

EURBICA REPORT 2000-2004

European Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives Report 2000-2004 Establishment, Membership and Organisation

After consultation with ICA category A and B members in Europe, the European Regional Branch of ICA (EURBICA) was established during the XIV International Congress on Archives in Seville on 23 September 2000. It was established to continue and solidify the work of the ICA Co-Ordinating Board for Europe.

The membership of EURBICA includes the European members of the ICA categories A-D (1050 members in all). The criterion with regard to "European" is membership in the Council of Europe with the exceptions: The Vatican and Belarus are both members of EURBICA although they do not belong to the Council of Europe. As regards the right to vote and candidate for the posts of EURBICA's functionaries in General Assemblies, it is limited to category A (83) and B (28) members.

EURBICA has three observers (since November 2002): Canada, Israel and the United States. The representatives of these countries have the right to attend the General Assemblies but not the right to vote. They also get the same information (e.g. members' letters) as the regular members.

The decision making and administration of EURBICA are based on two bodies, the Executive Board and the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the highest authority in EURBICA: it determines the policies and activities of EURBICA and elects members of the Executive Board..

The Executive Board manages the current business of the Branch and prepares agendas for the General Assemblies. It also recommends strategic plans and work programmes and carries them out after they have been adopted by the General Assembly.

The tasks and responsibilities of the General Assembly and the Executive Board as well as the whole EURBICA are determined by the EURBICA's Constitution which was prepared by the Executive Board and was approved by a General Assembly that was held in Marseille in November 2002. The Constitution is available both in English and French on EURBICA's website (accessible through ICA's website: www.ica.org).

The first Executive Board for EURBICA was elected in Seville in September 2000 in connection with the establishment of the new Regional Branch. The Board that was elected in Seville included Philippe Bélaval (Director of the French Archives), Daria Nalecz (Director of the Polish State Archives), Viktoras Domarkas

(Lithuanian Archives Department), Gigliola Fioravanti (General Directorate on Archives, Italy), Andreas Kellerhals (Swiss Federal Archives), Jari Lybeck (National Archives of Finland) and Norbert Reimann (ICA/SPA). Philippe Bélaval was nominated President and Daria Nalecz Vice-President of EURBICA. Jari Lybeck was nominated Secretary (later Secretary-General) of EURBICA. The nominations were approved by the First General Assembly of EURBICA that was held in Florence in May 2001, with the exception that the Treasurer and a new President were elected there (see below).

Philippe Bélaval left the French Archives at the beginning of 2001 and, consequently, resigned from the Executive Board too. His successor as Director of the French Archives Martine de Boisdeffre was elected President of EURBICA in Florence in May 2001. The duties of a Treasurer were taken up by the Treasurer of the ICA Leopold Kammerhofer in May 2001. It was decided that when the Treasurer of ICA comes from Europe, he or she will act also as the Treasurer of EURBICA.

Patrick Cadell, the former National Archivist of Scotland, who acted (on an ICA mandate) as a liaison officer of EURBICA in relation with the European Union and the Council of Europe, was elected an ex-officio member of the Executive Board in Reykjavik in October 2001. At the same General Assembly Josip Kolanovic (Director of the Croatian State Archives) was elected a member of the Board to represent the South East European countries there. Due to retirement Mr Kolanovic left the Board in the autumn of 2003. - Although a Board member can be seen to represent a certain geographical area in Europe, the membership in the Board is always personal and a vacant place can be filled only by a decision made by the General Assembly.

Although the Secretariat-Generalship has been in Finnish hands since September 2000, the staff of the President (Mrs de Boisdeffre) has also been rather heavily involved in secretarial duties because all the main texts (e.g. the minutes) are translated into French in her Department which also maintains the website.

During the period of 2000-2004 the Executive Board has met as follows (situation in July 2004):

- January 12, 2001, Paris (5 members)
- April 4, 2001, Lund (7 members)
- October 9, 2001, Reykjavik (8 members)
- November 12, 2002, Marseille (8 members)
- April 30, 2003, Paris (5 members)
- October 19, 2003, Cape Town, (6 members)
- April 7, 2004, Paris (6 members)

A new Executive Board will be elected during the XV International Congress on Archives in Vienna on 23 August, 2004.

The General Assemblies took place as follows (situation in July 2004)

- May 29, 2001, Florence (31 attendants)
- October 12, 2001, Reykjavik (60 attendants)
- November 15, 2002, Marseille (63 participants)
- October 20, 2003, Cape Town (29 attendants)

The next General Assembly will take place in the Vienna Congress on 23 August 2004.

PROGRAMME: EURBICA'S PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

Strategic plan

A special strategic plan (available on EURBICA's website) was adopted for EURBICA in the General Assembly held in Reykjavik in October 2001. The strategic plan defines a few guidelines which try, while taking into account of EURBICA's limited resources, to benefit the whole EURBICA community. The guidelines on main areas of interest mentioned in the strategic plan are as follows:

- detailed overview on research and cultural exchange programmes; the purpose is to issue a guide providing practical information relating to European research and support programmes;
- training; a survey on training needs in Europe that would e.g. provide basis for new training courses;
- appraisal; a survey of European appraisal criteria the results of which could be used as a basis for European recommendation on the subject;
- legislation and regulations on archival matters; an on-line database containing the said legislation and regulations of the different European countries with a comparative analysis.

Partnerships and Co-operation

Co-operation is the guiding principle of EURBICA. The idea is to have partners to reach common goals and to avoid overlapping activities. The main partners of EURBICA include other ICA organisations, especially three scientific Committees, namely the Committee on Appraisal, the Committee on Legal Matters and the Committee on Professional Training.

As regards external relations, EURBICA has two permanent institutions. First, Martine de Boisdeffre, President of EURBICA, is a member of EBNA (European Bureau of National Archivists). EBNA, which is a EU-organisation, has a meeting every six months hosted by each new Presidency of the European Union. The President of EURBICA is entitled to attend EBNA meetings even if he or she is not a National Archivist. Martine de Boisdeffre attended, every six months, the

EBNA meetings organized by the country in charge of the European Union presidency. During the Athens meeting in 2003 hosted by the Greek presidency, Martine de Boisdeffre presented a document defining the relationships between EURBICA and the European organizations.

Second, Patrick Cadell acts as a liaison officer between EURBICA, the institutions of the European Union and the Council of Europe. Mr Cadell's report is attached to this report as a separate enclosure. Through its representative Patrick Cadell EURBICA has been involved with discussions on three Council of Europe Recommendations in the formulation of which he has also given a contribution.

Concrete Results

EURBICA activities can be defined either broadly or narrowly. If a member wants to put its activities in the context of EURBICA and if it wants to disseminate information about them and their results through EURBICA channels then they are, in a sense, EURBICA activities. To speak in more precise terms, EURBICA activities are activities realised by EURBICA as an organisation.

Seminars, Conferences, Symposia

Speaking in the broad sense of the term, many activities e.g. Eastern and South Eastern Europe can be described as EURBICA activities, e.g. annual colloquiums (most of them international) and other archival meetings organised by the Head Office of the Polish State Archives as well as the Croatian and Slovenian State Archives and the Association of Croatian Archivists and other archival organisations in the region.

15–17 May 2003 the ICA Committee on Professional Training and EURBICA had a joint seminar (17 attendants) in Helsinki where e.g. two ICA training surveys and the EURBICA survey were presented and discussed.

20–24 May 2003 the ICA Committee on Appraisal and EURBICA had a joint seminar (15 attendants) in Warsaw and Elblag on the EURBICA survey on appraisal.

The Direction of the French archives organised, in the context of EURBICA, an international seminar on archival buildings. It took place in Annecy 27-28 May 2003.

In Kiev the Director General Hennadii Boriak of the Ukrainian State Committee on Archives organised an international seminar on 7 May on preservation and reconstruction of archival materials in disasters situations. It was one of the first seminars of its kind (or even the first) at international level. EURBICA gave some assistance in organising the seminar.

Studies, Actions and Projects

The Head Office of the Polish State Archives has realised, in the context of EURBICA, two large surveys, one on international training courses/workshops and one on appraisal and selection of documents. Both surveys were completed in 2002. The appraisal survey was realised in co-operation with the ICA Committee on Appraisal.

The so called Legal Database is one of the top priorities of EURBICA. The idea is to collect all European archives and related laws into an on-line database with comparative approach (a very important feature of the project). Due to lack of resources only some preparatory planning work has been done so far. However in the spring of 2004 the project got a new momentum by the joint decision of the Board to prepare a prototype of the database to be presented to the General Assembly in the Vienna Congress. The French Directorate of Archives is responsible for realising this prototype. The importance of the project is underlined by the fact that the DLM-Forum (a EU-based forum of co-operation) is about to adopt a similar project. The situation is somewhat awkward because the mandates and geographical areas of the EU and EURBICA are not entirely overlapping. The big question is, what would be the best way to co-operate.

A project called Common Archival Heritage (CAH) began in 1998 (see Website www.archiwa.gov.pl/CAH/index.html). The main goal of the programme has been to provide as broad an access as possible to information on archives consider as the source base for the common history of Central, Southern and Eastern Europe. At the moment six partners are involved in the CAH Project: the Open Society Archives (Budapest) and the archives administrations of Austria, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Ukraine. The programme is to be enlarged to cover the whole of Europe within six frame programmes called "eHeritage Portal". The idea is to focus on information on archival holdings referring to the history of other nations and states preserved in the archives of a given country. The project is now being realised within the context of EURBICA, i.e. EURBICA follows it closely and disseminates information about it.

In Italy an experimental international course on the conservation and access to photographic materials has recently been underway (12 January – 7 June 2004). The course, which was attended by 42 participants, was organised by Centro di Fotoriproduzione, Legatoria e Restauro degli Archivi di Stato, Istituto per la Patologia del Libro and Dipartimento di Fisica dell'Università "La Sapienza", in the framework of a project concerning higher education for librarians, archivists and conservators.

Most of the countries of South Eastern Europe have signed agreements on cultural cooperation and the exchange of experts and literature. The co-operation of archival educational programmes is one of the aims of this co-operation. One large co-operative project is about the archival sources of the Illyrian provinces. It is a joint project of Austria, Croatia, France, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia.

Future Actions

In the Cape Town General Assembly (October 2003) the Executive Board proposed that organising professional seminars be one of the main forms of EURBICA's activities. The proposal was approved unanimously. Two themes were put forward as the main themes for the year 2004: first, the prevention of natural disasters (fires, floods etc) and the reconstruction of damages caused by them, second, the methodology of teaching records management. A seminar on the first theme was realised in Kiev, Ukraine, mainly by the Ukrainian archives administration and some assistance by EURBICA.

A second seminar will be arranged in Helsinki, Finland, in November 2004. It will be a two day seminar with the title "Seminar on Teaching Records Management and on further Education/Training of Teachers". It will be organised together with EURBICA, ICA Committee on Professional Training and the National Archives of Finland.

Another seminar will be organised by the Direction des Archives de France on electronic finding aids ("Les Instruments de recherche électroniques") on 7-8 October 2004. The focus will be on DTD (Document Type Definition), EAD (Encoded Archival Description) and EAC (Encoded Archival Context). Translations will be both in English and French (see ICA and EURBICA's website).

Publications and Communications

- Strategic Plan, both in English and French (available on EURBICA's Website)

A directory of European research and cultural programmes, both in English and French (prepared by the Direction of the French Archives in 2001 and delivered to ICA Category A and B members)

Survey on international training courses and workshops, in English (realised by the Head Office of the Polish State Archives) (distributed widely in electronic form)

- Appraisal and Selection of Documents: Report on the International Survey, in English (realised by the Head Office of the Polish State Archives and the ICA Committee on Appraisal; available on EURBICA's website)

Regular information to members and observers (all categories) by mail, both in English and French.

The EURBICA's Website, available through ICA's Website (www.ica.org) is now under active development work. The new version, which will be a portal (www.eurbica.org), will be presented in the Vienna Congress, and put into service in September 2004.

Finances

EURBICA is funded basically in the same way as the other regional branches. The branches are entitled to an annual appropriation which varies from 3000 to 4000 euros per year. The expenses of EURBICA's liaison officer (Patrick Cadell) are covered by an additional, proportional payment paid by the members. It is an open question if such a liaison officer will be employed during the period of 2004-2008.

The French government has funded EURBICA activities with an additional 10 000 euros.

Proposals for EURBICA's priorities post-2004

According to the present Executive Board the future priorities of EURBICA should include Training, the Legal Database Project as well as enhancement of the Common Archival Heritage project in all its aspects, especially oral sources as well sources in digital forms. The Board also took into account the proposal made by the Czech National Archivist Dr Babicka on the importance of studying the various issues connected with the problems of ethnic and minority archives in Europe : however this issue, which has political aspects, will have to be discussed by the next General Assembly.

Another important issue is the European Archives Conference that will be held in Poznan, Poland, in 2006. It will be, during the 2004-2008 period, the only conference of such an importance held in Europe. EURBICA will, as an organisation, will take part in the planning and realisation of the conference which will be organized by SPA, the Polish Association of Archivists, and the Head of the State Polish Archives.