



Annex 1

Assembly Meeting

Saturday 8th September 2018

12.30pm-2.00pm

Global Justice Academy, Edinburgh (Old College, Playfair Library)

MINUTES (Draft)

Member institutions present

- Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, Serbia
- Centre for Criminal Justice & Human rights, University College Cork, Ireland
- Centre for Human Rights Studies, University of Zurich (UZHR), Switzerland
- Centre for Human rights, University of Pretoria, South Africa
- Centre for the Study of Human Rights Law, University of Strathclyde, UK
- Czech Center for Human Rights and Democracy (CCHR), Czech Republic
- European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation, Venice-Lido, Italy
- European Training- and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Graz, Austria
- Helena Kennedy for International Justice, Sheffield Hallam University, UK
- Human Rights Center, University of Padua, Italy
- Human Rights Centre at the Charles University, Czech Republic
- Human Rights Centre, Queens University Belfast, UK
- Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, UK
- Human Rights Consortium, School of Advanced Study, University of London, UK
- Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa, Canada
- Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland, Ireland
- Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, K.U. Leuven, Belgium
- Maastricht Centre for Human Rights, Maastricht University, The Netherlands
- Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM), University of Utrecht, The Netherlands
- Newcastle Forum for Human Rights and Social Justice, Newcastle Law School, University of Newcastle, UK
- Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo, Norway
- Pedro Arrupe Institute of Human Rights, University of Deusto, Bilbao, Spain
- Poznan Centre for Human Rights, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

- School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
- The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Denmark
- The Global Justice Academy, University of Edinburgh, UK
- The Human Rights Program of the Legal Studies Department, Central European University, Hungary
- The Institute of Democracy and Human Rights (IDEHPUCP), Peru

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

- Human Rights Law Centre, University of Nottingham School of Law, UK (by proxy – AHRI chair)
- Human Rights Programme at the University of Sydney, Australia (by proxy – Manfred Nowak)
- Institute for Human Rights, Abo Akademi University, Finland (by proxy – AHRI chair)
- Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland (by proxy - AHRI Chair)
- Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights, Bern, Switzerland (by proxy – AHRI Chair)
- The European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano (EURAC)
- Transitional Justice Institute, University of Ulster, Jordanstown/Magee, UK (by proxy – AHRI Chair)
- UNESCO Chair in Human Rights, University of Luxembourg (by proxy – AHRI chair)
- UNESCO Chair in Human Rights, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg (by proxy – Felipe Gomez Isa)

Observers represented

- EU Fundamental Rights Agency

New applicant institutions represented

- Australian Human Rights Institute UNSW, Australia
- Centre for Applied Human Rights, York, UK
- Centre for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany
- Chair of Human Rights University of the Basque Country, Spain
- Chang Fo-Chuan Centre for the Study of Human Rights, Soochow University, Taiwan
- Department Human Rights and Politics ELTE University, Hungary
- NCU chair of Human Rights, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland
- Research Centre for Fundamental Rights, Tallinn University, Estonia
- Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research, Sussex, UK

Apologies received

- Icelandic Human Rights Institution, Iceland

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed AHRI representatives and applicants to the Assembly. Meeting quorate.

2. Adoption of agenda

Decision: The Assembly unanimously adopted the agenda.

3. Approval of minutes from Assembly Meeting on 28th April 2017 (Annex 1)

Decision: The Assembly unanimously approved the minutes.

4. Report of the Chair

The Chair gave an overview of the transition period to the new Secretariat since April 2017. A significant task had been working towards the present conference. The Chair gave an overview of other initiatives. One aim of the Secretariat has been to establish a greater AHRI presence, to increase recognition of the Association's name externally. As a key mechanism for this, we have looked to publications, including the edited collection marking the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, introduced at the conference dinner. As a key mechanism for increasing the profile of AHRI within the network has been the monthly newsletter. The Secretariat has also taken steps to improve AHRI's financial systems. An updated AHRI website has also been launched.

5. Financial Statement (Annex 2)

The Chair asked attendees to press upon their member institutions the importance of timely payment of membership fees, which make a crucial contribution to the holding of the conference.

6. Admission of New Members (nine applications) (Annex 3)

The Chair welcomed the nine applications submitted and noted that the Executive Committee recommended all institutes for membership.

- Australian Human Rights Institute UNSW, Australia
- Centre for Applied Human Rights, York, UK
- Centre for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany
- Chair of Human Rights University of the Basque Country, Spain
- Chang Fo-Chuan Centre for the Study of Human Rights, Soochow University, Taiwan
- Department Human Rights and Politics ELTE University, Hungary
- NCU chair of Human Rights, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland
- Research Centre of Fundamental for Fundamental Rights, Tallinn University, Estonia
- Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research, Sussex, UK

The representatives present briefly introduced themselves and their institutions to the Assembly.

The Assembly was invited to ask any questions.

All applicants were welcomed with applause.

Decision: The Assembly unanimously admitted the nine institutions.

7. Election of Executive Committee Members (Annex 4)

The Chair asked if any Assembly Members wanted to put forward their institutes for election. Dr Suzanne Egan (UCD Centre for Human Rights, University College Dublin) and Professor Magnus Killander (Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria) introduced themselves and their institutes and put forward their motivations for joining the Executive Committee.

The Chair invited any comments.

The Chair thanked Professor Antoine Buyse (SIM, Utrecht University) for his work as Vice-Chair since April 2017. It had been agreed previously that a new Vice-Chair would be elected for the remaining year of the Secretariat's three-year term (until September 2019). Dr Ingrid Westendorp, member of the Executive Committee, stood for the Vice-Chair position, on behalf of the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights (Maastricht University).

The Chair invited any comments.

The Chair stated that it would be preferable to be notified of any interest in hosting the Secretariat a year in advance. This would permit the incoming Chair and Executive Secretary to sit on the Executive Committee for a year prior to assuming the roles, which would aid in the Secretariat transition.

Decision: The Assembly unanimously confirmed the election of Dr Egan and Professor Killander to the Executive Committee, and Dr Westendorp as Vice-Chair.

8. Update on Establishment of AHRI as an International Association under Belgian Law

The Chair invited Executive Committee member Professor Jan Wouters to give an update on the process of establishing AHRI as an International Association. Professor Wouters stated that the process was proceeding well and regular contact had been maintained with the notary. The formal establishment will be confirmed in autumn 2018, with the expectation that AHRI could proceed as an independent Association in 2019. The Chair thanked Professor Wouters for his continuing work on this initiative.

9. Conference Policy (Annex 5)

The Chair gave an overview of the proposed conference policy. This was drafted by the Secretariat in light of AHRI's growing membership and concomitant interest in hosting future conferences. The policy aims to clarify the timing of bids and the Executive Committee's criteria for assessing bids.

The Chair invited questions from the Assembly.

A question was asked about the nature of the criteria and whether they were too general. A similar question was asked about point 3 in particular ('The Executive Committee should consider the size of the conference. In principle AHRI should continue to alternate between large conferences open to non-AHRI member institutes/attendees and small-scale conferences limited to AHRI member institutes. Any cause for variance from the alternating years system should be presented. AHRI shall continue to maintain the option for hosting a smaller conference to ensure that all AHRI members, including those with smaller hosting capacities, are not excluded from hosting.') The Chair responded that traditionally, the aim was to have alternate years with larger and small-scale conferences restricted to AHRI institutes. Over the past few years the conference hosts have, for various reasons, put forward proposals for large-scale conferences. The policy aimed to clarify that the default position remained one of alternating between large and small-scale conferences.

Decision: Conference Policy unanimously approved.

10. AHRI Conference 2019

The Chair invited Professor Norman Weiss (Human Rights Centre, University of Potsdam) to introduce to the Assembly the plans, to date, for the 2019 conference. Professor Weiss noted that 2019 will be the 25th Anniversary of the Human Rights Centre (MRZ) and the conference organisers will warmly invite colleagues to a large scale conference on the theme of the relationship between human rights law and international humanitarian law. The conference date will be 6-7th September 2019.

The Chair also invited Professor Magnus Killander (Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria) to speak to the Assembly about the 2020 conference. Professor Killander noted that there will be some consultation about the date, and that the theme will be linked to socio-economic rights.

The Chair thanked both for their readiness to host the annual conference. The Secretariat will send out a call via email to invite proposals to host the 2021 conference.

11. Future secretariat transition plans/timescales

This point had been noted in relation to Executive Committee elections (item 7 above) so was touched upon only briefly. This concerned the role of Vice-Chair, who would ideally be a representative of the next Secretariat and in place during the final year of a Secretariat's term. This would help to ensure a smooth transition between host institutes.

Action: The Executive Secretary will send out a call for expressions of interest to host the Secretariat in advance of the 2019 Assembly.

12. Next meeting

The next Assembly meeting will be during the AHRI conference in Potsdam in 2019.

Action: The Executive Secretary will liaise with the conference organisers to confirm the date and time.

13. AOB.

a. AHRI Publications

The Chair gave an overview of discussions that have been held about a possible working paper series for colleagues from AHRI member institutes. This had been put forward as part of the vision of the new Secretariat at the 2017 Assembly meeting. There have also been discussions about, alternatively, creating a book series, after the Chair was approached about this by Edward Elgar Publishing, who were represented at the 2018 conference and had committed to offering a best paper prize at future AHRI conferences. Further discussions have taken place at the Executive Committee meeting during this conference. There is some support within the Executive Committee for a vision of establishing an AHRI Journal of Human Rights. A key aim would be to strengthen AHRI's name and recognition. The Executive Committee has committed to invest time to look seriously at this issue if there is a sense amongst the Assembly that this initiative is worth pursuing. Therefore, the Executive Committee is looking for a sense of the response of the Assembly and will then look at further elaborating on the concept.

The Chair opened the floor for contributions.

It was noted that it would have been an advantage to have some written material for the Assembly in advance of this meeting, to think about the possibility of a journal.

There was discussion about previous experience of establishing a new journal. It was noted that the process was long-term and challenging, in particular during the first three years. Strategy discussions would be required. The time consuming and costly nature of running a journal was highlighted, including the need to employ an individual dedicated to this, beyond what would be provided by a publisher.

There was discussion about the support being offered by the potential publisher. It would be necessary to find a publisher who would be willing to take some economic risks. Some publishers give financial support, which should be negotiated.

Open access was highlighted as an important consideration. The SUR Journal was given as a good example.

A number of questions were raised, about the title of a potential journal and the importance of featuring 'human rights' in the title, about alternative options such as an annual special issue in other journals and the original working paper series idea, and about whether a particular niche was envisaged in terms of the focus of a potential journal.

Several attendees acknowledged that it was an excellent idea, and that there was a market for an additional journal, but the practical challenges would be substantial.

There was some discussion of promotional activities beyond publications.

The Chair acknowledged the nature of the challenges that would be involved in such a project but reiterated some of the resources within AHRI which suggest it is worth investigating further (including that AHRI provides a potential pool of reviewers; a goal of supporting young academics; a means of promoting AHRI's international presence; in general, a way of thinking about the added value of AHRI. It would be possible to use papers from the conference to create a themed issue (forty-three papers had been submitted for this conference, which suggests that there is enough content for a journal). The Executive Committee would consider the responses from the discussion today and work towards creating a written proposal. It is clear that a very solid and strong proposal would also be needed for a publisher.

Action: The Chair invited interested attendees to signal their willingness to volunteer in the next stages, including anyone who would be willing to be potential advisory board members, and anyone interesting in joining a drafting committee for the written proposal.

b. AHRI Declaration

In recent years, the Assembly has adopted a Declaration. It was felt appropriate to continue this in Edinburgh. A proposed Declaration had been drafted in advance by members of the Executive Committee and other interested members. Hard copy drafts were available to all attendees and projected on the screen. Professor Jan Wouters gave some background on the choice of topic and the ambit. Attendees were invited to suggest additions or changes.

Rephrasing of some terms and language suggested.

Statements were made about the motivations of the AHRI Declarations, which began in 2015, and other possible specific inclusions, including reference to economic, social and cultural rights. The process for adopting Declarations was raised. For example, a process whereby people could submit ideas in advance? Questions were raised about impact and audience for the Declarations.

In respect of the Edinburgh Declaration, there was a call for volunteers to translate into other languages,

Action: A new draft of the Edinburgh Declaration would be circulated before the end of the conference.

Action: The Executive Committee to clarify at its next meeting future process for conference declarations.

c. Research collaboration

It was suggested that it would be good to return to looking at structures for research collaboration, including to gather ideas of contributions for research themes, and inviting the membership to contribute ideas for advancing research collaboration.

Mr Gabriel Toggenburg, on behalf of AHRI Observer member the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), referred to the Agency's work and expressed openness to exploring how AHRI could further contribute to/benefit from collaboration with FRA.

Action: The Executive Secretary would liaise with FRA to explore holding an Executive Committee meeting at FRA in Vienna, in order to explore opportunities for collaboration.