



Minutes

Steering Committee SPP/ICA, Meeting d.d. Tuesday, May 2nd 2006; Parliament of Austria Building, Vienna (Lokal II); 10.00 a.m. – 17.10 p.m.

Attendants:

Günther Schefbeck (president), Marietta Minotos (vice-president), Reinder van der Heide (secretary), Claus Brüggemann, Wlodek Kucner, Béla Pálmányi, Michael Schneider, Reinhard Schreiner

Absentees: Vincenzo Arista, France Bélisle, Mateo Maciá Gomez.

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0. Announcements

Günther Schefbeck (GS), president of SPP/ICA, starts the meeting by welcoming everybody. He has a few preliminary remarks:

- Mrs. Bélisle regrettably couldn't attend this meeting because there wasn't time enough to make reasonable travelling arrangements.
- Professional obligations forced Mr. Maciá to stay away from the meeting.
- The reason for Mr. Arista's absence hasn't come to the president's attention.

GS proposes, after having assured himself that no one present wants to add items on the agenda, to start the meeting immediately with the first item:

1. Next SPP-conference “The WWW as a challenge and as a chance for parliamentary and party archives”

This conference – proceeding from the results of the last SPP conference and going deeper into one particular subject mentioned there – should try to deal with the chances and threats the world wide web / the internet brings along for archives and archivists, especially in their role of ‘keepers of records’. In particular, the conference would have to focus on two different questions:

- How to deal with parliamentary and political party websites as matters to be archivally preserved, i.e. how to give users time-independent access to (every version of) these websites?
- How to use the Internet for presenting the archives themselves and give users space-independent access to their holdings?

At the former meeting of the Steering Committee in Vitoria this conference already has been tentatively planned to take place in Bonn (Germany) in the Autumn of this year (2006), but at that time nothing could be sure.

GS now gives the floor to Michael Schneider (MS), who unfolds to his increasingly surprised and excited audience a complete picture and program of a conference at Bonn from November 2nd – 4th of this year including starting and finishing times up to the minute of every item, presentations and even excursions to for instance Cologne. The conference's host will be the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

[N.B.: As secretary I will not try to outline the program exactly as MS initially explained it to the Committee; this wouldn't be efficient, because the ensuing discussion led to some mutations.]

As far as web archiving is concerned, arguments should be found why for instance we as parliamentary and/or political party archivists/record keepers want more than just having taken 'snapshots' of an internet site on a regular basis. It would be desirable to have discussions resulting in a set of *recommendations* on *how* to archive our websites.

In this perspective the question arose if and how the members could be brought to become involved in the proceedings; after all, recommendations need to be broadly based.

The second large subject to be dealt with by the conference will be: presentation by institutions of themselves and presentation of information on the internet – as a particular challenge to parliamentary and political party documentations and archives being responsible for making the political process transparent –, presentations of collections (not only document but also photo and AV collections), possible cooperation in these fields and other issues across borders between archives, documentations, and libraries, etc. This particular aspect will form the bridge to the 2007 SPP conference intentionally to be held in Corfu on the subject of cooperation of parliamentary and political party archives with their neighbouring institutions.

The last issue that has to be dealt with in the course of the 2006 conference would concern the legal problems (copyright, intellectual ownership, etc.) arising when presentation of information (publicizing) via the internet takes place. This is a global problem, and a global discussion; every one has to deal with it. Especially *practical* solutions for these juridical and theoretical problems will be sought after and exchanged. Photo's for instance are better presented with a very low dpi-resolution in order to take the wind out of the photographer's sail: a print of such a low resolution photo can hardly be considered to be a violation of (copy)rights.

In the program of course time will be reserved for the General Assembly (Thursday afternoon). The Steering Committee will already convene on Wednesday evening (Nov. 1st).

Non-business items

On Thursday evening members of the section get a chance to see and visit Cologne (Köln) where dinner will be served at "Früh" (near the famous cathedral).

On Friday a guided tour of the Archives of Social Democracy is on the program after which a reception will be held at the Bonner Rathaus (townhall of Bonn).

On Saturday we'll travel by bus to Trier. There will be a visit to the Karl Marx house as well as a guided tour of (Roman and medieval) Trier.

2. The future of the section

GS gives a short summary of the preceding developments regarding this very important issue: In Spring 2005 the conference of the Spanish parliamentary and political party archives passed a resolution in which a splitting of our section was proposed; this resolution was sent to the ICA Secretary General. This document was not submitted as an official motion to the president or the secretary of the section.

This internal resolution of the 'Spanish Group', not being part of the PA agenda as more than an issue which could be brought up under agenda item 5. 'Other issues' for discussion, was then nevertheless being pushed forward in an upgrading attempt as an official motion on the future of the section, to be voted on there and then, even before any other item on the agenda could be discussed. Of course, the president, in charge of guarding the procedures, the rightful order of the meeting and the rights of both present and absent members, could not leave the assembly to the 'Spanish Group's' own devices, and had thus to deny such procedural ways. Of course, lots of extra tension within the ranks of the membership present arose at that time, and the outcome of the meeting of the PA, contrary to the very interesting and successful conference itself during the days before, was not positive and/or constructive in any regard. Even the draft regulations, dealing with procedural and other complexities of this kind, were – deplorably so – not accepted.

GS adds that in his personal opinion the section should stay the way it has been conceived for several reasons. He on the other hand emphasizes that an open discussion should be started within the section involving all, or at least as many members as possible, regarding its function(s), its past and its future, whether we, archivists of parliaments, of political party organisations, and of personal papers of politicians, should stay together or not, whether there are other, different changes possible and/or wanted, etc.

At this moment there are two specific proposals on the table:

- Mrs. France Bélisle's proposal: she prepared a questionnaire in which the concept of splitting of the section is one issue among others (France Bélisle herself has expressed in a written statement to the 2005 meeting of the PA, which she couldn't attend as well, her preference for the status quo);
- Introducing an easily usable weblog structure for the members. This would make possible an interactive reciprocity between section members, and a good preparation for the next PA meeting as well.

Béla Pálmányi (BP) raises a question regarding the enlargement of the section (see also agenda item 4). He promises to try to update the existing list of all parliamentary and political party organisation's archivists. These people will then be eventually approached with the section's 'fact sheets'. RvdH promises to work on those.

BP regards the questionnaire by France Bélisle a bit too general, he'd like to see more specific questions asked. The questionnaire is therefore slightly amended by the SC (annex 1: English version, annex 2: French version).

Agreements:

- References to the achievements of SPP/ICA, in particular to the conferences held and the publications produced, will be added to the questionnaire, in order to provide the members with some sort of a balance-sheet, as a basis for reflecting on future activities.
- The questionnaire will not only be sent to the members but also serve as the starting point for the discussion on the section's future on the new weblog.
- BP will draft a new survey to update the existing list of all parliamentary and political party archives.

3. SPP Regulations

GS records the fact that no negative feedback has been received as far as the draft regulations are concerned. The rejection of the regulations at the Vitoria General Assembly was due to reasons outside the material contents of the draft, one can safely assume.

A valid reason to reject the draft regulations might have been the fact that they were only available in English at the time of the 2005 meeting of the PA. This sorry state of affairs has now been redressed thanks to France Bélisle, who translated the draft regulations in French.

In order to feel justified to submit the (bilingual) draft as a SC proposal to the next meeting of the PA, the SC members present once more go through the whole draft, which is passed with some slight amendments, including those moved by Mrs. Bélisle in writing. The new draft regulations are enclosed with these minutes (annex 3: English version, annex 4: French version).

4. Enlargement of SPP/ICA

- The new questionnaire/survey to be drafted by BP will be sent out to the larger list of addressees (outside of Europe as well), including the National Archives that will be asked to forward the questionnaire to parliamentary, political party, and politicians' archives being not yet members of ICA in their respective country.
- BP will try to lay hands on Maria Angeles' list as a point of departure for an updated list.
- In the list at least the following items should be addressed:
 - Name of institution
 - Location
 - Physical address
 - E-mail address
 - Website
 - Name leading person
 - Name contact person
 - Holdings
 - Archival services provided

BP hopes to be ready with this in June, in order to have answers before the end of September. The completed and official list could then be presented at the Bonn conference in November.

This is a first step in the enlargement process of the section, since by the survey itself relevant institutions would become aware of the section. As a next step, the updated list will enable us to actively inform these institutions of the section's profile.

This will be done by the new fact sheet or sheets about our section. As stated above, RvdH will try to produce such papers.

- The basis is already available in the form of a small article, published in Flash nr. 9 (April 2006, pag. 11);
- A list of the past conferences should be included;
- Another question to be answered via these fact sheets is: how to 'sell' the SPP?
- RvdH aims to have the sheets ready and available by the end of June;
- He thinks it might be handy to approach the 'correspondents' of the ECPRD for addresses; every one present promises to find as many names and addresses as possible, and also to contemplate a possibly wider group of interested parties.
- An opportunity to approach possible new members could be a conference to be held in Portugal in 2007 that Mr. Caldera of the Mario Soares Foundation indicated to be ready to organize: "Archives and Democracy". (It is yet to be clarified whether this conference will to be organized under the auspices of SPP, which would possibly mean that there would even be two SPP conferences in 2007.)

5. Website & weblog

GS summarises past website and host problems. He has set up a provisional weblog for organisational purposes of the SC, but due to technical imperfections this weblog being available free of charge has not proven to be very successful so far. There will be the opportunity to have an SPP weblog providing better technical functionalities at low cost.

The greater ICA hasn't been able to set up an overall infrastructure which could host sectional sites (though this will remain the mid-term intention of the ICA secretariat), so that avenue seems to be closed for the moment. Our Spanish committee member, Mr. Mateo Maciá, who in the course of the SC meeting in Vitoria was asked to explore the possibility of relaunching the website hosted by our former Spanish provider, did not give a positive report.

Claus Brüggmann (CB), who already in the course of the SC meeting on 14 March 2006 was nominated SPP "webmaster", sees possibilities to launch an interim solution in due course. For the time remaining until there will be the option to have the section's website hosted within the framework of the ICA website, he will establish, at low cost as well, a generic SPP website hosted by a German provider. It would be appreciated to send him 'all we have on SPP/ICA issues'.

CB will give his attention to the two main functions of an SPP website:

1. the information function:
 - the list of members, providing as much data as possible about them, and the overall list of the parliamentary, political party, and politicians archives of the world;
 - basic information about where we stand as section;
 - the minutes of the meetings of the PA/SPP and the SC/SPP;
 - conference proceedings and recommendations;
 - publications of the section and/or its members.

2. the communication function:
 - the forum function, either through linking to the section’s weblog or through using a bulletin board software:
 - for subjects of common interest, also between the conferences and PA meetings;
 - to make it possible to share things: problems / solutions / questions, etc.

6. Financial issues

GS explains that the basic funding of the SPP lies with the ICA. It involves a percentage of the membership fees (another reason for enlargement of the section). Then there is ‘project’-funding. A project will be eligible for funding if and when a ‘product’ is delivered in the course of this project (e.g. a publication). The SC is interested in any ‘project’ which might be proposed by the SPP members (submit them by e-mail).

Question: is ‘Bonn’ fundable? (depends on the ‘products’ generated by it). Generally speaking the ICA is not in the (financial) position to treat issues of funding ‘lightly’. Particular funding problems are regularly arising with regard to coverage of translation and interpretation expenses made necessary by the working languages regime, and with desirable support for members from developing countries making it easier for them to attend conferences.

BP informs the SC that the Soros Foundation mentioned earlier by him in connection with possible funding of particular SPP events aiming at involving members from developing countries currently seems unlikely to be ready to provide such funding.

7. SC Membership issues

The SC had three ‘leavers’ lately: Mr. Tonelotto, Mr. Marinho jr., and Ms. Corominas. One new member has been co-opted: Mr. Kucner. So GS raises the question whether the SC would deem it necessary to co-opt further new members, and to propose a candidate for vice-presidency to the PA. After a short discussion, the SC does not deem it necessary to co-opt new members now and to have a second vice-president elected in the course of the next meeting of the PA. (Under art. 60 para. 4 of the ICA Constitution 2004, there have to be “up to two vice-presidents” and “at least three other members”, so that the present composition is in compliance with the Constitution.)

8. Other issues

GS informs the SC that he will have the opportunity to represent the SPP at the ICA EB meeting in Tokyo in May 2006. At the end of November 2006 the CITRA and EB meetings will take place in Curaçao, for which the SPP president and secretary are invited. Though GS does not yet know whether he will be able to attend these meetings, he expresses his opinion that the SPP should be represented there. RvdH volunteers to try to get permission from his employer, the House of Representatives of the Netherlands (of which Kingdom Curaçao happens to be a part).

