



Minutes

Steering Committee ICA-SPP, Meeting d.d. Friday, Aug. 27th 2004; Austria Center (B550), Vienna

Attendants:

Günther Schefbeck (president), Mariona Corominas i Noguera (vice-president), Marietta Minotos (vice-president), Reinder van der Heide (secretary), Vincenzo Arista, France Bélisle, Claus Brüggemann, Mateo Maciá, Inaldo Marinho, Béla Pálmanyi, Michael Schneider, Reinhard Schreiner

Absentee:

Mario Tonelotto

Günther Schefbeck (GS), president of the SPP, prefaces the meeting with a few remarks, as a further elucidation on the Draft agenda 2004 – 2008, in the possession of the attending Steering Committee members (see Annex):

1) Organizing yearly SPP-conferences/seminars:

Possibly in cooperation with the ECPRD (European Center for Parliamentary Research & Documentation) / CERDP (Centre Européen de Recherche et de Documentation Parlementaire), an organization set up in 1977 as a network to foster cooperation and exchange of information between parliamentary libraries and research departments in Europe. It has organised several seminars on archival subjects in the last years, e.g. in Brussels (2002) and The Hague (2003): <http://www.ecprd.org/index.asp>;

focusing on actual challenges for archivists due to technological as well as societal developments of relevance to both parliaments and political parties;

We should try to think up projects of interest for both political party archivists and for parliamentary archivists.

In the programs of future seminars there should be particular attention to a balanced agenda leaving room for subjects specifically of interest for parliamentary archivists on the one hand and archivists of political parties on the other hand;

furthermore we need proposals for subjects, premises, hosts (a shelter for our efforts); also we need hosts for Steering Committee meetings (one or two times a year);

GS: Has any one proposals on these subjects?

Mariona Corominas i Noguera (MC): I'd like to know more about the ECPRD/CERDP. GS explains (see above).

Béla Pálmanyi (BP): We should use Internet and e-mail etc., in my opinion we have had too few meetings in the last four years. My proposal: let's talk about the desired frequency of meetings and/or conferences in the 2004-2008 period ahead. Is it perhaps necessary to

organise separate congresses for political party foundations and for parliaments? The sessions can be smaller in that case. Let us talk about this.

GS: Our proposal is not to organise separate conferences, but to organise in the future more balanced agendas for conferences/seminars of the SPP.

Reinhard Schreiner (RS): I share the view of our president; separating the sessions for parliaments from sessions for political party organisations would be a bad idea, and the beginning of splitting the SPP, not a sensible thing to do, both organisationally and probably financially as well.

GS: Our basic idea is to organise yearly conferences (so in 2005, 2006, 2007 and maybe 2008, although in 2008 the Plenary Meeting of the ICA will take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia); as far as Steering Committee meetings are concerned, we think one meeting per year should suffice.

BP: Can we meet next February (2005)?

Claus Brüggmann (CB): I think that is a good idea, we can then think over the program for the four year period ahead.

GS: I agree. We should collect all the material, I think in February some structured material will be available. We can exchange information, ideas and other material via e-mail.

Michael Schneider (MS): We should have a list of all the members of the Steering Committee plus all the relevant data, and distribute these data among us.

Reinder van der Heide (RvdH): I will make the list and send it to you as an appendix of the minutes of this meeting (see Appendix 2).

Mateo Maciá (MM): In connection with a possible cooperation with the ECPRD: the ECPRD is only an European organisation, whereas the ICA-SPP has a global function. I'm not sure if cooperation would be a good idea?

GS: I have had contact with the co-director of the ECPRD, he was also on the seminar in The Hague, and he showed a lot of interest in cooperating with us.

CB: If we organise a seminar or conference, why don't we invite them to attend?

MM: I want to stress the importance of the archival matters to us (ICA-SPP). I agree with the idea of two Committee meetings, one plenary meeting with two different conferences for resp. the political party organisations and the parliaments, I agree with Palmanyi's idea.

GS: I'll try to structurize the discussion so far:

We have

1. frequency of meetings;
2. how to organise the meetings;

Are we in agreement about frequency?

France Bélisle (FB): Frequency also has financial consequences for extra-European members,

this can be a problem.

At this time and place some translating in French had to take place. Thanks to FB, our bilingual and therefore unsurpassed Canadian colleague from Ottawa, the exchange of thoughts, ideas, views, opinions and convictions, so far taking place exclusively in English, from this moment on was also performed in the other official ICA language for the benefit of our more francophonely inclined colleagues from Italy, Spain and, last but certainly not least, Hellas (Greece).

In the slipstream of these translationary attempts to quell the imminent surging of potential miscommunication suddenly a cornucopia (horn of plenty) of proposals and commitments emerged, whereby GS invited the Steering Committee to Vienna in February 2005, MC pledged to make an effort to organise the next ICA-SPP Conference in Barcelona (spring or autumn 2005?), and our new Brazilian colleague mr. Inaldo Marinho Junior (IM) invited all of us to Brazil in November 2005!

GS: Question: how do we organize all this? I don't think it is necessary to meet in two different conferences, I do therefore not agree with BP's idea. If there are interests, challenges or subjects specific for parliaments or typically of interest to political party organisations, then we can organise those interests in one conference. Every SPP member can choose to attend the lectures or presentations he or she prefers at a given moment.

RvdH: I fully agree with our president, it would be inefficient and unnecessary to split up the conferences, to separate activities and/or interests along the lines of the different background of our members. Any one should be able to attend presentations by representatives of the other organizational background, it might be also of interest to his own surroundings.

FB: I also fully agree, we're all about the same: "information".

MM: But the documentation in resp. parliaments and political parties is very different, and requires a different treatment.

CB: We should leave it to the section members themselves to choose which lectures or presentations they wish to attend.

RS: I agree with GS, RvdH and CB.

MC: I agree with MM: political party foundations and parliaments are two different things. Political parties are private, parliaments are public institutions.

Vincenzo Arista (VA): Can't we organise two different meetings, a political party meeting and a parliamentary meeting, during one conference?

RS: Modern parties have documentation too, parliaments have archives too, separating the two on these grounds (private/public) would not be wise in my opinion.

MS: Leave the past behind! Cooperation between foundations and parliaments is possible in all cases, we both face the same (digital) problems, try to find the issues in which we are all interested: standardisation (deciding on standards/ISO-NEN-norms), digitisation, preservation, etc.

MM: agrees with MS.

IM: we should stay together, it is necessary for both groups (to combine forces). ‘Design a new history for this section’ (make a new future).

GS: sums up the issues and the discussion so far.

1st proposal: two different options:

- organising different conferences: nobody really wants that;
- one conference: separation in 2 working groups.

GS, at this moment of his summing up, interrupts himself in order to share three points of experience:

I’ve been to several conferences; experience shows that meeting and working in smaller working groups enhances exchanges of views; you can get into better and deeper discussions that way.

Political party organisations and parliaments, are they a completely different thing? Legally: yes, but do they have different professional interests: no. There is a constant converging of documentation and archives. Historical separation gets less and less important. Parliamentary archives are usually very structured archives. Political parties have much more unstructured documentation. The new technologies blur these differences, overcome them, so, differences become less and less important.

Being together in one section: we form a critical mass, because of which we can organise something. We should try to avoid separation of activities.

Back to summing up:

- A majority within the section stress the importance of common and general interests.
- Some want to organise workshops along the lines of political parties and parliaments, resp.
- Organise conferences
- Split up the subjects (organise workshops), not the section.

MM: promises to send data on the section next monday.

We are the second section in terms of growth. In the last 4 years we gained 22 new members.

GS: Our growth is due to the differentiated nature of our section. Contrasts and similarities are attractive. It is worthwhile to exchange views, opinions, ideas about different fields of experience.

We should now concentrate on the next subject for our conference.

Final summary:

- we keep to joint conferences; and will
- organise conferences with smaller discussion groups on the basis of subject.

2) Subject matters (defining their level of abstraction; identifying priorities)

Common needs, laid down in standards;

Own standards, or link up with other ICA working groups that are drawing up standards, mark-up languages etc.

We live in a transition period of digital preservation vs. analogous preservation; how do we cope with that?

The conference in Barcelona: what shall we choose as framework / main theme for that conference? The floor is open!

RvdH: my proposal would be to explore both the wonderful as well as the problematic kernel – in my view – of the electronic, c.q. digital developments that we are dealing with, namely

that these new technologies signify, c.q. imply three important modernisations available to organisations as well as individuals:

- an enormously increased speed regarding transport of information;
- an exponential increase in distributional potential;
- a tempting mirage of seemingly unlimited storage room.

The latter modernization poses serious problems where transport and distribution, not through space, but through time is at stake (= accessibility on the long run, in other words: digital longevity/permanence).

GS: This could be a main theme or framework for the conference. It seems indeed especially important for our section. Parliamentary and political party archives are or at least seem somehow closer to documentation than archives of other organisations. It is of the utmost importance to organise and classify our archival documents etc. in an as early as possible stage, to assure long-term preservation.

MS: Users don't see the difference between archives or documentation at all, so I second the proposal of RvdH. This matter is connected with point 2 also (standards and standardisation).

MM: There are different important and interesting subject that are the questions of the day:

- e-Parliament;
- website preservation;
- digitisation;
- long term preservation;
- document-, record- and workflow management systems, etc.

GS: Here in the Austrian Parliament the system of electronic support of law-making is relatively advanced (workflow management and electronic documents). Giving insight into this system and its implications as to long-term-preservation of documents could be a subject for our next conference (Barcelona) or even future conferences.

Claus Brüggmann (CB): There is already a standard, so the first step is done: the ISO-NEN-15489; a topic for the next conference could be the Moreq standard, we can ask Angeles Valle de Juan, she knows a lot about it.

GS: I have a short intervention: we could make this a workshop-item.

MC: The ISO-NEN-norm is a more international standard, but this aside, I think the role of the archivist as manager and producer of documentation within the parliamentary organisation is, or at least should be, a central one and therefore it is a very important issue for our section.

GS: Convergence and integration, this role of the archivist is an aspect of that. Moreq has been developed for European parliaments, we should focus on and/or use general international standards like ISO-NEN, etc. The responsables within parliaments should be aware of our role in the parliamentary machinery.

BP: I'd like to say something about e(lectronic)-Parliament. I have a different and difficult question. There exists a great difference between developed and less developed countries. Can't we make questionnaires: we'll have to ask every member, working for a parliament, about their current practice: for instance: how about substitution of paper documents by electronic documents? We should collect as much information as possible in the next year.

Who could help with this task?

CB: During the next conference we can ask the members in order to get to know as much as possible. The results of the conference can be written down in a summary, and then:

- we provide the attendants of conference with basic information about the situation of the members;
- we make a questionnaire with reference to the summary of the conference (recommendations, discussions, decisions etc.)

FB: I support what Mariona said about the role of the archivist. We talk about information management: papers, documents, videotapes, etc., it is all about knowledge management. How do we interpret / fill in our role as ‘keeper of the memory of our organisation’?

GS: Summing up:

We have a next conference;
 we have a title (From Archives to Information Management)
 we have a time and place and an organiser for the conference (Barcelona in Spring/ Mariona);
 we have a sub-theme: management of electronic information;
 and we have a possible subject for a future conference: archival questions related to websites – 2007 (?).

MS: volunteers to preside over a workgroup about the last theme.

3) SPP website (improving and expanding it)

CB: We should put draft guidelines, draft recommendations of the meetings etc. on the website; members could then comment on the draft. Furthermore, we could put texts on elections on the site. Subjects like: how to run the Steering Committee and/or Plenary Meetings; a set of procedural rules would also be handy if available on the website.

Anticipating item 7 of the agenda, a short discussion about adopting procedural rules arises.

GS sums up: Every member of the Steering Committee is invited to send in a draft. In case there are contradictory elements, the secretary and the president will work them out. The deadline for these drafts should be the end of November, also for the comments and contradictory views. If there are no comments, then the text at hand is accepted. At the next meeting of the Steering Committee we’ll vote on it and present it to the members of the section.¹

CB: How about ‘virtual’ conferences?

GS: Some subjects could be discussed in a forum on a bulletin board, we’re not talking about video conferences, that’s music for the future, and there is a time problem of course. When Australia sleeps, Austria is awake and vice versa...

The minutes of the meetings can of course also be put on the website.

At this moment the website is hosted by a Spanish host; it costs about € 100 per year. A ‘virtual’ committee will decide on it (continuance); GS and RvdH will dive into that problem.

¹ Thanks to a hint given by CB, after the meeting we found out that – according to art. 61 of the ICA Constitution 2004 – section regulations always need to be submitted to the judgement of the ICA Executive Committee.

At this moment the Spanish Senate is paying for this. Could we have this sort of thing funded by the ICA? GS will take it up with Mr. Kammerhofer (financial department ICA), treasurer.

4) Creating a long-range concept for the print publications of the SPP

GS: Permanent and regular publishing is very useful, it enhances our 'corporate identity'. An annual report, a yearbook would be a good tool for enhancing item 6 (enlarging the Section). It can inform our future members what we're about, what we have been doing so far.

All the above is of course only feasible with money, in other words: additional funding.

- Funding
- Board of editors
- Perhaps deciding in February about a board of editors and/or 'peer-review';

GS says that he prefers the Steering Committee as board of editors.

5) Acquiring additional funding for the section's activities

MS: Speaking of funding. My organisation, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, might be able and willing to bear the costs of transport for far-away members who without such subsidizing would not be able to attend.

This offer by MS is cheered by the other committee members. MS will find out how much funds the FES could muster for this worthy cause.

BP mentions the UNESCO as a possible funding source that could be approached.

RvdH wonders if perhaps the Open Society Institute, part of the Soros Foundations Network would be interested in helping our section. Soros considers democracy and liberty of paramount importance, like we all do. Our section stands for those values. We might be able to find out if Mr. Soros is interested in helping us proliferate the realisation of such ideals by approaching his organisation.

BP: thinks that this might be a good idea. He has spotted some fellow countrymen of his, Hungarians somehow associated with Soros' organisation. Something good might grow out of this, he promises to approach them, try to dig a canal towards this possible source...

GS says that he'd like to be present too, when BP has a meeting with his fellow countrymen.

6) Enlarging the section

The draft agenda mentions under this heading:

- Animating ICA members from related fields (e.g. archives focusing on the personal papers of politicians) to enter the section;
- Inviting relevant archives particularly from outside Western Europe to join the ICA and the section;
- Using existing networks such as the IPU or the IALHI for encouraging parliamentary and party archives to become members.

?? brings up the subject of the Association of American Archivists: why are they not member of our section, is the question. And what about archivists from African and Asian countries like for instance Japan?

MM mentions the Mario Suarez Foundation, the Charles de Gaulle Foundation, etc., we should approach them about a possible membership of the SPP. It is agreed upon to send a list of those sort of foundations to the section.

RvdH mentions the IISG (International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam) as the type of organisations which should be made aware of our existence.

GS thinks it would be a good idea to make some sort of summary of what our section is all about, a fact sheet of some kind. Together with RvdH he will make a draft. Such a fact sheet or folder could be of great use, if sent to prospective members.

?? wants to know if there might be the possibility of reduced fees for members from less developed countries. We should find out if such a thing is possible by asking Mr. Mikoletzky. Probably it will not be possible to make a financial distinction between member countries from the so-called 1st, 2nd or 3rd world, for all sorts of reasons, recorded in the general ICA-regulations.

7) Furthering a vital, cooperative and amicable atmosphere in the section

The attendants of this meeting agree upon the fact that this meeting itself has been an example of what this last (but certainly not least) agenda point is all about. The meeting has been lively and animated, creative and constructive, and, over and above all this, it has yielded several tangible results. It would be best for all concerned to leave the past at rest in order to continue on the very positive and harmonious chord we have been able to strike together this past morning.

GS ends the meeting by expressing his confidence, that this meeting's atmosphere has been an indication that in the next four years future activities of the section can and will result in the furthering of solutions for the challenges we'll come up against in the professional sphere shared by political parties and parliaments.

