

# **Minutes of EURBICA General Assembly, Vienna, 23 August 2004**

## **MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF EURBICA HELD IN VIENNA ON 23 AUGUST 2004**

### **PRESENT:**

59 attendants of whom 33 were members entitled to vote (28 category A members, 5 category B members)

President of EURBICA, Mrs Martine de Boisdeffre (Director of the French Archives) acted as the chairman of the General Assembly. Mr Jari Lybeck (Director of the Provincial Archives of Hämeenlinna, Finland), Secretary General of EURBICA, kept the minutes. The agenda that was followed in the meeting was posted beforehand to the members of EURBICA as well as to the category A and B institutions of the three observer countries (Canada, Israel, the United States).

### **1. ADOPTION AND ADDITION TO THE AGENDA**

The agenda was adopted with two additions: 1) Israel's application for full membership, 2) Leopold Kammerhofer's (Treasurer) report about EURBICA's financial situation.

### **2. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN CAPE TOWN (OCTOBER 2003)**

The minutes were approved.

### **3. CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

Mrs Daria Nałęcz explained about the extensive survey on archival training which was realised by the Polish State Archives in 2001-2002.

In May 2004 the Ukrainian archives administration organised, assisted by EURBICA, a European seminar in Kiev on natural disasters, their effects on archives and the reconstruction of damaged materials. The recent floods in many central European countries as well as EBNA's (European Bureau of National Archivists) priorities were the main incentives behind the seminar. The event was a successful one and the papers delivered there will be published later on.

The so called Legal Database is one of the main priorities of EURBICA. The idea is to collect European archives and other relevant legislation (with contextual and comparative analysis) to a database which would be available on the Internet. With limited resources it has been very difficult, however, to realise the project. The

Directorate of the French Archives has made a major contribution by producing a prototype of the database. For technical reasons the actual presentation of the prototype had to be arranged on two separate occasions during the congress week but the prototype was described in the General Assembly.

The main search paths of the database (prototype) are geography (a map where to choose a country) and content (subjects). Contextual information (e.g. legal and institutional framework) is of great importance. The database would also include a bibliography on relevant archival and legal literature. The prototype has been tested on three archival laws, those of France, Switzerland (federal) and the state of Geneva (Switzerland).

Cooperation is the central philosophy of the project. The database cannot be created and maintained in a centralised way. Every member country should itself add information to the database (a special password is needed for this). In order to guarantee the coherence of the content, each input will be validated by an authorized person (member of the Executive Board). There will be three ways to add legislation to the database: 1) to employ links to relevant websites, 2) to attach electronic documents to the database, 3) to write the text to the database.

The President discussed the question of finances too. In order to go on, the project would need 50 000 euros. This sum could permit to improve the database from a technical point of view, but does not include translation costs because the idea is that each country would do it itself (translations into English and French). The President said that she could hire a student to work on the project for some time but after that money is needed. She also pointed out that DLM-EEIG has plans to create a similar database. She promised to talk to Hans Hofmann, director of the Historical Archives of the Commission, about possibilities to cooperate.

The Dutch National Archivist Martin van Boven expressed his gratitude for the work that the French Directorate on Archives has done. He pointed out, however, that the project is very difficult due to different legal systems, different terminology etc. There should be an expert to guard the coherence of the database. The President emphasised that this was just a prototype. All those things Mr van Boven referred to must be dealt with in the working group. Mr van Boven added to this that a strong and clear format is an absolute necessity.

Mr Lajos Körmendy from the Hungarian National Archives said that if the Legal Database Project succeeds, it is a great achievement. The idea has been developed since the early nineties. Mr Körmendy also asked about the contacts with the Committee on Legal Matters.

The President said that Viktoras Domarkas, a member of EURBICA's Board, is also a member of the Legal Committee. The President of the Committee, Claes Gränström, has belonged to EURBICA's Database Working Group.

Mrs Nałęcz pointed out that EURBICA and the Legal Committee are not competing. The Legal Database is the common goal of both bodies. As regards the DLM project, it takes time and we should not wait for it to develop.

Mr Körmandy remarked to this that EURBICA and the Legal Committee should co-operate concretely e.g. in the field of indexing and thesauri.

#### **4. 2004-2008 ACTION PLAN**

As regards the immediate future, the President referred to an international conference which will be arranged by her administration on the DTS (Document Type Definition), EAD (Encoded Archival Description) and EAC (Encoded Archival Context) in Paris on 7-8 October 2004.

The Secretary-General mentioned the seminar on records management teaching and on further education / training of teachers which is going to be organised in Helsinki in November 2004. It is a joint project of EURBICA, Committee on Professional Training, Section of Archival Education and the Finnish National Archives. The idea is that the seminar would launch a larger ICA project on this subject.

Mr van Boven pointed out that there are other similar projects in Europe. A major programme called ERPANET is about to end now. Would it be possible to continue it in some form or another as a EURBICA project? The President regarded this as an excellent idea.

Daria Nałęcz spoke about the results of the big training survey that was realised by her administration (Polish State Archives). According to the survey, the main areas of interest in the training sector include electronic records, records management and preservation.

The Polish State Archives organise annual colloquiums for archivists of Central and Eastern Europe. Mrs Nałęcz would like to have more attendants in these colloquiums from the East (Uzbekhistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgistan etc.).

Mrs Nałęcz wanted to put special emphasis on The Common Archival Heritage Project. One of the goals of the project is to create a portal through which it would be possible to access archives which exist in a country or countries which are of special interest to another country or countries. The project tries to get funding from the EU.

In this connection the assembly discussed a proposal made by Dr Babička, National Archivist of the Czech Republic, concerning the archives of minorities. Dr Babička had proposed that this issue be taken in EURBICA's new action plan.

Mrs Nałęcz remarked that the Common Archival Heritage could serve as a common "umbrella" in this issue. The project covers minority archives too.

Mrs Nalecz also informed the assembly about the next European Archives Conference which will take place in Poznan, Poland, on 17-21 May 2006. The expected number of attendants is ca. 800 people. The conference fee will lay around 150 to 200 €. The conference will be a joint project of the Polish State Archives, the Polish Association of Archivists, the ICA Section of Professional Associations and EURBICA.

As regards the strategy of EURBICA for the period of 2004-2008, the Board proposed that the three issues from the previous period should remain on the agenda, namely training, the Legal Database and the Common Archival Heritage. The proposal was accepted.

The Finnish National Archivist Jussi Nuorteva raised the issue of evaluation (the Finnish National Archives Service will be evaluated in 2005-2006 by international experts). Coming from the world of research and science administration, Mr Nuorteva emphasised the importance of evaluation and benchmarking.

The President agreed with Mr Nuorteva's views. The question of evaluation should be on EURBICA's agenda. She would like to have a paper on this issue from Finland or some other Nordic country. Perhaps also a working group could be established to prepare the issue. She concluded that the initiative was now in the hands of the representatives of the Nordic countries.

As a last issue under this item, the President referred to the EURBICA survey on appraisal realised by the Polish State Archives in 2002. The survey has proved very useful for the Committee on Appraisal.

## **5. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS**

Patrick Cadell, EURBICA's liaison officer with regard to the Council of Europe (CE) and the European Union (EU), gave a report on recent developments in these fields. First he spoke about the two recommendations of the CE concerning access to archives (2000) and access to official documents (2002) respectively. The recommendations complement each other: the first recommendation is about archives that have been transferred to archival custody, the latter is about records that are still used by the records creators. As regards the latter recommendation, there is a manual about how to apply it. There has been some talk about making the recommendations binding instruments but nothing has come out of it so far. Mr Cadell pointed out that both recommendations are available on the website of the CE.

Mr Cadell told also that a third recommendation is being prepared in the archival field, namely on archiving electronic documents. The recommendation is targeted to the legal sector.

In the EU sector the most important development is the new report on archives in the European Union. The process started at the meeting of the EU national archivists in Lund, Sweden, in 2001. It proved to be difficult to get a Council resolution to back up the project. Mr Cadell emphasised that this kind of back up was regarded necessary to realise the project. In May 2003 the Council passed a resolution on the report, its content and time schedule. The report was finished a few weeks ago and would be published soon.

An important EU project is the DLM-Forum which was launched in mid-90s. Today the project has been reorganised and is called DLM-EEIG (European Economic Interest Group). It concentrates on the issue of electronic records and tries to get funding from different national and EU sources.

As his last point, Mr Cadell told that the archives bulletin INSAR, published by the Historical Archives of the Commission, keeps appearing though irregularly.

## **6. NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The list of candidates for the new Executive Board had been delivered to the members with other conference material beforehand by post. (The list is enclosed with these minutes). The President went through the list briefly and then proposed that the vote be taken collectively, that is, concerning the whole list at the same time. The other alternative would be to vote about each candidate separately. The assembly was unanimously in favour of the collective vote. The result of the vote was that all the candidates were unanimously elected.

## **7. FULL MEMBERSHIP OF ISRAEL IN EURBICA**

Israel had applied for the full membership of EURBICA instead of being an observer. The President asked the assembly to vote about this issue. 27 members were in favour of Israel's membership and 6 members abstained from vote. No one voted against Israel's membership.

## **8. FINANCIAL SITUATION**

ICA's Treasurer Leopold Kammerhofer who is also EURBICA's Treasurer explained about EURBICA's finances during the period of 2001-2003. EURBICA has received 3 500 euros annually from the ICA budget. In 2002 and 2003 EURBICA received an extra sum of 7 800 euros in all to cover part of Patrick Cadell's expenses as EURBICA's liaison officer. This extra sum was collected from the members in addition to their regular ICA fees. Mr Cadell's expenses have amounted to ca. 21 200 euros in all.

For the year 2004 EURBICA has received a purse of 5000 euros. Besides that the French archives administration (Direction des archives de France) has given EURBICA an extra sum of 10 000 euros which is still intact.