

Bucharest conference 2006

EASR General Assembly , Bucharest 2006, September 22th,

Report 2005-2006 by the General Secretary

1. Membership Status and Issues

EASR Member Associations 22 September, 2006 with names of appointed delegates/representatives to the EASR Executive Committee

- BASR, British Association for the Study of Religions (James Cox)
- 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)
- ESSR, Eesti Akadeemilise Usundiloo Seltsi (Estonian Society for the Study of Religion) (Ülo Valk)*
- 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) (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 Française 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) (Britt-Mari Näsström)
- 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 Marianna Shakhnovich Ivan Miroshnikov Marina Vorobjova Olga Konstantinova Elena Borta Galina Sokolova

IAHR representative

Rosalind Hackett/Tim Jensen

Before our meetings in September 2006 the number of EASR-affiliated national associations was nineteen, with eight individual members, and an IAHR member.

During the year one request for membership had been received from a national association (the Estonian Society for the Study of Religion/Eesti Akadeemilise Usundiloo Seltsi), and the Executive Committee fully endorsed the request (which was later accepted by the General Assembly on 22 September).*

One individual member had resigned and five new members had joined. EASR continues to be of value to individual members from countries with no national association and with few opportunities to meet on a more regular basis with other scholars of religion. It was decided by the Executive Committee that an application for individual membership must be accompanied by a letter of support from a recognised scholar or research supervisor. Furthermore, the decision was made to discontinue the practice of requiring individual membership of EASR by bursary applicants from countries with no national associations, and the Bursary Guidelines were changed accordingly.

NB All the national associations are kindly reminded to tell the General Secretary if their EASR representative for 2007 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 at the General Assembly were contingent on payment). Ten member associations had paid for this year; several were in default of payment for this and earlier years and had not been in touch with the Treasurer. The voting rights of their members were suspended. 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.

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 kept at €3,000.00 for the purpose of helping scholars and postgraduate research students to participate with papers in the next year's conference.

In addition to the award of five bursaries, a sum of €500 had been given to support student participation in the European Students Symposium on the Study of Religion in Marburg (which had been matched with €250 from the DVRW). More than 100 students had attended, from some 13 different countries.

Discussion lists and websites

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

Changes to the web presence of the University of Marburg (host for the EASR website) had had implications this year for updating of the EASR pages. The Committee was keen to identify members who might be interested in participating in an internet working group with the aim of maintaining (and developing where necessary) the (a) e-lists, (b) the standing EASR home page, (c) a new one-page portal for several e-journals based in Europe, and dedicated to EASR reports, information about publications etc, (d) and an encyclopedia of religion page containing reliable contributions on religion/s. Please contact the Internet Officer if you are interested (Professor Michael Pye, pye@res.otani.ac.jp).

Up to €2000 has been reserved in 2007 for supporting these initiatives.

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. Selected papers from the Turku conference will be published in the book series of the Dönnner Institute and in *Temenos*, the Nordic journal for the study of religion.

IAHR matters

At the Executive Committee Meeting there had been a discussion about the implications of the strength of EASR for the future of IAHR. EASR delegates and officers had expressed the view that a strong EASR could only help IAHR, not least of all because committed and regular conference participation and regular reports about IAHR activities at EASR gatherings would be likely to enhance knowledge about IAHR and participation in its quinquennial congresses and other activities. National associations were again encouraged to relay the message about the

importance of paying their subscriptions to IAHR as well as EASR.

The editors of IAHR's journal *Numen* encouraged EASR members to submit articles and to suggest themes for special issues.

EASR and European research initiatives

In 2005 the issue of research collaboration within the European arena had been discussed, including the circulation of information about calls for research, and the possibility of using EASR conferences as a means of showcasing and stimulating collaborative research initiatives.

National associations and individual members had been notified early in 2006 of the call by NORFACE for outline research proposals from scholars in member countries on the subject of "The re-emergence of religion as a social force in Europe". A number of EASR members had submitted applications and at least one team had been successful in getting through to the final round. Several members of the EASR Executive Committee had served on the Assessment Panel.

The Research Network for European History of Religions (NEUR), based in Denmark, had sponsored two panels at this year's EASR conference in Bucharest bringing together scholars from all over Europe (with Danish Government support for Eastern European scholars). A contract had been signed with a publisher for six volumes on European history of religions

Members were reminded of the importance of circulating information on European research initiatives on the e-lists.

Nomination and election to office 2008-2010

The Executive Committee had discussed the matter of elections for EASR officers for the period 2008-10, as nominations will have to be brought to next year's meetings in Bremen. Article 7 of the constitution, on elections, reads as follows:

7(i) The members of the Committee shall be elected for a period of three calendar years running from January 1st. A member may be re-elected, except that no member shall serve in the same office for more than two terms, and no members shall be elected for a total of more than five terms with or without intervening periods. The same terms apply to delegated members. 7(ii) The elections shall be conducted by postal ballot. In cases where a candidate is unopposed there should be no postal ballot...

A nominating committee has been set up with the aims of establishing a nominations process, bringing forward possible names, and identifying dates by which nominations should be sought more widely and a postal ballot held (if required). It was agreed that a "postal" ballot could be conducted by e-mail.

Future conferences

At the General Assembly in Turku it had been agreed that the 2007 EASR conference would take place in Germany in association with the DVRW. The dates of the 2007 conference will be 23-27 September and it will be held in Bremen. A website has been set up (<http://www.religion.uni-bremen.de/dvrweasr2007/>) and the theme is "Plurality and Representation: Religion in Education, Culture and Society." The EASR General Assembly will take place on 26 September.

No firm proposal has yet been received for the 2008 EASR conference, though it is hoped that it may take place in the Czech Republic.

It was noted that a conference will be held in Stockholm in April 2007 in conjunction with the Swedish Society for the Study of History of Religions (SSRF) and the IAHR, and that a conference will take place organised by the Turkish Association for the History of Religions (TAHR) in conjunction with the IAHR in October 2007.

Conclusions

The success of the conference in Bucharest had underlined the importance of EASR annual conferences for furthering the European study of religions, and notably for drawing in members from Eastern Europe and promoting the work of younger scholars. It had been attended by some 250 delegates from more than thirty countries, and was the first of its kind in Romania. The conference organising committee, with representatives from the Romanian Association for the History of Religions, and in particular the energetic young organisers Eugen Ciurtin, Mihail Neamtu and Mihaela Timus, were warmly thanked for their hard work in planning and running the conference so well, and in obtaining excellent support and sponsorship from the Romanian government, other public bodies and from further afield. The conference will be remembered for its focus on the legacy of Mircea Eliade and the historical study of religions.

Kim Knott EASR General Secretary 19 September 2006 (revised 28 November 2006)