

European Association for the Study of Religion (EASR)

Report of the General Secretary

Presented at the General Assembly, 18 August 2005
Linnasmäki Conference Centre, Turku

Membership Status

EASR Member Associations 18 August, 2005 with names of appointed delegates/representatives to the EASR Executive Committee

- BASR, British Association for the Study of Religions (Graham Harvey)
- Ceska Spolecnost Pro Studium Nabozenstvi (The Czech Society for the Study of Religion) (Bretislav Horyna)
- DAHR, Dansk Selskab for Religionshistorie (Danish Association for the History of Religions) (Marianne Q. Fibiger)
- DVRG, Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionsgeschichte (German Association for the History of Religions) (Hubert Seiwert)
- GSSCR Greek Society for the Study of Culture and Religion (Panayotis Pachis)
- Magyar Vallástudományi Tarsaság (Hungarian Association for the Academic Study of Religions) (Mihály Hoppál)
- NGG, Nederlands Genootschap van Godsdiensthistorici (Dutch Association for the History of Religions) (Wouter Hanegraaff; Herman Beck)
- NRF, Norsk Religionshistorisk Forening (Norwegian Association for the History of Religions) (Knut A. Jacobsen)
- Polskie Towarzystwo Religioznawcze (Polish Association for the Science of Religions) (Halina Grzymala-Moscinska)
- ÖGRW, Österreichische Gesellschaft für Religionswissenschaft (Austrian Association for The Science of Religion) (Johann Figl)
- RAHR, Asociaia romani de istorie a religiilor (Romanian Association for the History of Religions) (Eugen Ciurtin)
- SECR, Sociedad Española de Ciencias de las Religiones (Spanish Association for the Science of Religions) (Santiago Montero)
- SGR/SSSR, Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Religionswissenschaft/Société Suisse pour la Science des Religions (Swiss Association for the Science of Religions) (Maya Burger)
- Società italiana di storia delle religioni (Italian Association for the History of Religions) (Fabio Scialpi)
- Société Ernest-Renan. Société Francaise d'Histoire des Religions (French Association for the History of Religions) (Charles Guittard)
- Société Belgo-Luxembourgeoise d'histoire des religions (Association for the History of Religions of Belgium-Luxembourg) (André Motte)
- SSRF, Svenska Samfundet för Religionshistorisk Forskning (Swedish Association for Research in Comparative Religion) (Eva Hellman; Antoon Geels)
- Suomen Uskontotieteellinen Seura (Finnish Society for the Study of Comparative Religion) (Nils Holm)
- TAHR, Türkiye Dinler Tarihi Dernegi (Turkish Association for the History of Religions) (Mehmet Aydin)

Individual members

Gustavo Benavides
Gilani Fawzia
Svetlana Gorbunova
Alexandre Krasnikow
Ekaterina Elibakain
Michiaki Okuyama
Evyatar Marienberg
Marianna Shakhnovich

IAHR representative

Rosalind Hackett/Tim Jensen

In 2005 the number of EASR-affiliated national associations remained at nineteen, with eight individual members and an IAHR member. No requests for membership had been received from national associations, though informal talks had been held in Tokyo with scholars representing the Ukrainian association (which is affiliated to IAHR).

No new applications from individual members had been received. Although none of the individual members were able to attend the executive committee meeting or the conference in Turku, the General Secretary and other members of the committee have been in fruitful contact with several of them during the year. It is the hope of the committee that EASR may be of use to individual members from countries with no national associations and few opportunities to meet on a more regular basis with other scholars of religion.

NB All the national associations are kindly reminded to tell the General Secretary if their EASR representative for 2006 has changed.

Payment of subscriptions and other financial matters

During the year associations had been reminded of the requirement to pay subscriptions or request a reduced level of fee by 31 May (and that voting rights were contingent on payment). Less than half of member associations had paid for this year and several were in default of payment for earlier years. Only one application had been received for reduced payment. The committee once again reiterated the possibility of applying for and paying a reduced fee. It was aware that this option is important to less affluent associations and, consequently, to the well-being and progress of EASR. Member associations were strongly urged to seek agreement for a reduced fee and to pay in due time, i.e. no later than May 31 each year.

A small group of executive members had been asked to discuss and report back next year on future strategy for collection of subscriptions.

Details of the EASR bursary scheme with a closing date for applications of the end of June had been circulated (in due course these would be placed in a prominent position on the website). The bursary fund was to be increased to €3,000.00 for the

purpose of helping scholars and postgraduate research students to participate with papers in the conference in Bucharest, Romania in September 2006.

IAHR International Committee meeting and General Assembly, March 2005, Tokyo

During the year the General Secretary had represented EASR with Gustavo Benavides, an individual member, at the International Committee meeting of IAHR. Representatives of the majority of EASR's national associations were also present including those of the Greek, Romanian and Turkish associations all of which were accepted as affiliates of the IAHR at the General Assembly in Tokyo.

At the General Assembly honorary life membership of IAHR had been conferred upon the EASR president, Professor Giulia Sfameni Gasparro and on Professor Peter Antes, previous IAHR representative on the EASR executive committee.

Minutes of the IAHR General Assembly were available from the website, www.iahr.dk.

Discussion lists and website

The six discussion-lists, Synkron, Yggdrasil, Dolmen, Most, Tonantzin, and Candide, covering the various regions and languages within the EASR, continued to run smoothly, some with more vitality than others. Members who changed email addresses were asked to report this by way of unsubscribing and subscribing. For more information about the lists, how they work and how to join them, see the EASR website, www.easr.de.

The EASR website continued to provide routine, static information about the association, its members and executive committee, its minutes and reports. It also provided a link to the conference website. In order to provide a more dynamic vehicle for the exchange of information, the *Internet Journal of Religion*, a one-page portal for several e-journals based in Europe, was to be dedicated to the EASR and used as a forum, particularly for younger scholars, for such items as conference reports. The Internet Officer was warmly thanked for this offer.

Publications

The Publications Officer had informed the executive committee of the publication of the proceedings of the Messina conference; the representative from the French association had reported on the progress of the Paris proceedings. No formal proceedings would be published from the Santander conference. There were plans to publish selected papers from the Turku conference in the book series of the Dönner Institute and in *Temenos*, the Nordic journal for the study of religion.

EASR archiving

Following last year's decision that the outgoing and incoming General Secretaries should formulate a policy about the retention and archiving of EASR documents, it had been decided that, in addition to housing General Assembly minutes and reports on the EASR website, additional materials would be stored electronically on CD. It was agreed that the archive should consist of formal documentation (agendas, minutes, reports, calls for meetings and other important announcements by the General Secretary as well as financial accounts and updates) but not routine correspondence.

The exchange of information on teaching and research on religion in Europe

The previous General Secretary had reported to the executive committee on the relatively poor response he had received to calls for those interested in exchanging teaching. He also reported on a Danish initiative to establish a Research Network for European History of Religions. Those aware of European research projects on religion were encouraged to circulate information via the e-lists. The possibility of an EASR sponsored panel – on European research collaboration – at a forthcoming conference had also been discussed by the committee.

Future conferences

At the General Assembly in Santander it had been agreed that the 2006 EASR conference would take place in Bucharest, Romania. The Romanian representative reported on progress. A steering committee had been established by the Romanian Association with its supporting partners, the University of Bucharest, the Ministry of Culture and the Romanian Cultural Institute. The title of the conference would be 'The Religious History of Europe and Asia: Past, Present and Future'. It would be held in mid-September (dates to be confirmed). The languages would certainly be French and English, with the possibility of panels in Italian and German. The importance of the need to raise the status of the study of religions in Romania was stressed.

The executive committee had also discussed EASR conferences beyond 2006. It was hoped that the 2007 conference would be held in Germany, with Italy and Hungary listed as possible host countries for later meetings.

IAHR representatives had informed the committee of conferences planned by the Turkish and Greek Associations for 2006.

Conclusions

The success of the conference in Turku had underlined the importance of EASR annual conferences for furthering the European study of religions. Even in the year of an IAHR world congress, participation had been good, with scholars attending from all over Europe, particularly the Nordic countries. The conference organising committee, with representatives from the Dönner Institute and the Finnish Society for the Study of Religion, and in particular Björn Dahla and Maria Leppäkari, were

warmly thanked for their hard work in planning and running the conference so smoothly. Turku, with its strong traditions in the history, methodology and ethnography of religions and its two universities (University of Turku and Åbo Akademi) had again proved to be an excellent location for an international conference.

Kim Knott
EASR General Secretary
18 August 2005 (revised 16 September 2005)