

President's report 2011

With the conference of Budapest, the EASR celebrated its 10th anniversary of international conferences. This event was festively celebrated by the Hungarian Association, the host of the 2011 anniversary, with songs, music and dance. The beautiful historical setting of Buda provided the background for a conference held with large participation.

Since the IHAR conference in Toronto, the business of EASR has been more or less routine work, as the organization runs now quite smoothly. An important event was that professor David Vaklavic (University Masaryk of Brno, Czech Republic) took office as the general secretary of the Association in January. David Vaklavic studied philosophy and the history of religion at Masaryk University in Brno and obtained a Ph.D. in 2004. He has lectured at the Faculty of Education of Technical University in Liberec since 1998 and at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno since 2002, where he is presently Associate Professor at the Department of the Study of Religions. His areas of researches are new religious movements, religious situation in Central Europe and the methodology of the scientific study of religions.

We are very happy to have him now as the general secretary of our Association. There have also been shifts in the different functions in the executive committee about which we have already talked in Toronto (Please refer to the general website of EASR for detailed information).

I have been in touch with the Hungarian Association for the preparation of the Congress and did the site visit in April 2011. This was the occasion not only to meet people, but the Hungarian Association also organized a session to reflect on the issues related to teaching religions in the context of modern European countries and in Hungary. The EASR has been committed to this problematic now for several years and we also have a working group on teaching religions.

The Hungarian Association and their members were very eager to make our stay as comfortable and successful as possible and we thank them very warmly for the beautiful conference they organized. It was a success in all respects, scientifically, organizationally, culturally – all of which embedded in cordial hospitality. The three main organizers, the general director Bulcsu Hoppal, and the vice directors Abraham Kovacs and Zsolt Szilagyi deserve the special thank for the organization.

A preoccupying event during 2011 was the case of the Belgium Association. There has been an exchange of letters and mails with members of Belgium and the IAHR, especially with Tim Jensen who has more closely looked at this case. The situation in Belgium is still not clear, but it seems that the younger scholars from Gent have not been able to realize their wish to have a new association that would be more active than the older one. The debate is continuing and we will have more news in 2012.

The Irish Association has applied for membership to EASR and was elected during the General Assembly (see secretary's report).

We have not chosen any Honorary member this year, but elected a new group to come up with propositions for the general assembly of 2012.

I think as an association, the EASR is successful. It allows scholars from Europe to gather, it is a platform of discussion and information, it is a network. The number of associations is growing, and we have, in collaboration with IAHR, contributed to establishing new national associations in various countries.

We also have the working groups, the bursaries, as well as a wonderful new website. In the next years EASR will be involved more directly in the EASH (European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities) in order to secure a

better position of the social sciences and humanities in the new Framework Programme “Horizon 2020” of European Funding.

The next conferences have been announced during the General Assembly, to note only the forthcoming conference in Stockholm in August 2012 (see website)

I would like to very warmly thank the various officers in charge who have worked during this year and given their time to contribute to the organization of the EASR.

Maya Burger