

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY Meeting Minutes, *Stockholm, Sweden*

Sunday 25 August 2012, 1400 hrs,  
Södertörn University

**EASR Officers:** Maya Burger, David Václavík, Marco Pasi, Jenny Berglund, Katja Triplett, Eugen Ciurtin

**IAHR Officers:** Rosalind Hackett, Tim Jensen

**National Associations Representatives:** Ron Geaves, Graham Harvey, David Zbiral, Aleš Chalupa, Christoph Bochsinger, Lidia Guzy, Ringo Ringvee, Janis Priede, Bjorn Ola Tafjord, Andrzej Szyjewski, Eugen Ciurtin, Charles Guittard, David Thurtjeff, Susane Olson, Peter Nynäs, Bulcsú Hoppál

### Adoption of final agenda

1. Adoption of final agenda
2. Reports by the President and the General Secretary
3. Treasurers report
4. Internet officer report
5. Process of nomination and election of the Executive Committee for term 2014 – 2016
6. Approval of membership of the Lithuanian Association for the Study of Religion
7. Approvals of individual memberships
8. Honorary membership
10. Information about next EASR Conference in 2013 in Liverpool
11. Information about next IAHR Congress in 2015 in Erfurt
12. Any other business

**The agenda was adopted.**

### President's report

I welcome you to the general assembly of 2012. It is the first time that EASR has come to Stockholm. We reach now the end of the conference, and we may warmly thank the organizers for the excellent organization of the conference. Ever since the Swedish team announced its readiness to host the conference, they did all that was to do. Everything worked so smoothly that we can only give applause to the whole team.

The high number of participants (over 350) in the conference is testimony to the increasing importance of our organization.

I would like to thank our executive committee and especially the various officers who have done such a great job to run EASR. I think they deserve our gratitude, and I remind you that this is all honorary work. As you will learn from the various reports, the different fields of our organization are working smoothly.

During the last year, we engaged in various subjects:

- The first one is related to our participation in the field of Euroresearch programs. I met the secretary of the Euroresearch in Bern in December 2011 who insisted upon our participation in the network they are establishing. He then contacted us regularly to be part of the planning of the funding. Marco Pasi as well as David Vaclavik attended these meetings and they will briefly report on it.
- The case of the Belgium association is still not solved. The association that was almost extinct for the last years and did not pay their fees, has approached us with a new configuration of a (re-)newed Belgium Association. However, the committee has decided together with the IAHR to inform the new association that the various universities in the country should be part of the project and equally represented. Tim Jensen has also informed them about some weak points in the new constitution. Once these questions are solved, the new Belgium Association will be part of IAHR and EASR.
- An important suggestion came from our publishing officer, Eugen Ciurtin, who proposes to establish a series reproducing the academic contributions of our annual meetings. The Executive committee has shown much interest in the question, but is not yet ready to follow up the initiative, as there are already many journals in the field available. The organisation of such a series would need further investigation.
- The executive committee has started the organisation of the elections of the members of the executive committee to be held in 2013.

These were the points, beside our regular business, regarding finances, scholarships, and organisation of the conference.

I have the pleasure to invite you to participate in the next year's conference in Liverpool 2013 on the subject of *Religion, Migration and Mutation*, organized by the British Association.

### General Secretary's report

The number of EASR-affiliated national associations is twenty-three, with sixteen individual members, two honorary members and one IAHR member (jointly held post). We have obtained one application for membership during this year. It has been request of the Lithuanian Association for the Study of Religion. The Lithuanian Association has accomplished all requirements and Executive Committee recommended approval of the Lithuanian Association during its last meeting.

On the other side there is a group of the national association, which are passive and they haven't pay a membership fee for years. These are Association for the History of Religions of Belgium-Luxembourg, Portuguese Association for the Study of Religions and Polish Association for the Science of Religions. More information will be presented in a treasurer report. The President, General Secretary and the treasurer propose following steps:

- 1) To propose to the General Assembly deleting of the Belgium Association from the EASR members list
- 2) To contact the Portugal and Polish Associations and ask them for clear answer, if they want still to be a member of the EASR and for paying owed fees

### Regular business

a) The call for this year's General Assembly was made by email more than 90 days in advance as required by the constitution. It was posted on the e-lists of EASR.

b) Member associations and individual members were reminded of the need to pay subscriptions (or make an arrangement with the Treasurer) by 31 May. More information will be given in treasure's report

c) EASR bursary information and application form were circulated and posted on the website earlier in the year (with closing date of mid-June). Unlike last year we have obtained no less than eleven applications, which is probably an all time record. Receiving so many applications makes it of course also necessary to make a selection, which has been carried out as usual by the special committee composed of myself, the President and the General Secretary. We had five bursaries and all have been awarded to the best candidates. More information will be given in treasure's report

d) The Working group on Honorary membership has prepared proposal for a new honorary membership. More information will be presented in item 9

e) Next EASR **conferences will be held in September 4 – 6 2013 in Liverpool (UK)**, hosted by the British Association for the Study of Religions and in **May 11 – 15 in 2014 Groningen (Netherlands)**, hosted by the Dutch Association for the History of Religions.

It is gratifying to think of the business of EASR moving ahead in such capable and experienced hands, with new members joining the committee and others remaining for a second term, and with an excellent spread of officers from East, West, South and North of the continent.

## Treasurer's report and finance matters

### *Treasurer's report*

#### 1. General remarks

We can be generally satisfied with the financial situation of the Association. This year has ended again, like last year, with a positive balance. We have in fact a credit total of € 11.909, which means a credit balance of € 3130 with respect to last year. This significant increase is also due to the fact that, as you know, we had no submissions for bursaries last year, and therefore we could save the total budget that had been earmarked for them. The only small inconvenience is that our new bank ABN AMRO (see last year's report) is now charging us for the usual bank expenses, which we did not have with the former bank. This is of course absolutely normal with a commercial bank, and it usually involves relatively small amounts. But it also means of course that we need to be careful in how the account is managed, because at the end of the year all these expenses can make a difference. In any case, in order to cover these expenses he has now opened also a savings account next to the usual current account, which will allow us to have some interests on the capital at the end of the year.

Another point that should be mentioned is that the expenses for the maintenance of our website are higher than we had anticipated. We had earmarked an amount of € 600 for website-related costs, but in fact we have spent € 756. This means that I had to go over the allotted budget, which was not a serious problem since we spent nothing on bursaries and less than anticipated on travel costs for officers. But it is clear that for the next year the website budget will have to be raised.

Our cash inflow, which as you know of course is mostly based on the members' dues, has remained stable, and is about € 3000 per year. This remains therefore the relative amount that we have at our disposal for our ordinary expenses, which consists mainly in the bursaries for participation in EASR conferences and travel costs for EASR officers.

## 2. Dues

He has no big issues to report concerning the payment of the dues. As usual, some associations were a bit late, but most situations were solved before the conference. And then we have what we could now call our “chronic” cases. I think there is no need to say anything about Belgium, since things are now moving in that country, but the situation should obviously be discussed in a different moment. He understands in any case that we should consider the old Belgian association dead for all intents and purposes and that no payment of dues should ever be expected from them. The association will however remain in the paying roll until its dissolution and termination of membership is formalised. We then have two other situations of associations that have not been paying for a number of years: the Polish and the Portuguese association. At this moment it is still impossible for me to establish any line of communication with the Polish association and I invite Polish officers and members, if they are present here, to get in contact with me any time and try to solve once and for all this situation. There is not much to be said about the Portuguese association because, from what he has heard, it also seems dormant, or even close to extinction. Unless it is somehow revived we cannot really expect any payment of dues, or even communications, from them. Concerning the individual members, he would like to thank Ivar Maksutov, who is their representative on the Executive Committee, for collecting their dues, which makes my task much easier of course.

## 3. Bursary Fund

The situation with the Bursary Fund has been very different from last year, when we had received no applications. This year, we have received no less than eleven applications, which is probably an all time record. Receiving so many applications makes it of course also necessary to make a selection, which has been carried out as usual by the special committee composed of myself, the President and the General Secretary. We had five bursaries and all have been awarded to the best candidates. The bursaries will be paid as usual after the conference, upon demonstration of actual participation in the congress (through the usual documents: receipt of registration fee, flight or train ticket, student house or hotel bill). Of course it is important that officers and delegates of the various national associations continue to spread information about the bursary scheme among their members and encourage their eligible members to apply in the coming years.

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the financial situation of the association is satisfying, and allows us to continue in our usual activities without particular worries for the future. Considering the present cash inflow of roughly € 3000, he suggested that **our budget for next year’s bursary scheme amount to € 1800, divided into six bursaries of € 300 each. € 800 would be earmarked for website-related costs and € 400 EASR officers travel costs.**

This proposal **was accepted** by the GA

## Internet Officer's report

### (a) Internet Officer EASR website

#### *Website management*

The EASR website is updated by the Internet Officer as to current News or Dates and updates of the member associations pages as well as other parts of the website. The Internet Officer facilitates these content updates and members of the committee, member associations and their representatives are asked to check the website and send updated content to the Internet Officer whenever it seems necessary.

Since the content needs constant updating and some additional writing, e.g. intro page to conferences, one or two more registered authors can via the content management system Typo3 support the Internet Officer in keeping the site up-to-date and e.g. insert meta tags for search engine optimization.

#### *Technical maintenance*

Proper and timely technical updates and security management of the EASR website have been ensured by a maintenance contract with a company specializing in Typo3: QID Marburg. This technical maintenance requires 333,20 EUR per year. The bill is paid directly by the EASR via its Treasurer.

#### *Hosting*

The EASR website with its 3 domains is hosted by JWeiland Hosting. The cost is paid directly by the EASR via its Treasurer.

### **E-lists**

The six e-lists are fairly active, especially as to announcements such as calls for applications, calls for papers and some book publications. Yggdrasill, the German e-list, has seen occasionally very intense phases of discussion, as in recent years. List members of the e-lists have access to electronic archives of the lists via the *Sympa* portal maintained by Marburg University, so members can research and review these discussions anytime.

#### *Statistics*

Number of subscribers (by email address)

	August 2009	August 2010	September 2011	August 2012	Decrease/Increase from last year
Candide	56	66	82	95	+13
Dolmen	179	201	231	248	+17
Most	74	77	87	91	+4
Synkron	122	124	131	131	0
Tonantzin	92	101	106	112	+6
Yggdrasill	616	685	774	850	+76

### Process of nomination and election of the Executive Committee for term 2014 - 2016

Contemporary Executive Committee Officers has their mandate till the end of December 2013 and therefore an election of the new EC should be during summer 2013. EC discussed about procedure and it suggests to use some beaten track and for this reason it suggests establishing Nominating committee.

Candidates for members of Nominating committee, who will be proposed to General Assembly, are:

**Maya Burger as a head of Nominating committee (President of the EASR/Switzerland)**

**Marco Pasi (Treasurer of the EASR/ Italy-Netherlands)**

**Eugen Ciurtin (Publication Officer/ Romania)**

**Christoph Bochinger (Germany)**

**Charles Guittard (France)**

The committee will prepare timeline for the nomination process and for the election process as well.

This proposal **was accepted** by the GA

### Approval of membership of the Lithuanian Association for the Study of Religion

General Secretary introduced a request of the Lithuanian Association for the Study of Religion, which he obtained together with pronouncement of IAHR. Because Lithuanian Society has accomplished all requirements and Executive Committee recommended its approval during its last meeting, General Secretary recommended accepting the Lithuanian Association for the Study of Religion as a new member of EASR. EC also **advises** to GA accepting of the Lithuanian Association for the Study of Religion

GA **accepts** approval of the Lithuanian Association for the Study of Religion

### Approval of individual membership

The Membership Secretary reported that she has obtained 8 requests for individual membership. Only one request was from European country (Russia), rest from Asia or North America. General Secretary, together with President and Membership Secretary suggest to pass new by-law concerning to regulation of the individual membership:

**For an application for individual membership it is necessary to present two written recommendations of persons who are individual members of the European Association for the Study of Religions or members of a national association which is a member of the EASR.**

This proposal **was accepted** by the GA.

## Proposal for the Honorary membership

The group for Honorary Membership is composed of Katja Triplet and Panayotis Pachis, respectively from the German and Greek Associations, and Maya Burger (author of the present report). Honorary membership of our Association is attributed to a person for his/her outstanding work in the field of the Study of religions and /or for his/her longstanding contribution to our Association. This year we propose Peter Antes, who just retired from Hannover University as a honorary member of our Association. Prof. Dr. Dr. Peter Antes is of course a well-known person among us, but nevertheless, I would like to say a few words. (However, it will be difficult to be short, for the academic curriculum of Peter Antes is long and impressive!).

Peter Antes studied catholic Theology, Science of religions and Orientalistik (orientalist studies) in Freiburg and in Paris and became doctor in theology and philosophy. His habilitation was in the history of religions and in comparative religions. He was appointed at the University of Hannover in 1973 as professor for "Religionswissenschaft und Didaktik des religionswissenschaftlichen Unterrichts." He was elected emeritus in 2011.

Peter Antes is known for his exceptional talents for languages. When he made his *Abitur*, he already knew besides German 7 languages, Latin, English, French, Greek, Hebrew, Italian and Spanish. But of course, he did not stop there, and he is known for speaking 20 languages!

He has been editor of important books in our field, such as, for example, the "New Approaches to the Study of Religions", and books such as "Religionen im Brennpunkt" und "Grundriss der Religionsgeschichte".

Since 1991 he is member of the editorial Board of *Numen*, since 2001 of the scientific journal *Daimon. Annuario di diritto comparato delle religioni*; and since 2002 Membre du comité scientifique d'Archaeus, the Bucarest series of the history of religions.

Peter Antes has not only been deeply involved in the making of the discipline, the Study of Religions, in his home University, providing for instance a study of religions profile to the teaching subject: Werte und Normen. He has also been very active in the DVRG, the Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionsgeschichte, for which he acted as president from 1989 to 1993. He became Honorary member of the Association, running now under the name of DVRW (Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft), in 2011 in Heidelberg.

In 2000 he became president of the IAHR, the International Association for the History of Religions, until 2005, nominated then Honorary member of IAHR in Tokyo.

He has regularly been the representative of the German Association for EASR.

Peter Antes has been president of many Associations and was an academic expert for commissions, which I will not reproduce here. But in order to appreciate the wide appreciation he enjoys, we may state that he received:

- In 1995 the nomination of Chevalier, of the Ordre des palmes académiques
- In 2001 he received the academic price: Premio Anassilaos International
- In 2007 he was nominated Cavaliere of the Ordine della Stella della Solidarietà italiana, by the Italian State president.

He was invited professor at the Universities of Geneva, Tokyo and till today at the Gregoriana in Rome. He presided and participates until now to the *International Summer School on Religions* in San Gimignano. This is where he is right now and cannot be present for his nomination as Honorary Member.

The executive committee proposes Peter Antes as Honorary Member for his outstanding contribution to the Study of Religions in general and his support to EASR from the beginning till now. The General Assembly has accepted with felicitation Prof. Dr. Dr. Antes as an Honorary Member of EASR.

The proposal of working group and EC **was accepted** by the GA

#### Presentation of the EASR Conference 2013 in Liverpool

Organizers presented the next EASR Conference, which will be held in Liverpool in September 3 – 6 2013.

#### Presentation of the IAHR Congress 2015 in Erfurt

Organizers presented the next IAHR Congress, which will be held in Erfurt in 2015.

#### Any other business