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## MINUTES OF EURBICA'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN ABU DHABI ON 28 NOVEMBER 2005

**PRESENT:** 33 attendants of whom 23 were voting members ( 22 category A members, 1 category B member. Of category A members two were such that were also official category B members). The total number of attendants (33) included one official observer (The National Archives of the United States)

While waiting attendants to come, the President gave the floor to Mrs Daria Nałęcz who explained about the recent situation with regard to the forthcoming European Conference on Archives in Warsaw (18-20 May 2006). She told that the list of speakers is complete and that a draft programme is in place. Some minor changes were, however, still possible. After 18 November the registration fee will rise from 200 euros to 275 euros. She also mentioned that she had not received as many answers as she had expected to her questionnaire concerning the state of archival science which is one of the themes in the conference. She urged people to answer the questionnaire. Mrs Nałęcz was asked if digitization will be dealt with in the programme. She answered that it will come up in connection with some subjects, e.g. with European Portal (one of the workshops). The President (Martine de Boisdeffre) pointed out that a link must be established from EURBICA's website to the Conference site ([www.archiwa.gov.pl](http://www.archiwa.gov.pl)).

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

The agenda was adopted.

### **2. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (MINUTES) OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN VIENNA (AUGUST 2004)**

The report (minutes), which was delivered to the members beforehand, was approved.

Under this agenda item some discussion took place that should have belonged, in fact, under items three and four. This discussion concerned DLM-Forum. Mrs Nałęcz pointed out that DLM-Forum (or, nowadays DLM-EEIG, i.e. DLM-European Economic Interest Group) is an organisation the membership of which requires a fee. Its main interest today is MoReq (functional requirements for records management systems). The President said that there is a common consent that the Legal Database is now EURBICA's project. Martin van Boven (the Netherlands) wondered about the status of the Legal Database Project with regard to DLM and the European Union. Should all mentions concerning EURBICA's and DLM's co-operation be removed from EURBICA's documents because we are now talking in this connection emphatically about EURBICA's project. The President was of the opinion that there was no harm in references to co-operation although in actual fact the Legal Database Project

was now on EURBICA's agenda only. She underlined the strong position of the project since it is mentioned in the recommendations connected with the new EU Report on Archives.

### 3. GENERAL REPORT FOR 2005

Secretary General had sent the general report to the members in advance, so he referred only to the main points of the report. The report dealt with EURBICA's activities since the International Congress on Archives in Vienna. A new board was elected in Vienna including Martine de Boisdeffre (President, France), Daria Nałęcz (Vice President, Poland), Jari Lybeck (Secretary General, Finland), Joan Boadas i Raset (Spain), Herman Coppens (liaison officer, Belgium), Natalija Glazar (Slovenia), Salvatore Italia (Italy), Peter Kartous (the Slovak Republic), Andreas Kellerhals (Switzerland), George Mackenzie (the United Kingdom), Angelika Menne-Haritz (Germany) and Yusuf Sarinay (Turkey).

In the field of seminars and conferences a mention should be made of an international conference on archival description (France), an international seminar on training records management teachers (Finland) and the 11<sup>th</sup> international conference "Colloquia Jerzy Skowronek" (Poland). The main forthcoming event is the 7<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Archives (Poland); EURBICA is one of the organisers of the event.

As regards projects, EURBICA has two of them: 1) the Legal Database Project (LDB), 2) Training project. These projects were presented more fully under agenda item 4. The role of DLM-Forum aroused, however, some discussion also in this connection (see item 2). DLM-Forum was mentioned as a potential partner in Secretary General's report. It was pointed out that DLM has practically given up its legal database project and is concentrating on MoReq. The President was of the opinion, however, that the mention about possible co-operation with DLM will not do any harm and could be kept in the report which was not objected by the Assembly.

The third project on EURBICA's agenda is CAH - Common Archival Heritage (see <http://www.archiwa.gov.pl/?CIDA=109>). The main goal of the CAH is to provide as broad an access as possible to information on archives considered as the source base for the common history of Central, Southern and Eastern Europe, based on modern information technologies. It is not a EURBICA project as such but it is closely followed up by EURBICA which also disseminates information about it.

The LDB has been on EURBICA's agenda since 2001. The idea is to collect all European archives legislation and other relevant legislation with contextual information to a database that would be available on the Internet. The target group of the database constitute archivists, administrators and students of archival science. There is already a prototype of the database (created in the Direction of the French archives) and a working group is testing it as well as developing an index to be used in making searches in the database. Several countries have produced test material for the database. The prototype has been successfully demonstrated in many international conferences.

#### 4. CURRENT ACTIVITIES

##### *Professional training*

Secretary General explained about the current state of EURBICA's training project. It is about training the trainers, in this case about teachers of records management. The starting point of the project was a seminar that was held in Helsinki, Finland, in November 2004. The minutes of the seminar as well as the presentations are now available on EURBICA's website. The goal of the project is to produce a methodology and training package that could be used in training teachers of records management. The materials should be published in 2006 and tested in different workshops in Europe in 2007. The final product should be completed by the International Congress on Archives in Kuala Lumpur in 2008. The project is endorsed as an official ICA project.

After the Helsinki seminar the project has come to a halt, mainly due to other pressing engagements of the principal actors. It is going to be revitalized, however, so that some results could be presented in the European Archives Conference in Warsaw in May. The working group and the strategic group guiding its work should be fully functional by the end of February. There is a good hope that the well known developer of archival training Mrs Margaret Crockett would join the project in some capacity. Representatives of the University College London as well as the National Archives of Finland are likely to participate. Hans Scheurkogel from the Dutch Archives School has also promised to make a contribution. It was asked why e.g. the Marburg School is not represented in the project. The President said that the participation is based on interest. Those individuals and institutions participate who are interested in the project.

##### *Legal database*

Mrs Christine Martinez explained about the Legal Database Project (LDB), officially, *Access to legal information concerning archives and records - A legal database for EURBICA* was taken on EURBICA's agenda in 2001. The idea of the project is to collect all European archives and other relevant legislation with context information to a database that could be used on-line on the Internet. Besides different national legislations, the database will contain also relevant EU regulations. It will also contain a bibliography concerning each country represented in the database as well as contact information for those who want to get more information about the laws and/or their context.

The target group of the database would be archivists, administrators, legislators and students of archival science. The database would facilitate international co-operation and be of help when national archival legislations are enacted or modified. It would also sensitize administrators to archival matters.

The project has a working group (Andreas Kellerhals, David Leitch, Françoise Limon-Bonnet, Jari Lybeck, Christine Martinez). In 2005 the working group had three meetings, two in Paris (January, June) and one at Kew (November). There is a prototype developed by the Direction of the French archives and it has been demonstrated successfully in various international conferences. When the database is functional, each country is itself responsible for filling in the information it wants to put there (within

the framework of the database). An Editorial Board will monitor that the information is put in the database according to the rules but this monitoring concerns only the structure and the way on presenting the information, not its content.

The concept of the prototype has been tested by producing certain texts which give contextual information about national legislations. These texts have been produced by the archives administrations of Finland, France, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia (soon to be completed), Switzerland and Turkey. Recently the working group has been working on a structured index that will be used in making searches of the legal texts.

During the 7th European Conference on Archives in May 2006 in Warsaw the project will present two guidelines which are of great importance when the database is in operative use, firstly, the guidelines on how to produce contextual introductions and, secondly, guidelines on how to index the legal texts.

The prototype of the database is far from a finished product. Technical specifications, ordered and paid by the Direction of the French archives, which are needed in the further development of the database are there but more money is needed to take concrete steps. Mrs Martinez told the Assembly that 20 000 euros is the sum that is needed to complete the database from the technical point of view. Mrs Martinez has been in contact with Frank Brady, head of Unit 3 of the General Secretary of the Commission, who has promised his support. He has also promised to find someone who could, within the Commission, collaborate with the project taking care of the watchdog function from the point of view of the European institutions. Mrs Martinez also pointed out that other branches might give some assistance because EURBICA's work is a potential benefit for them as well. The concept and structure of the legal database could freely be exploited by other branches.

The fact remains, however, that no immediate funding for the legal database project is in sight. This was regarded as a great pity because 20 000 euros are not a large sum of money and it should be relatively easy to raise such a sum. Mrs Martinez told that the working group has played with the idea of arranging a special collection for raising the money. If 40 member countries of EURBICA donated 500 euros each, the project would have the funds needed for the completion of the project (from technical point of view).

This particular idea did not arouse debate but otherwise the funding question was discussed. Mr Karel Velle (Belgium) referred to the public-private partnership concept. There might be companies that were interested to sponsor the legal database, provided that their name appears in the product. The President regarded this as a good idea. Mrs Martinez pointed out how frustrating the fundraising issue has been. The legal database is a good product, and the money needed to complete it, is not large. Still we have not had luck with the Council of Europe, Unesco or the European Union. Paradoxically it seems to be so that the sum EURBICA is asking is too small. The investors tend to favour big projects which need hundreds of thousands of euros or millions. The logic seems to be that a project that needs 20 000 euros cannot be that important.

Mrs Hadyka, representative of the US National Archives (observer in EURBICA) remarked at this point that EURBICA's legal database project is a very interesting one and that she will spread information about it when she returns home.

#### *2005 events and members activities*

The Secretary General referred to the General Report which was dealt with under agenda item 3. He said that he had no other information about members' activities after the Congress of Vienna. It was agreed that if there is any piece of information about projects, guidelines, meetings etc. a member wants to share with others the member in question can send this information either to Jari Lybeck (jari.lybeck@narc.fi) or Christine Martinez (christine.martinez@culture.gouv.fr), or preferably to both. Mrs Martinez is the person responsible for putting information to EURBICA's website.

#### *Electronic records and archives*

Andreas Kellerhals told about the results of the electronic records experts' meeting that was held in Budapest in October 2005 in connection with the DLM-conference. EURBICA's Executive Board decided in June 2005 to examine whether electronic records should be included on EURBICA's working agenda. It was also decided that an informal experts' group should prepare this issue further. The group which met in Budapest had members from Finland, France, Germany, Poland, Slovenia and Switzerland. Andreas Kellerhals discussed the main points of the group's conclusions. Firstly, EURBICA could send 2-3 experts to the United States to collect relevant information about American programmes (ERA, NDIIP). Secondly, a watchdog function could be established in the field of on-going professional training and thirdly, a specific reflection could be conducted in the legal field, in partnership with ICA/PCOM priorities 1 ja 2. As regards dissemination of information about electronic records issues, a specific working space could be created on EURBICA's website. An important point in the conclusions is that whatever activity is concerned, a special attention should be paid to co-operation with libraries

Andreas Kellerhals also explained about a questionnaire drafted by the experts' group concerning the members' needs and expectations in the field of electronic records. The questionnaire is used to assess what kind of role (if any) EURBICA should play in this issue.

After Mr Kellerhals's presentation the President opened the discussion on this matter whose core was the question whether EURBICA should add electronic records to its programme. The floor was first taken by Mrs Mary Ann Hadyka from the National Archives of the United States who had prepared, at the request of the Secretary General, a short overview of the current state of the American ERA (Electronic Records Archives) Programme. The Programme was launched by the National Archives in 1998 and its aim is to develop a system, independent of any hard- and software, which could be used in long-term preservation of authentic electronic records. The first three years of the project were intense research the partners of which were government agencies, computer science institutions and archives. In the summer of 2005, NARA selected Lockheed Martin as the contractor to build the system. The plan is that in 2007 the system would be partly operative, with full operating capability in 2011. The

great aim of the National Archives is that all electronic materials as well as their finding aids would be in the same system. ERA will be used in implementing this. The budget to do this would be ca. 300 million \$.

Mrs Nalecz asked if this money covered also digitisation of records. The ERA program will not cover this specifically although digitized records will be a part of ERA. NARA is working with several private corporations and universities to digitize select NARA holdings. The President thanked Mrs Hadyka for her interesting presentation. On her part, the President shed light on the French situation by saying that a common platform for all electronic records is under construction. It should be in operative use in 2009.

Mr Hartmut Weber underlined that it is very important that archivists deal with electronic records. He emphasised the role of DLM-network in this.

The President returned to the basic question: should EURBICA get involved in electronic matters. She pointed out that we could start with simple things like putting IT-information on EURBICA's website.

Mrs Nalecz pointed out that EURBICA should take into account all member countries including members who have just now beginning to deal with electronic issues. According to her, information about standards, guidelines, case studies etc. should be disseminated actively. A lot of things are happening in many countries and this information should be made available in a concentrated manner. Mr Karel Velle proposed that questions, answers, analysis etc. could be put on the Web too.

The President summed up the discussion by saying that according to her interpretation, the attendants were in favour of adding electronic issues to EURBICA's programme. The Assembly gave unanimously its acceptance to the President's view. The President said that the first phase of this new programme item would be the exchange of information about issues concerning electronic records.

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

See item 6.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

The President raised two issues on which she wanted to give information to the Assembly. In the Executive Committee a working group was established whose task is to harmonize the constitutions of the branches and sections with ICA's new constitution. The new constitution might be on the agenda of the next General Assembly. The Secretary General of ICA Joan van Albada pointed out that the first draft would be available in four or five months time. As regards the next General Assembly, the President pointed that it would be desirable to have it in Warsaw in May because that would guarantee an active attendance. Mr van Albada said EURBICA was free to deal with the constitution issue in Warsaw.

Then the President gave the floor to Hans Naess (Norway) who was coordinator in the Task Force ICA's Revenue Structure. Mr Naess informed the Assembly about the financial situation of ICA which became very critical after Vienna. The Task Force was established to propose solutions to the crisis by the ICA Executive Board at its meeting in Washington in April 2005. In its report the Task Force proposes three main points:

1. The currency problem must be avoided which will be done by using one currency only (euro).
2. The conditions of the Secretariat (Paris) must be changed so that it is not over-worked.
3. The annual minimum budget of ICA to cover basic secretarial and functional costs is 800 000 euros. The Task Force proposes that 40-50 richest members of ICA would have the main responsibility to raise this sum. The contribution of the remaining ca. 140 members would be much less. This money plus external funding will be used to fund projects.

After thanking Mr Naess the President took up the issue of the report of EURBICA's liaison officer. According to the agenda item 5, EURBICA's liaison officer Herman Coppens (Belgium) should have had a presentation about EURBICA's relationship with the European institutions. Unfortunately Mr Coppens was not able to attend the General Assembly. He had asked Mrs Martinez to be his substitute in the Assembly.

Mrs Martinez told, on Mr Coppen's behalf, that the recommendations on the European legal database now joined to the new *Report on Archives in the enlarged European Union* were endorsed on 14 November. The recommendations take into account the work done by EURBICA in this field. She also told that a new body, European Archives Group, will be established comprising representatives from the Member States and EU Institutions. The task of the group is to focus on the promotion and implementation of the concrete actions indicated in the Report, in particular the five main actions which are

1. Damage prevention and restoration.
2. Electronic records.
3. Internet Gateway/Portal to European archives
4. Legal matters (legislation, database).
5. Measures against theft.

At the end of the meeting the President asked if the Assembly accepted her proposal to arrange next General Assembly in Warsaw in May 2006 in connection with the 7<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Archives. The proposal was approved.

No other matters came up and the President concluded the meeting.

