

ISHA Policy Paper 2019

The following Policy Paper was made in order to outline the basic principles and plans of the International Board and Council of the International Students of History Association (ISHA) for the term of 2019. For the first time, the ISHA term follows the calendar year, which means that the new ISHA Team has started on 1 January and will stay on board until 31 December. This is one of the final steps in our seat transition from Zürich (Switzerland) to Berlin (Germany), which paves the way towards a new promising chapter in the history of our international association.

30 Years of ISHA

While we start to write a new chapter, it is also important to look back on the previous ones. The first chapter of the ISHA book has been written exactly 30 years ago, when a group of Hungarian history students decided to use the upcoming fall of the Iron Curtain to get into closer contact with their fellow students in other countries. Building out an international association that would allow students of history to come into contact, cooperate and exchange ideas about certain historical themes was their main goal, and it is exactly the thing we still value the most in our association today. In 2019, we will celebrate the foundation of our association and its lustrum anniversary once again, first by promoting and organising local anniversary activities within our local sections, but also by using this anniversary as an opportunity to promote our organisation in new exciting ways; in a digitalised world, the hashtag #ISHA30Years will help us with this. Last but definitely not least, the climax of our 30th Anniversary will be reached by holding this year's Annual Conference of ISHA (2-8 September 2019) in Budapest, the city where it all started for ISHA.

Communication & Transparency

While our anniversary might be the most visible outcomes of our plans for this year, we plan to make our other policies and ideas more visible as well. Better communication (internally and externally), as well as clear transparency, are some of the challenges which we will focus on this year.

An important first step to reach this goal, is to have a better (internal) overview of our contact points. We will make structured lists by gathering updated contact information of our members, sections, patrons, partners, associate partners, alumni and all other associated people and institutions in our network. A basic, but well-maintained structure is key to be able to apply a better communication strategy and to gather new ideas, new contacts and new opportunities from outside our direct surroundings, to be able to expand our network in a more sustainable way.

On the other hand, we plan to revitalise our newsletter, by sending it out more regularly (not strictly monthly anymore), each time with smaller amounts of information to make it more enjoyable to read through. While we will keep sending out newsletters, we will also use our social media better to be able to reach our network in a quicker and slightly more informal

way. Short videos, explanatory flowcharts and smaller, quicker amounts of information will be used to apply a new social media strategy in our organisation.

While all of these plans seem to be focusing mainly on communication, it also implies a new approach to reach more transparency: we aim to get into close contact with active people from outside the International Board and Council. Our goal is to give our members more information about what we internally do, to collect their ideas and external input about the organisation and our plans, and to give new impulses to our internal structures, by giving ourselves an external platform to explicitly show what we are doing to improve our organisation. Questions and remarks will be answered in a more transparent and accessible way, by implementing a new FAQ section on our website.

Committees

The most transparent way for an external member to get involved into the direct policy decisions and structures of ISHA, is by working in one of our five committees. The Fundraising Committee, the Public Relations Committee, the Project Management Committee, the Alumni & PhD Network Committee and the Training Committee will gather more regularly and discuss more specific plans and ideas for the improvement of ISHA. The committees will each be skillfully led by one of our Council Members or other Officials; these spokespeople will have to report about their activities to the Officials Skype meetings and they will be put on the right tracks by the advice of the IB members. Our main goal as International Board and Council will be to attract more external people (and their opinions and views) into the committees, something which we will do by giving committee members some exclusive advantages and rights. More specific information on those advantages will be communicated in later newsletters and GA's. The committees will have some specific aims too:

- Fundraising Committee: They will actively search for funding opportunities, grants and potential sponsors, to increase the possibilities of setting up new projects, policies and programmes. Now that we are putting the final steps in our process of becoming a charitable organisation, the Fundraising Committee will finally be able to support ISHA to reach the common goals of the organisation and its members.
- Public Relations Committee: The PR Committee will mainly increase the visibility of our organisation, by (re)introducing T-shirts and hoodies, flags, promotional leaflets and other merchandise, and by helping out the Webmaster with social media promotion and communication.
- Project Management Committee: The PMC will keep up the valuable work which it is already doing, but it will try to streamline the concept and the procedures of applying for and organising ISHA seminars, by focusing on better and earlier communication with the (candidate-)organisers of events, seminars and conferences. For example, candidate-organisers of ISHA seminars will need to contact the PMC before applying, after which the PMC will express a formal advice on the General Assembly on which the seminar application will be voted.
- Alumni & PhD Network Committee: They will improve the communication with the Alumni and PhD networks, they will support the organisation of Alumni events (for example, in May there will be one in Leuven) and they will improve the organisation of the commonly held PhD Workshops at ISHA events.

- Training Committee: The Training Committee will gather information, opportunities and knowledge from the YNGO Training Network, while it will also try out a new Training workshop or session at one of our international events. In the meanwhile, they will support the IB with finding new, more creative ways to do the “How to ISHA” sessions, which will be mandatory to all participants of a seminar from now on.

Structure, Statutes, Membership & Sections

When talking about the How to ISHA workshop, it is important to know how ISHA is internally structured and how it functions. Changing the seat from Zürich to Berlin meant that we had to change parts of our statutes and structures, so it also had a few legal implications on our organisation; most notoriously our membership and section structures and definitions. We have noticed that these changes brought a lot of confusion and statutory difficulties, to the point where structures became inefficient and unclear, even for ourselves. One of the first things we already did as an IB and Council, was clearing out the errors by applying many statutes changes. To do so, we have established a “Think Tank for Changes to the Statutes and Standing Orders”, which will keep functioning throughout our term to help us in the process of clarifying our own structures. One of our next tasks will be to inform our members, sections and all other affiliated people about our new structures: a good communication strategy will once again be important to reach this goal. Explanatory flowcharts concerning the new membership and sections definitions are part of our first step in this process.

Consolidation/expansion

All of our plans and goals are obviously relying on the success of our network, so last but not least, we will try to consolidate and sustainably expand our international network. We will try to revitalise former and current sections, while also looking out for potential new local groups to include into our ISHA Network. This also means spreading out into new continents again, a process which has already been started during the last term, with the establishment of new ISHA sections in three continents (Europe, South America and Africa). Consolidation and expansion should always be kept at a sustainable, balanced level, a basic idea which counts for all branches of our organisation: the membership and section network, alumni & PhD networks, partners and associate partners, the financial situation, internal and external communication, etc.

With the support of all of you (our members, alumni, partners, associate partners and all others who are involved in ISHA), our balance, our common goals and our new possibilities will be easier to reach. It will help us to add at least another 30 years to the ISHA History book.

Yours sincerely,

In name of the International Board and the Council of the International Students of History Association (ISHA)

Anselm Logghe - President
Yordana Nikolova - Vice-President
Raphael Päbst - Vice-President
Nicole Hanisch - Treasurer
Valentina Cola - Secretary

E-mail: info@isha.international

Website: <https://isha-international.org/>

Address:

ISHA International Secretariat
c/o Fachschaftsinitiative Geschichte
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften
Friedrichstraße 191-193a
10099 Berlin

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/isha.inter/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ishainter>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/isha.inter/>