

Presentation

EURBICA, the European Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives, was officially set up in May 2001 at the 6th European Archives Conference in Florence.

The creation of this new regional branch is designed to give the countries of the continent of Europe real visibility and appropriate representation within the International Council on Archives (ICA).

EURBICA is chaired for the time being by Martine de Boisdeffre, head of the French Archives Directorate (Direction des Archives de France), and is managed by an executive board.

Membership of the branch extends to European national archival organisations, and professional archival associations (at national level), categories A and B respectively under the constitution of the ICA, as well as to participants belonging to other categories (local and municipal archives). EURBICA has also got two observers : Canada and United States.

The first General Assembly of EURBICA was held in Florence on 29 May 2001. It gave an opportunity to lay before those members present the draft constitution of the branch and its strategic plan, that is to say the priority actions for the months ahead: professional training, a survey of methods of appraisal and disposal, the creation of a legal database, the range of European programmes in support of research and cultural exchanges, etc.

The EURBICA General Assembly which was held during the 35th International Conference of the Round Table on Archives (CITRA) in Reykjavik (Iceland) ratified the action plan for the branch, and began the work of examining its constitution. This was adopted at the General Assembly held during the 36th CITRA at Marseille in November 2002.

The thinking behind the work of EURBICA is the need to link all activities, whether bi-lateral or multilateral, undertaken by the various national archival bodies, so as to construct a network of partners all working with EU and European organisations for the development and promotion of archives.

This alliance of means and objectives should be of value to the partners themselves, who will thus have access to greater resources in the fields of training, standardisation and publicity. It will also be helpful to outside contacts, who as a result will be better able to understand the fundamental role played by archives in the relations between the citizen and public bodies, in the development of democracy and good governance. Above all it will highlight the importance of the archival heritage common to all Europeans.

Another essential element of the work of EURBICA is the need to take account of the widely varying situation and needs of different parts of Europe □ western, eastern, southern, Balkan, etc □ so as to set up, in the interests of all, a policy which, without being uniform, will be coherent and lasting. In this connection EURBICA wishes to work towards a resolution of the various tensions and disputes which concern the archives and archivists of Europe.

The European Branch works in close co-operation, of course, with the authorities of the ICA, and with all other European or international bodies which may support its activities (European Commission. Council of Europe, UNESCO, etc)