th 2007.

Layout-Negative
- ✓ Different fonts, as well as bold and capital letters;
- ✓ Unstructured homepage;
- ✓ "Buttons" at the end of the page, which refer to other information pages;
- ✓ No clear structure between the different pages (for the visitor as well as the webmaster), some pages are difficult to find.

Layout-Positive
- ✓ Colours used;
- ✓ Many pictures, drawings, etc.;
- ✓ Modern font.

Content-Negative
- ✓ Original splash page is changed into a homepage;
- ✓ Old news (activities of February, March and April 2007 still on the website);
- ✓ Besides the activities no new information. This can be mundane for the visitors of the website;
- ✓ No consistency in using both languages, Dutch and Spanish (bilingual), for example information about the activities;
- ✓ Not many activities.

Content-Positive
- ✓ Background information about the society, the committee, the objective, etc.;
- ✓ Summary of the activities**.**

Based on the results of the analysis of the websites of the other associations, as well as the analysis of the current website of the society, I have some recommendations I would like to offer in order to make the website more attractive and user-friendly for visitors.

6.4.1 Division of the Website

In order to create a user-friendly website, the basic division of the website needs to be improved. This basic division of the website consists of the structure, the hyperlinks and how every information page is linked to one another.

Appendix 14, Website, Division Current Website, provides an overview of the different information pages the current website contains and how every page is linked to one another. Every line between two pages represents a direct link that can be one way or vice versa. For example, from the homepage you can go directly to the Spanish page about the general information and from there back to the homepage. Personally, I believe that the current division does not contribute to a user-friendly website. Not only for the visitor of the website, but also for the webmaster who has to update the website.

To offer the society a well-structured division, I have made a new division with the same information pages or items as the current website contains. *See Appendix 14, Website, Division New Website.*

Comparing both divisions makes clear, that a well-structured division between the offered information pages is needed in order to provide a user-friendly website. Visitors should be able to move easily between various pages as they do not want to put a lot of effort in finding the right page containing the information wanted.

Keeping the above-mentioned division in mind, I would like to start by introducing the splash page again, which offers the opportunity to enter the Dutch or the Spanish homepage. On both homepages, the visitor should be given the opportunity to go to the homepage in the other language. Giving the visitor this opportunity, the society must be consistent in offering the same information in both languages. Details will be discussed in section 6.4.3 of this chapter about the recommendations for the content of the website.

Keeping in mind that the website ought to be very easy to use, I recommend using the division introduced by the students of the Europe Calling project, the so-called banner, content and text. *See section 6.1 of this chapter, Europe Calling Project.* By means of buttons within the fixed content frame, the links to all the information pages are visible at a single glance and at every moment. The current division makes the visitor scroll down to the bottom of the page where the links can be found and not all the links to the different pages are visible.

6.4.2 Layout

Besides making the website user-friendly and providing a well-structured division, the layout of the website determines its attractiveness and the image of the society. The layout should therefore be adjusted and should be related to the information the website provides.

The most important aspects of the layout concerns colours and fonts. These aspects represent the image of the society and are present on every single page.
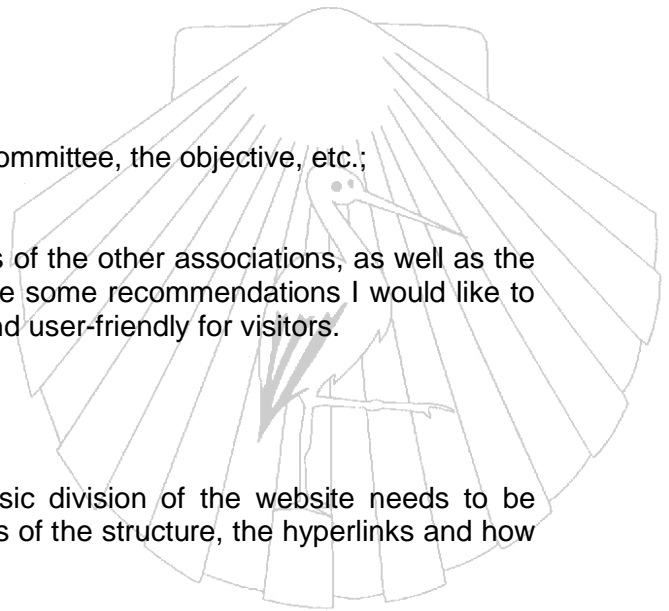
The society still uses some of the colours recommended by the students of the Europe Calling project. These colours are:

- ✓ Red (RGB 230 38 0) for fonts and buttons;
- ✓ Cream (RGB 237 235 165) as background colour of all information pages;
- ✓ Black for some parts of the text and frames.

I would recommend these colours as well, only some of them to be used for different purposes.

I advise to use a cream background colour in order to create a soft background while reading instead of bright white.

In my opinion, red should be used for the website as red is the colour of passion, is in the flag of Spain and is by many people associated with the spirit of Spain and Latin America. As the background colour is quite soft too, I would not recommend using it as the text colour on every page. I believe that this combination of two soft colours does not work well and therefore I recommend a black font in contrast to the soft creamy background colour making the text easier to read.

Red can be used for the buttons and for lines dividing different parts of text e.g. the division between the different activities on the pages of the summaries.

If the division of frames like the banner, content and text is being used again, I would introduce the beige colour (RGB 207 205 137) as background colour for the banner and the content. This colour has been introduced by the Europe Calling project and will emphasize the basic division of the homepage.

I would recommend keep using the Arial font as this is a modern font and easier to read than the old-fashioned Times New Roman. Besides, using the Arial font will create similarity as I have also recommended this font for the leaflet and the bulletin. The society should be aware that it uses this font consistently and should avoids using bold as well as capital letters frequently and simultaneously.

Besides colours and fonts, the layout of the website consists of drawings and pictures. The society applies sufficient items on its website in order to create the idea that visitors are not only reading huge amounts of text. I recommend using more pictures when it concerns the different activities in order to make them more attractive. It brightens up the website and I feel that the society should replace items more often. If the society wants to increase the number of visitors to the website, it should provide new information and items on a regular basis. If visitors view the same information every time they visit the website, it could become tedious. More information about renewing the content of the website can be found in the next section.

6.4.3 Content

Applying the positive aspects and changing the negative ones, creates an attractive website, visually as well as subject matter. It is important to offer informative, interesting and new information.

Firstly, the language in which the website is written is very important. I believe that the website should be bilingual. Offering the website in the Spanish and Dutch language, enables the society to reach those people who have not mastered the Spanish language. Offering a website in the Dutch language, gives these people the opportunity to learn more about Spain and Latin America related subjects. The website of Asociación Iberoamericana Eindhoven is mainly written in Dutch and it has quite a lot of visitors and online members. It

is very important that the society is consistent in using both languages and that every page is bilingual. Languages should not be used simultaneously.

Secondly, it is very important that the website offers informative, interesting and new information. This information can be divided into qualitative and quantitative information.

Qualitative information should offer up to date information. Visiting the website for my analysis on May 6th 2007, I found outdated information about activities held in February, March and April 2007. The society should maintain this information on a regular basis to create a professional image and to keep the visitors of the website interested and curious.

When it concerns quantitative information, I recommend the society expanding their range of different subjects. Offer new information frequently and keep visitors interested in new information. Add topical matters from Spanish and Latin American newspapers or websites and offer more information about Spain and Latin America related subjects like music, every day life, culture, etc.

A separate information page could be added with web links to different subjects, like other associations, culture, economy, travelling, newspapers, magazines, books, cooking, dance, music, science, etc. Of course, all these subjects need to be related to Spain and/or Latin America.

To personalise the website and involve the members in an active way, add illustrated reports of past activities written by members themselves. These reports may then in turn encourage enthusiastic visitors to join the activities offered.

The society should emphasize the involvement of the visitors of the website. Introducing a separate contact page gives the society the opportunity to invite the visitors to give their opinions, suggestions or recommendations and gives the visitor the opportunity to ask questions. Therefore, it is not necessary to provide the postal, as well as the email address of the secretary on the homepage.

In my opinion, several different information pages of the society should emphasize the visitors input. On the activities page the question could be asked whether other activities should be added.

My last recommendation would be introducing a counter on the website to be able to see the number of hits during a certain period.

Recommending all of the above-mentioned, I am aware that this will be time consuming and will take a lot of effort to transform the website. The period in which this can be accomplished, depends on the amount of time the webmaster and other members of the committee can spare. Once these recommendations have been applied, the website will be more user-friendly, up to date, more attractive for people to visit and will keep its visitors interested and curious.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The objective of this paper consists of discovering whether the society has used past recommendations to improve its leaflet, bulletin and website, in order to increase its number of members and increase its familiarity amongst potential members and how various means of promotion can be improved.

The Spanish Society of The Hague has applied most of the recommendations made by the students of the Europe Calling project in 2000, in order to improve its promotional material e.g. the leaflet, the bulletin and the website. As these changes have already been discussed in chapters four, five and six, this chapter will give a brief summary of my recommendations to improve the leaflet, bulletin and website and how to increase familiarity amongst the potential target group.

Regarding the internal communication towards the members of the society, the committee has to amend its bulletin as many members find it unclear. Changing the bulletin by means of improving the layout and content, will meet the requirements of the members. However, the society should not forget that interested people and members are often let down and drop out because their expectations have not been met. Involving members in various activities and allowing them to share personal experiences insures the members to feel personally involved. If the members feel they have a large influence on what the society offers, it will encourage the members to stay.

When it concerns the external communication towards the potential target group, the leaflet and the website determine the image of the society and these means of promotion should therefore be professionalized. The committee believes that the society is being seen as a local social club of amateurs. Improving and professionalizing the leaflet and website using the recommendations I have made in chapters four and six, enables the society to be seen as it wants to be seen; a serious and responsible society that provides a meeting place, offers activities and tries to respect the wishes of the members and maintain their interest in Spain and Latin America.

Improving and professionalizing the promotional material towards the potential target group is not sufficient if the society wants to increase its familiarity and increase its number of members. The potential target group should be aware of the existence of the society, of what its objective is and what kind of activities it offers. The society can increase its familiarity by:

✓ approaching the media to advertise in local newspapers.
✓ expanding the contacts Mr. Nigten has with The Hague University, in particular The Hague School of European Studies.
✓ distributing the leaflet frequently in public places like libraries, universities, schools, language institutes, etc.
✓ approaching other organisations and associations, asking if they are willing to add a web link of the Spanish Society of The Hague in their bulletins, leaflets and websites.

Nowadays, more and more people use the internet to seek information about various subjects and therefore I believe that the society should use its website in a professional way for the internal and external communication towards its members and potential target group. The society should therefore update its website by means of improving the layout and the content making it more user-friendly.

I also believe the society should explore the options of having its own accommodation. The committee may want to explore the possibilities of hiring a suitable accommodation within The Hague University or sharing an existing accommodation with other associations in order to provide the members and interested people a place to have a cup of coffee, read the newspaper or maintain frequent contact with other members.

In order to apply the recommendations I have made, the society should pay more attention to its public relations and how this position within the society can be filled. I do not believe that one person should fill this position. The society can think of spreading the various tasks amongst dedicated and enthusiastic members, forming a small group. These members need to communicate with each other on a regular basis.

Considering all the recommendations, I am aware that this will be time consuming and will take a lot of effort to apply them. The period in which this can be accomplished, depends on the amount of time the webmaster, members of the committee and members can spare.

I do believe that when these recommendations are being used and applied, members are being personally involved, the familiarity of the society amongst it potential target group will increase and as a result the total number of members will increase.