



General Assembly

of the International Students of History Association, held at the ISHA Autumn Seminar 2012 on Wednesday, September 26th, 2012, at the University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Present members of the International Board

Sven Mörsdorf, President
Marko Morović, Secretary
Anne Greule, Treasurer

Present members of the Council

Tihana Sedlar (Osijek)
Marko Ožegović (Zagreb)

Other officials present

Andraž Kamenik (Webmaster)

ISHA sections present

1. Berlin
2. Helsinki
3. Jena
4. Ljubljana
5. Marburg
6. Maribor
7. Osijek
8. Rome
9. Sofia
10. Trieste-Koper
11. Zagreb

Agenda

- 1) **Opening, taking down of attendance**
- 2) **Appointment of the speaker and the minute-taker, checking the quorum**
- 3) **Passing around the minutes of previous meetings, amendments and approvals**
- 4) **Reading and discussion of the agenda**
- 5) **State of Affairs**
 - a. **International Board**
 - b. **Council**
 - c. **Treasury Committee**
 - d. **Carnival**
 - e. **Sections and Observers**
- 6) **Upcoming events**

– Break –
- 7) **Cooperation with other organizations**
- 8) **Various points of discussion**
- 9) **Questions and closing**

1) Opening, taking down of attendance: Opening at 15:19. A list is passed around.

2) Appointment of the speaker and the minute-taker, checking the quorum:

Sven is appointed as speaker, Marko and Anne as minute-takers. Because of insufficient information received by the former IB, and further complicated by the technical limitations of the online banking system of the ISHA account (the balance can only be checked after the beginning of a new month for the whole preceding month), it was impossible to check which sections paid their membership fee last-minute. This is why the definite number of member sections cannot be verified until after the GA, making it impossible to know the exact number of sections needed to establish a quorum. With representatives of only eleven sections present, it is assumed that a quorum was not reached. A solution for this problem can only be to set the end of the payment period before the beginning of the month in which the Autumn GA takes place. The Spring GA is not affected because by the respective month all sections will either have paid or lost their membership rights.

3) Passing around the minutes of previous meetings, amendments and approvals

The minutes are passed around. They are approved with minor amendments.

4) Reading and discussion of the agenda: The agenda is explained and passes unchanged.

5) State of Affairs

a. International Board

1. Handover and Policy

Having assumed office about four weeks ago, the new Board introduces itself at its first ISHA event. Already in August, a handover meeting together with the outgoing IB was held, where information and documents were passed on and policy matters discussed. A document explaining the new IBs ideas for their Policy Plan is presented and approved by the GA. The final version will be made available on the website and through a newsletter.

2. European Commission Youth in Action Grant Application

The previous two IBs each tried to succeed with applications for European Commission funding. After a promising start, the second application, despite trying to improve the weak spots, achieved a far lesser score in the evaluation. Therefore the IB argues that it is to be expected that another application would most likely fail too, since it is not clear why ISHA does not meet the criteria. Due to the enormous workload necessary for such an application, the IB decided not to apply this year. Anne remarks that in the future, a more professional and long-term approach should be adopted (including asking for help with successful applicants among other international student organizations).

3. Membership Fees and Finances

Anne reports that where possible, bank transfers are encouraged over cash payments because they make both the treasurer's and the treasury committee's work easier. At the moment she is still waiting for several documents and reports (income, expenses) from the former IB.

4. Questionnaires, contact detail forms, and other administrative procedures

The IB will prepare questionnaires and contact update forms and send them to all members and observers soon. More care will be taken to keep the contact list update, and also to stay in touch with the members and observers.

5. Website and newsletters

The IB and the two webmasters will start working on the website soon. The texts and functions will be updated and bugs fixed. Also, the design will be improved so that the website will look more attractive and professional. The IB encourages everyone to register for the monthly newsletter on the website.

b. Council

The IB and the Council members have already started to work together on various tasks. Some of them are long-term tasks (e.g. the one of Pieter Baeten from Leuven, who is entrusted with the ISHA archive), others are based on ad-hoc needs (e.g. editing the newsletter). Over the year, the tasks and results will be presented in the newsletters and upcoming State of Affairs meetings, and later summed up in the Annual Report.

c. Treasury Committee: A report for the previous term will be available at the next GA.

d. Carnival

Copies of the 2011 Carnival edition were printed this summer and are handed out now. For the 2012 issue, editor-in-chief Dubravko Aladić from Osijek is the contact person. He proposes a better review system through establishing a board of reviewers. For his edition, which is currently being finalized and will be ready before the next seminar, he has already introduced this system. He also sees the need for a standardized system of reference for the articles and will make the one he used available to future editors.

e. Sections and Observers

Banja Luka (observer): For the ca. 120 history students, there is a local organization that also conducts projects. They heard about ISHA from the Belgrade section.

Berlin: Getting new members is difficult. Outgoing Erasmus students from ISHA Berlin spread the word elsewhere. They're currently working on the 2013 Summer Seminar.

Trieste-Koper: Organized an Adriatic seminar. Have contacts to Bari and Venice who might want to join.

Osijek: prepare their journal *Essehist*, which will probably be available in Leuven. Their journal is open for everyone who is interested. At their university, they organize lectures and promote ISHA with freshmen.

Helsinki: Try to be very active, promote ISHA amongst freshmen and hope for good results.

Jena: Recover from the Annual Conference that they organized this spring. Try to get new members. Active members, good perspectives.

Zagreb: Are here organizing the seminar!

Split (observer, not present): Council member Marko Ožegović reports that there are interested people with whom he is in touch. They want to organize a meeting, which might be the next Autumn Seminar.

Marburg: There are five people who try to promote ISHA and to find new people. They organize(d) several local activities, e.g. lectures and excursions.

Ljubljana: Had to cancel the New Year's Seminar they were preparing due to financial reasons. There are 5-10 active members, they are waiting for the next semester and will promote ISHA.

Sofia: Has 7-8 active persons and new members, promotes ISHA among Bulgarian students and a Turkish student organization. They also have plans for workshops.

Belgrade: Currently sees a problem in getting new ISHA Belgrade people to apply for ISHA seminars.

Vilnius (observer): Is not represented by section members, as the section died out. The girls who are present here in Zagreb and for the first time at an ISHA seminar might revive the section though.

Rome: Promotion amongst freshmen, makes plans to be more active at the faculty level.

6) Upcoming events

a. New Year's Seminar 2012-13, Ljubljana (cancelled; search for replacement)

ISHA Marburg might improvise a smaller seminar as a replacement, but cannot be sure about the availability of funds and help. They will discuss this at home.

b. Annual Conference 2013, Leuven

The Annual Conference 2013 will be held from April 8th-14th, 2013, in Leuven, Belgium. The topic will be "Migration", and there will be room for 100 participants. More information to follow.

c. Summer Seminar 2013, Berlin

ISHA Berlin prepare their event for July 15th-21st, 2013, with the topic "Places and Space in History". They want to introduce an innovative concept with having workshops at actual places (e.g. cemeteries, excavation sites...). The participation fee might be 100 euros, but they're working on attracting more financial support.

d. Autumn Seminar 2013 (candidate needed)

There are no candidates yet and the call is still open.

e. New Year's Seminar 2013-14 (candidate needed)

Also here, the call is still open.

f. Other seminars/conferences and events by our partner organizations

Euroclio will hold their next Annual Conference in Erfurt, Germany, during the same week as ISHA, in April 2013. A call for participants will be spread in the next newsletter.

Miha (Ljubljana) informs about the **International Movie Festival**, which will be held in Ljubljana in December, and invites everybody to participate. For more information, one can search for 'Filofest'.

– Break from 16:30 until 17:05 –

7) Cooperation with other organizations

a. Long-term partnerships (*EUROCLIO, CLIOH, ICHS*)

- i. As the **CLIOH** networks were not prolonged and thus unfortunately do not exist anymore, there is no further cooperation possible. Perhaps in the future they might be revived, with the possibility of continuing our cooperation.
- ii. **Euroclio**: There are currently no joint projects, but ISHA received an invitation to participate in their upcoming Annual Conference (see above).
- iii. **ICHS**: ICHS (International Committee of Historical Sciences) is the worldwide history umbrella organization, and provides a good opportunity for networking. They hold a large conference every five years, the next one will take place in China in 2015. ISHA might contribute a student session again, like during the previous conference in Amsterdam in 2010.

b. Other co-operations (*StudyPortals, Network of Concerned Historians*)

- i. **StudyPortals**: StudyPortals is a website that offers information about degree programs. ISHA has been a partner in the preceding two years, meaning that it links to the website and occasionally advertises it in its newsletters, etc. In return, ISHA is mentioned on their website and received goodies. The IB argued that the benefit for ISHA is marginal, while fulfilling the partnership requires time; also, the commercial interest of the website was remarked; therefore the IB proposed to discontinue the partnership, which was approved by the GA.
- ii. **Network of Concerned Historians**: The goal of the network is to create awareness for persecuted historians around the world. They publish a yearly report and support projects related to their goals. The question was raised whether to seek a partnership with them and promote their work. While the work of the network was generally seen positively, it was suggested to gather more information and to invite a spokesperson to the Annual Conference in Leuven.

c. Invitation to the Right to Research Coalition (R2RC) – guest expert: Ivan Flis, European Federation of Psychology Students Associations (EFPSA)

The R2RC is a network of student organizations and publishing/library-related lobby groups which advocates Open Access as an alternative to the currently dominant system of research publishing in expensive, subscription-based frameworks. The coalition advocates the free availability of the results of scholarly research via open online journals and publications. In his presentation, Ivan (himself editor of an international student journal and active within the R2RC) argued that taking a stance for Open Access is important for society as a whole, and in particular for students of all fields, including history and the humanities. After a lively question round, it was decided to further discuss this issue and decide about whether to accept the invitation at the next GA in Leuven.

d. Debate: ISHA and its ability to form partnerships (political, sponsorship)

In the wake of the above invitation, but also because it is an issue which needs clarification in general, the question if and how ISHA should deal with possible involvements/cooperation that might include commercial or political motivations needed to be raised. It was discussed if ISHA should stay “neutral” and what neutrality actually means, and whether different levels of involvement, exceptions and such are thinkable.

The most important point raised during the discussion was that ISHA is *not* apolitical, though not in the sense that it positions itself as “right-wing” or “left-wing”. Rather, ISHA’s work promotes issues that also have a political dimension (e.g. international cooperation, equality), and is therefore unable to simply ignore politics. It was argued that, after careful consideration, forming partnerships could be used to more closely define what ISHA stands for. Special care should be taken when money is involved, be it in form of financial support for ISHA or if a financial benefit were created for a partner with a commercial interest.

After a lively debate it was agreed that proposals of cooperation and funding have to be handled with utmost sensitivity, on the international level as well as when ISHA’s members organize activities in the name of the whole organization. Concerning seminar sponsorship, it was stressed that the autonomy of the sections should be respected as much as possible also concerning their choice of sponsorship, as long as there is no conflict with ISHA’s principles (cf. articles 4 and 5 of the Statutes). On this background, the idea of formulating specific guidelines for sponsorship and cooperation was not approved; rather, case-by-case decisions. However, the section on sponsorship in the event organization manual should be expanded in the next update.

8) Various points of discussion

a. ISHA as an informal/registered Swiss association

This old question has been decided in the meantime by a change of situation. Swiss organizations are now eligible for EU funding, while a costly formal registration is still not necessary. Registering with the Swiss authorities would not bring any benefits, but only obligations, such as announcing every board change, and the necessity to pay fees. Therefore the plan was finally abandoned.

b. Board of Patrons

The members of the GA were informed that a list with possible candidates was created and they were asked to think about further candidates. The GA in Leuven will be presented with the first candidates and will vote about their invitation.

c. Friends of ISHA and Alumni Organization

It was suggested that both ideas for sub-organizations should be combined; the question remained open how a “mechanism” to include former ISHA members/make joining attractive could be developed. This will be developed further by a Council member until the next GA.

d. Proposed change to Standing Orders

The proposals are not pressing and were adjourned to the next GA.

e. Debate: “Professionalisation” of procedures (e.g. seminar and officials applications)

This point was postponed due to lack of time; however, it was commented upon the choice of the term “professionalization” and suggested to use “standardization”.

f. Debate: Financial help for ISHA officials

This point was also postponed. The IB created a draft proposal for guidelines, which will be discussed in Leuven.

g. Other

Concerning the agenda of the GA, it was suggested that the order of the agenda should better reflect the importance of the topics, and that some debates could be started online in advance using the website and forum to save time.

9) Questions & Closing: No questions, closing at 19:00.