



Minutes

Steering Committee SPP/ICA, Meeting d.d. Wednesday, Nov. 1st, 2006;
Hotel Consul, Bonn, Germany

Attendants:

Günther Schefbeck (president), Marietta Minotos (vice-president), Reinder van der Heide (secretary), France Bélisle, Claus Brüggmann, Włodzimierz Kucner, Mateo Maciá, Béla Pálmányi, Michael Schneider, Reinhard Schreiner

Absentee:

Vincenzo Arista

This Steering Committee Meeting took place in the evening at the Hotel Consul, Oxfordstraße 12, Bonn, Nov. 1st, 20.00 – 22.30 p.m.

Günther Schefbeck (GS), president of the Steering Committee (SC), welcomes the (many) attending members of the Committee.

GS gives a comprehensive account of the foregoing months, the preparation of today's conference, the cooperation with Michael Schneider (MS), organizer of the conference. He also brings to attention the events of the past year including the tableau of our Vitoria-conference, especially the plenary meeting at that occasion. He expresses his hope that a somewhat quieter path for our section lies ahead.

1) Working program 2006/2007 and the next conference of SPP/ICA

GS takes as point of departure for our next conference, which thanks to the preparatory efforts already taken by our vice-president will take place in Greece (Corfu, possibly Athens) in autumn 2007, the fact that archives and libraries/documentations have to co-operate with each other in the field of information management, and that at some institutions/organisations, the parliament of Sweden for instance, the archives are organisationally connected with or even part of the library and documentation centre.

Reinder van der Heide (RvdH) contends that the same – in an organisational way – goes for the situation in the Netherlands.

Marietta Minotos (MMi) thinks it a good idea to take '(future) co-operation between archives and libraries' as a promising subject for the Greek conference. After all, both archives and libraries in their cultural dimensions, contribute to the dissemination of high value information to the public and their representatives. Corfu University offering training for both archivists and librarians, this venue would prove to be particularly appropriate to discuss this particular subject.

She expects to be able to organize the conference at the end of October / beginning of November.

Claus Brüggmann (CB) mentions the fact that in general archives of politicians are blending the two areas, that of archivists and that of documentalists or librarians. Could this prove to be a fruitful sphere of experience?

Mateo Maciá (MMa) will approach Prof. Cruz, an expert of the field, to attend the conference.

RvdH could approach Prof. John MacKenzie Owen, a Dutch expert at the University of Amsterdam, who is covering both archivist and book (information) sciences.

GS promises to contact the international organisation for librarians, the IFLA, in preparation of the conference.

CB will try to find out what kinds of international collaboration are existing among documentalists. He presumes that especially copyright issues would be better known and understood by librarians. Due to increasing digitalisation in archives, the issue of intellectual ownership will play a major role in the future, as well. Access to information, particularly the permanent version of such access, is the common denominator for libraries, documentation centres and archives.

Everyone present agrees that an interesting conference on these issues must and will be possible. Sub-issues for the conference could deal with the cultural and educational responsibilities of archives and libraries and their differences, the legal environment and their differences, the training requirements for archivists, librarians, and documentalists, and the dimension of (future) international co-operation.

MMi proposes that she would try to involve students from Corfu University, the only Greek university offering an archival sciences curriculum, in the process of organizing the conference, and invite them to attend it. It seems to the SC a plausible solution to have the conference for that reason solely on the island of Corfu. To split the conference between Athens and the island of Corfu would, for travel reasons, be too expensive for many of the potential participants.

The SC members agree that next spring the SC will have a preparatory meeting, which will take place in Vienna.

GS brings up another project/subject: a conference to be organized by the Mário Soares Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal; theme: “Archives and Democracy” or “Open Archives, Open Societies”, something along those lines. MMi will try to contact the people there. If and/or when she has more information she will inform the SC members by e-mail.

Another item on the working program is ‘publications’. GS explains that the transcripts from the Vitoria-Gasteiz conference mp3-files are not (yet) available. The mp3-files themselves are available. MMa will try to get them to the secretary. The transcribing of these files can/will result in a publication.

MS brings up the possibility to have the results of the upcoming Bonn conference published. Of course, a precondition of such a publication would be the speakers to supply their papers/contributions.

Someone asks if it is obligatory to supply the papers in English and French. GS states that this is not the case, though a standard procedure to add a short summary in the other language would be very helpful if not desirable.

RvdH will try his luck with the Stenographic Department of his parliament. Perhaps they are willing and able to do some transcribing.

MMi asks if Comma, the periodical of the ICA would be willing to publish a contribution like the results of conferences. GS supposes that only rather short pieces/accounts are welcome in Comma. He doesn’t know exactly what plans the ICA has with Comma, perhaps in the future, due to the costs, it will be published only digitally. MMa will ask Mr Sobrón an account of the conference in Vitoria. RvdH will inform himself about the future of Comma at the Curaçao Annual General Meeting of the ICA, at which he intends to represent the section.

GS raises the question if anyone of us has ideas about a project. There are few reactions.

RvdH puts forward that he might be able to sort out, maybe solve our transcribe and translate

problems with speech recognition techniques. He has friends in the Netherlands experimenting with and researching of that sort of solutions. GS thinks that for that type of projects even EU funding might be available, and he refers to a corresponding project in the Estonian Parliament. Perhaps in Curaçao someone is interested in a joint venture regarding such a project, another section, another committee? RvdH will try to find out.

Another idea coming up is the construction of ‘twin-archives’, or partner-archives’, similar to what some cities have created among themselves: twin-cities or partner-cities. The idea is of course to help and inspire each other. In an e-mail to the secretary by Ms. Traoré Nassa, she summons up and explains the advantages of such arrangements. GS applauds the idea of such structured bi-lateral contacts, he thinks this could well be an improvement and a stimulation for archives, especially in third world countries, to get more involved in the SPP by exchanging ideas, knowledge, experiences, and people.

2) Questionnaire evaluation (2a) and strategic issues (2b)

a. As GS already mentioned during his small preliminary speech, our ‘researchers’ got a very poor response to their questionnaire, only four filled-in forms returned to the secretary, RvdH remarked. For that reason he suggests to the SC members to urge the attendant SPP members at the Bonn conference to fill in the form some time during this conference. GS intends to call attention for this solution during the meeting of the Plenary Assembly.

b. Strategic issues: The organisational structure of the SPP in the (new) draft regulations gives room for standing working groups for archivists of parliaments, for archivists of political parties’ organisations, as well as for politicians’ archivists. A concept-proposal to that effect has been sent to our Spanish colleagues but there was no reaction so far. The Spanish members have a meeting on Nov. 21st, so hopefully after that a comment will be received. GS adds that if the SPP draft regulations will be accepted at the Plenary Meeting tomorrow, there will be no need to amend them in accordance with future model regulations for ICA sections, because in that case our regulations will be adopted before the Executive Board has adopted model regulations (a template) for sections.

3) SPP website

CB, in his capacity as our webmaster, states what we all (could) know: mission accomplished, the website has been launched: <http://www.ica-spp.org>.

He thanks France Bélisle for her efforts to translate the English version into the French one.

The initial costs for the website were € 244,-, the annual costs only € 12,-. The site works smoothly, and according to CB the workload might have been worse.

RvdH asks about the weblog service. CB is a bit sceptical about the projected use of the weblog possibility. He doesn’t expect too much interest. GS argues that ‘internet’ wasn’t used either in the beginning. Only after a while, after the experience with a new medium, people throw themselves on something new. One should give people an incentive to use the weblog means. We should find a subject of interest, for instance why not start a weblog on archival partnership, use it as a means to intensify cooperation between archives in different countries? A sort of introductory seminar could be the kick-off. CB remains sceptical.

4) SPP enlargement and directory of parliamentary/party/politicians archives

Béla Pálmány (BP) has had problems with completing and correcting the list of colleagues all over the world; he used to dispose of an earlier list, but now it basically seems to have

disappeared. He has trouble creating an up-to-date list, especially with regard to non-members from political party institutions and politicians' foundation (parliaments are of course easier). He will, however, continue his efforts.

MMi has already made a draft letter; she disposes of many foundation addresses, and she'll send the list to GS.

Reinhard Schreiner (RS) remembers to have sent, in the first SPP year, letters to many political parties, receiving rather limited response. A survey of party archives in Europe reveals that most of them are stored at foundations. GS thinks many archives of politicians are in State Archives or regional/municipal archives. We should focus on making a directory of non-member institutions/party foundations. This directory should be on-line, and with it we should refer to the existence of our section. Potential members should be informed that membership of our section means being part of a network. Information about the section should be made available to them, and they should be made aware that membership is open to them.

RvdH will try to find out about party foundation addresses of Dutch organisations, and he will send them to MMi and GS.

5) Financial issues

According to GS the financial situation has not improved since our last meeting. In Tokyo he has insisted on more transparency in 'sectional' budgets, a wish that was endorsed by other presidents of sections, who were present at the meeting. He asks RvdH to bring up the subject in Curaçao again by asking for clarification regarding the available budget of the section. He has sent a letter to 'Paris', but so far no answer has been received. The question is: how much money is available, and by what procedure and under what conditions can we dispose of these funds?

GS urges the SC to contemplate new ways of acquiring public and/or private funding for no-matter-what activity we unfold. One of the declared aims of the section is that 'the southern hemisphere' will somehow get more involved / be able to take more part in our endeavours and activities, which probably would require funds obtained to support archivists from there to attend conferences and meetings taking place in Europe, or to organize events in developing countries.

6) SC membership issues

GS, for the time being, deems it not necessary to elect another vice-president, nor another member to its ranks. The nine other SC members present agree with him.

7) Other issues

a.

GS proposes to hold the next SC meeting in Vienna again; everybody agrees. It will be in late spring (April/May).

b.

GS summarizes what should be clarified in Curaçao:

- how to involve the sections in the overall ICA program
- the budgetary matter
- ins and outs of the template for sectional regulations

GS expresses his positive feelings about this meeting and thanks the attending members for their constructive contributions, and he expresses the hope that the plenary meeting tomorrow will be as fruitful.

