



## AHRI Assembly Meeting 2017

Friday 28 April 2017

14:00-17:00

Venue: Irish College, Janseniustraat 1, Leuven

### Minutes (approved)

#### **Member institutions present:**

- Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, Serbia
- Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, South Africa
- Human Rights Consortium, School of Advanced Study, University of London, UK
- Centre for the Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
- Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway
- The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Denmark
- European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation, Venice-Lido, Italy
- European Training- and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Graz, Austria
- Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, UK
- Newcastle Forum for Human Rights and Social Justice, Newcastle Law School, University of Newcastle, UK
- Institute for Human Rights, Åbo Akademi University, Finland
- Human Rights Center, University of Padua, Italy (by proxy – Pietro De Perini)
- Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, Austria (by proxy – Manfred Nowak)
- Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM), University of Utrecht, The Netherlands
- Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo, Norway (by proxy – Christian Boe Astrup)
- Pedro Arrupe Institute of Human Rights, University of Deusto, Bilbao, Spain
- Poznan Centre for Human Rights, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland
- Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, Lund, Sweden
- The Research Group Law and Development, University of Antwerpen, Belgium

- Riga Graduate School of Law, Latvia
- Czech Center for Human Rights and Democratization (CCHRD), Czech Republic
- The Human Rights Program of the Legal Studies Department, Central European University, Hungary
- Centre for the Study of Human Rights Law, the University of Strathclyde, UK
- Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, K.U. Leuven, Belgium
- School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
- Research Centre Human Rights, University of Vienna, Austria
- The European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano (EURAC) (by proxy – Alexandra Budabin)
- The Global Justice Academy, University of Edinburgh, UK
- Human Rights Centre of the University of Potsdam, University of Potsdam, Germany
- The Institute of Democracy and Human Rights (IDEHPUCP), Peru
- "Alfredo Vázquez Carrizoza" Institute for Human Rights and Peacebuilding, Bogotá, Colombia
- Human Rights Center at the University of Dayton, Ohio, USA
- UCD Centre for Human Rights, University College, Dublin, Ireland (by proxy – Bianca Föhrer)

**Member institutions represented by other AHRI institutions (by proxy):**

- Erik Castrén Institute of International Law and Human Rights, University of Helsinki, Finland (by proxy - AHRI Chair)
- Human Rights and Globalization Research Group, University of Seville, Spain (by proxy - AHRI Chair)
- Human Rights Centre, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK (by proxy – Antione Buyse)
- Human Rights Law Centre, University of Nottingham School of Law, UK (by proxy – Antione Buyse)
- Human Rights Programme at the University of Sydney, Australia (by proxy – Manfred Nowak)
- Icelandic Human Rights Center, Iceland (by proxy - AHRI Chair)
- Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland (by proxy - AHRI Chair)
- Maastricht Centre for Human Rights, Maastricht University, Faculty of Law, The Netherlands (by proxy – Eva Maria Lassen, AHRI Executive Secretary)
- Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights, Bern, Switzerland (by proxy – AHRI Chair)
- Transitional Justice Institute, University of Ulster, Jordanstown/Magee, UK (by proxy – AHRI Chair)
- Crucible Centre for Human Rights, Roehampton University, UK (by proxy – Peter Johansson)
- The Centre on Human Rights in Conflict, University of East London, UK (by proxy – AHRI Chair)
- Human Rights Centre at the Charles University in Prague (by proxy – AHRI Chair)

- The Centre for Human Rights Research (CHRR), the University of Manitoba, Canada (by proxy - AHRI Chair)
- Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of the Washington College of Law, American University, USA (by proxy – Felipe Gomez)

**Candidate Institutions represented:**

- Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice, Sheffield Hallam University, UK
- Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights (CCJHR), University College Cork, Ireland
- Department of National and Supranational Public Law, the University of Milan, Italy
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Austria (by proxy – Eva Maria Lassen)

**Excused absence:**

- German Institute for Human Rights, Germany
- Human Rights Implementation Centre, the University of Bristol, UK
- Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa, Canada

**1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed AHRI representatives and applicants to the Assembly.

**2. Adoption of Agenda**

Item 10 was expanded so as to include election of a new Vice-Chair. A proposal of adoption of a “Leuven Declaration” was added to item 12.

**Decision:** The Assembly unanimously adopted the agenda.

**3. Approval of minutes from Assembly Meeting 2016 (Annex 1)**

**Decision:** The Assembly unanimously approved the minutes.

**4. Report of the Chair**

The Chair gave a brief overview of the work of the Secretariat since the Assembly Meeting 2017, including preparing the transition of the Secretariat to a new hosting

institution. The Chair referred to the financial situation of AHRI, the preparation of Constitutional amendments and election to AHRI bodies.

**Decision:** The Assembly received the Chair's report.

## 5. Financial Statement (Annex 2)

The Chair briefly commented on the statement, which shows that the AHRI financial situation is sound, based on the annual membership fees as well as on the considerable contribution in kind as well as financial support of both the institution hosting the AHRI Secretariat and the institutions hosting the annual conferences,.

**Decision:** The Assembly unanimously approved the financial statement.

## 6. Amendment of AHRI Constitution (Annex 3, 3.a.)

The suggested amendments of the constitution were two-fold.

### I. The establishment of Observer Status

The application for Observer Status submitted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights spurred, in the autumn 2016 and spring 2017, the Executive Committee to discuss the establishment of the status of Observer. The purpose is to allow human rights institutes and comparable entities - which do not fully comply with the criteria for membership or which may not wish, for other reasons, a full membership - to obtain a status of affiliation. On this basis the Executive Secretary prepared, prior to the Assembly Meeting, a constitutional novelty to be proposed to the Assembly, namely that of AHRI observer status. This included a proposal for constitutional amendments, which were presented to the Assembly.

**Decision:** The Assembly unanimously approved the constitutional amendments introducing the status of Observer.

### II. Establishment of AHRI as an international association under Belgian law.

At the Assembly Meeting 2016, the Assembly invited Prof. Jan Wouters and the Executive Committee to explore further the possibility of the establishment of AHRI as an international non-profit association under Belgian law. The

preliminary explorations completed, the Executive Committee recommends that the Assembly entrust Jan Wouters and the Committee to initiate the process of the establishment of AHRI as an international non-profit association under Belgian law.

Jan Wouters explained the process to the Assembly: The establishment of AHRI as a non-profit organisation under Belgian law requires a number of constitutional amendments. The substance and the structure of the present AHRI constitution will be maintained, but it will be necessary to change the terminology of particular passages of the Constitution. Jan Wouters provided a few examples of such changes.

It is a requirement that the official seat of AHRI is on Belgian territory. This will have no impact on the choice of seat of the AHRI Chair and Secretariat. The Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies is willing to act as seat of the Association.

In order to proceed with the Belgian authorities, Jan Wouters will need proxies from the AHRI membership, mandating him to proceed with the establishment of AHRI as an international non-profit association under Belgian law.

The Chair and the Assembly expressed gratitude to Prof. Wouters and his team for undertaking the considerable task to prepare AHRI for the establishment as an international non-profit association under Belgian law.

**Decision:** The Assembly unanimously approved the procedure outlined by Jan Wouters and agreed that the necessary steps should be taken to establish AHRI as an international non-profit association under Belgian law and that the official seat of AHRI should be the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies. The Assembly mandated Jan Wouters to act on behalf of AHRI vis-à-vis Belgian authorities and to complete the necessary constitutional amendments. The Assembly decided that Jan Wouters soon after the Assembly should collect a proxy from each AHRI member in order to complete the process of establishing AHRI as an international non-profit association under Belgian law.

## **7. Admission of New Members (Annex 4)**

The Executive Committee presented three candidates for membership of AHRI:

- Department of National and Supranational Public Law, University of Milan (Milan, Italy)

- Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights (CCJHR) in the School of Law, University College Cork (Cork, Ireland)
- Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice (HKC) (Sheffield, UK)

The official representatives of the applicant institutions briefly introduced their institutions to the Assembly and motivated the applications.

**Decision:** The Assembly unanimously admitted the three institutions with applause.

Professor Wolfgang Benedict raised the issue that AHRI has no French members. The Chair observed that the issue should be included in the efforts to expand the membership of AHRI.

**Decision:** The Assembly decided to include the issue of French members in the further work to broaden the membership of AHRI.

#### 8. Admission of Observer (Annex 4)

The Executive Committee presented an application for observer status:

- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

On behalf of the Agency, Eva Maria Lassen motivated the application of FRA.

**Decision:** The Assembly unanimously admitted the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights as Observer with applause.

#### 9. Election of Executive Committee members (Annex 5)

The terms of four members of the Executive Committee were ending, with the possibility of re-election, namely those members elected in 2014:

Institution	Representative	Elected
London School of Economics	Margot Salomon	2014
University of Oslo	Inga Bostad	2014
Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights/ University of Vienna	Manfred Nowak	2014
University of Deusto	Felipe Gómez	2014

Poznan Human Rights Centre	Roman Wieruszewski	2015
Belgrade Centre for Human Rights	Vesna Petrovic	2015
Maastricht Centre for Human Rights	Ingrid Westendorp	2015
Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, SIM	Antoine Buyse	015
Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway	Ray Murphy	2015
Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies	Jan Wouters	2015

Dr. Margot Salomon announced that London School of Economics would step down, after having served for several terms.

Christian Boe Astrup informed the Assembly that the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights was willing to stand for re-election. The present representative, Prof. Inga Bostad, will step down as director of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights by the end of 2017, at which point the Centre will appoint a replacement for Inga Bostad as member of the Committee.

Prof. Manfred Nowak expressed his willingness to stand for election as representative of EIUC as the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights/University of Vienna University of Vienna would no longer be member of the committee.

Prof. Felipe Gomez expressed the willingness of the University of Deusto to stand for re-election with him as its representative.

On behalf of the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Chair informed the Assembly that the Danish Institute for Human Rights was willing to stand for election with Dr. Hans-Otto Sano as its representative.

The Chair recommended to the Assembly to elect the Institute of Democracy and Human Rights (IDEHPUCP), Peru, as member of the committee with director Elisabet Salmon as its representative.

**Decision:** The Assembly unanimously and with applause decided to enlarge Committee with one member and to elect the following for membership of Committee:

- EIUC, Manfred Nowak

- The Norwegian Centre of Human rights, Inga Bostad (until the end of 2017 and another representative for the remaining of the term)
- University of Deusto, Felipe Gomez
- Institute of Democracy and Human Rights (IDEHPUCP), Elisabet Salmon
- The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Hans-Otto Sano

The Chair expressed his appreciation of Margot Salomon's long-standing dedication to AHRI in her capacity of Committee Member and Vice-Chair for AHRI for several terms.

## **10. Election 2017 of Chair, Vice-Chair and Executive Secretary (Annex 6)**

### **I. Election of Chair and Executive Secretary**

Global Justice Academy at the University of Edinburgh jointly with the Centre for the Study of Human Rights Law at the University of Strathclyde had expressed interest in taking over as Chair (Dr. Kasey McCall-Smith) and Executive Secretary (Dr. Elaine Webster). The Committee heartily supported the application.

The Chair gave a brief overview of the process of transition of the functions of Chair and Executive Secretary as well as the Secretariat from the Danish Institute for Human Rights to Global Justice Academy at the University of Edinburgh and the Centre for the Study of Human Rights Law at the University of Strathclyde.

**Decision:** The Assembly unanimously and with applause elected Dr. Kasey McCall-Smith as Chair and Dr. Elaine Webster as Executive Secretary.

### **II. Election of vice-chair**

At the Executive Committee Meeting taking place 27 April, the incoming Chair, Dr. Kasey McCall-Smith, opened up a discussion with a view to rethinking the function of the AHRI vice chair. It was proposed to consider a construction whereby the position of vice chair at a given point in the AHRI three year cycle is taken up by the chair-elect, in anticipation of taking over as chair at a later stage, hereby securing a smooth transition of the AHRI chair (and Secretariat) from one hosting institution to another. The Executive Committee welcomed this idea and decided to explore this and other possibilities further at a future Executive Committee Meeting. On this basis, the Committee recommended that the Assembly appoint a vice chair for the duration of one year only, in order to be able to implement a new procedure at the Assembly meeting 2018. The Committee proposed the election of Prof. Antoine Buyse as vice chair

**Decision:** The Assembly unanimously and with applause elected Prof. Antoine Buyse as vice-chair for the duration of the next AHRI year (April 2017 – September 2018).

### III. Transition of Chair

The outgoing and ingoing Chairs suggested that the ingoing Chair took over the responsibilities with immediate effect.

The outgoing Chair and Executive Secretary expressed their heartfelt thanks to the Assembly for having been entrusted to host the AHRI Association since 2012. It has been an honour to contribute to the strengthening of AHRI as a platform for excellent human rights research and to expand the network globally. The Assembly applauded the outgoing Chair and Executive Secretary, following an intervention by Dr. Margot Salomon.

**Decision:** The new Chair runs the remainder of the Assembly.

#### **11. New Chair: visions**

The newly appointed Chair offered thanks to the Danish Institute for Human Rights and gave an overview of what AHRI can expect from the Secretariat in Scotland.

The Chair discussed visions for maintaining and building upon the significant progress achieved to date. These focused on: continued expansion of AHRI, particularly in the Global South (including continuation of the Working Group on expansion of membership); consolidating communications between member institutes via AHRI and communication of AHRI activities within member institutes (including dissemination of guidelines on communications and introduction of a regular newsletter); creation of a Working Paper series (building on previous proposals for an AHRI journal); and strengthening sustainability of AHRI (including embedding AHRI activities within the member institutes and considering timescales for appointment of future Secretariats).

**Decision:** The Assembly received the new Chair's visions and expressed its support to the Chair's further elaboration of the efforts needed to further improve the work of AHRI.

#### **12. Plenary debate about AHRI future: current and new initiatives**

##### I. Leuven Declaration

Prof. Jan Wouters, Leuven Centre for Global Governance and AHRI Executive Committee member, proposed that the Assembly consider adopting a 'Leuven Declaration'. This would continue in the growing tradition of adopting such Declarations at AHRI conferences. Prof. Wouters invited comments. Comments from the floor related to: the use of specific examples in view of achieving greater media impact; the

desirability of having a Declaration that was of fairly general relevance (noting the way in which the previous Declaration on Academic Freedom could be invoked in relation to recent events at the Central European University); the need to include community activist leaders amongst those currently under threat; the importance of choosing language that does not preclude critical positions that academics within AHRI might take (for example, critique of international organisations); the need to be clear about the motivation behind calls in the Declaration (for example, stating explicitly why independent mechanisms are important and so on).

**Decision:** Assembly agreed in principle with Prof. Wouters' draft and decided to establish a drafting committee to continue during the break to work on the declaration. The Assembly later on adopted the Leuven Declaration.

## II. MOOC: 'Mass Migration and Human Rights: Ethical and legal dilemmas'

Ingvill Thorson Plesner, Norwegian Centre for human Rights, presented an update and introductory video on the AHRI joint MOOC project. Half of the lectures will be from AHRI members. The process of producing the MOOC is ongoing and is projected to be finished by summer 2017. There was a suggestion for an online space (e.g. a blog to document the process and progress of the MOOC).

**Decision:** The Secretariat will circulate information to members with contact details for anyone wishing to learn from or get involved in the MOOC project.

## III. Proposed COST action on treatment and integration of immigrants

Prof. Tom Hadden provided an update on a side meeting held during the conference pursuant to the note circulated via the Secretariat. Agreed focus on integration. Intention is to ensure a balance between reception and target countries amongst the participating member institutes; this will require wider participation. Participants will be required to provide information on existing research and initiatives in their country, factual data on national approaches, and any existing information on best practice and lessons learned. Re: lead applicant and location: three or four (non-UK) members have expressed an interest. Next step is to identify a lead institution to take over the project. Role of AHRI to be further discussed. Date for applications is September 2017.

**Decision:** The Secretariat will circulate a reminder to encourage interested members to contact Prof. Hadden.

## IV. Scholars at risk

The Chair communicated a suggestion on behalf of Dr. Hans-Otto Sano, Danish Institute for Human Rights, to consider how AHRI could help to accommodate a scholar at risk.

**Decision:** The Secretariat will circulate a request for members to contact Dr. Sano with suggestions.

V. International tribunal of conscience regarding crimes against humanity in Mexico

Prof. Camilo Pérez-Bustillo, Human Rights Center, University of Dayton, gave an overview of the International Tribunal of Conscience of Peoples in Movement, which will hold special sessions in Mexico in September 2017. The Human Rights Center at the University of Dayton is a co-sponsor of the initiative. Prof. Pérez-Bustillo highlighted the opportunities for Global South connections, and partnerships with grassroots organisations, through support for the tribunal. AHRI was invited to endorse the initiative and individuals within the member institutes were invited to support or participate in the tribunal.

**Decision:** The Secretariat will circulate a document and interested individuals can contact Prof. Pérez-Bustillo directly.

**13. The AHRI conference 2018**

The Chair provided an update on the next AHRI conference, to be hosted by the Global Justice Academy in Edinburgh on 7-8th September 2018. Website is planned to go live imminently. Planning is underway, including for a conference dinner and ceilidh. The Chair urged early booking of accommodation. The conference website will include a discount code on university accommodation.

**Decision:** The Assembly received the update.

**14. The AHRI conference 2019**

Members were asked to notify the Executive Secretary to express initial interest in hosting the 2019 conference. The conference will include components with a particular focus on AHRI issues.

**Decision:** The Secretariat will circulate a reminder to members to signal interest before September 2017.

**15. Next meeting**

The Next Assembly meeting will take place during the Edinburgh conference, on 8th September 2017.

**16. AOB**

I. Comment on support for the Central European University:

Dr Sejal Parmer, Human Rights Program of the Legal Studies Department, CEU, gave thanks the AHRI network and to individuals who had offered support. Members were urged to continue to stand with CEU.

## II. AHRI involvement

The Chair asked attendees to consider standing for election to the Executive Committee in September 2018, and to contact the Secretariat at any time with ideas, including, for example, for regional working groups/work in progress workshops. The Chair reiterated that AHRI welcomes active involvement of the member institutes.

*Minutes taken by Eva Maria Lassen (item 1-10) and Elaine Webster (item 11-16)*