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**Minutes: AHRI Annual Assembly Meeting 2014**

Copenhagen

Tuesday 30 September 2014

12:00-13:30

**Member Institutions represented:**

* Belgrade Centre for Human Rights
* Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria
* Chr. Michelsen Institute
* Czech Center for Human Rights and Democratization (CCHRD)
* European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation
* Human Rights Centre, Queen’s University
* Human Rights Centre, University of Essex
* Human Rights Consortium, University of London
* Human Rights Law Centre, University of Nottingham
* Institute for Human Rights, Åbo Akademi University
* Institute for Human Rights, University of Iceland
* Interdepartmental Centre on Human Rights and the Rights of Peoples, University of Padua
* Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland
* Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies
* Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights
* Maastricht Centre for Human Rights, Maastricht University
* Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM)
* Newcastle Forum for Human Rights and Social Justice
* Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo
* Pedro Arrupe Institute of Human Rights, University of Deusto
* Poznan Centre for Human Rights, Polish Academy of Sciences
* Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
* Riga Graduate School of Law
* Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights
* The Centre on Human Rights in Conflict, University of East London
* The Danish Institute for Human Rights
* The Human Rights Program of the Legal Studies Department, Central European University
* Transitional Justice Institute, University of Ulster
* UNESCO Chair in Human Rights, University of Luxembourg
* University of Zürich Competence Centre for Human Rights

**Candidate Institutions represented:**

* Human Rights Centre, Durham Law School: Represented by Alan Greene
* School of Global Studies at University of Gothenburg: Represented by Peter Johansson
* Research Centre Human Rights, University of Vienna: Represented by Manfred Nowak
* Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa: Represented by John Packer

**Agenda**

The meeting was chaired by AHRI Executive Chair Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen except from agenda item 7 which was chaired by Antoine Buyse.

1. Adoption of Agenda:

*The agenda was adopted*

1. Approval of minutes from Annual Meeting 2013:

*The minutes from the Annual Meeting 2013 were approved*

1. Report of the Chair:

*AHRI consists of 46 members now. Since the last Assembly Meeting effort has been put into streamlining the secretariat function of AHRI. The Chair pointed out that the secretariat has to be sustainable until AHRI gets more funding.*

*Resources have been allocated to streamline the membership application procedure and to update the membership information on the website. There is now a pre-screening procedure by the Executive Committee in regards to new membership applications.*

*With mandate from the London conference The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) has arranged this year’s general state of the art human rights research conferences. It has been a positive challenge and the massive interest has made DIHR upscale numbers of people participating. The Chair expressed gratitude towards the Programme Committee and also the AHRI members that supports with FRAME.*

1. Financial Statement

*In London it was decided that there should be put forward a financial statement for 2015 and onwards, but since institutional membership fees have been introduced for 2014 DIHR has made a short financial overview.*

*The Chair pointed out that funding does not go to the host institution of the secretariat nor to the host of the conference. It goes to the conferences and other arrangements. Staff hours as contribution in kind are part of the allocated resources but is not part of the DIHR’s financial statement.*

1. Membership applications

*The secretariat had received four new membership applications. The Executive Committee endorsed the applicants and recommended them to be adopted by the Assembly. Applications had been received from:*

1. *Research Centre at the University of Vienna: represented by Manfred Nowak.*
2. *University of Gothenburg: represented by Peter Johansen*
3. *University of Ottawa: represented by John Packer*
4. *University of Durham: Alan Greene*

*All applications were accepted by the Assembly.*

1. Future directions:

*It was pointed out by the Chair that the AHRI network has great potential to be the premiere network in the field of human rights. Especially within four areas the Chair suggests to look into further development:*

* *Conferences: Taking the positively overwhelming interest in the 2014 conference into account it seems that there is a marked for hosting large general human rights research conferences. In the future there will be a biannual structure for the AHRI conferences:*
* *General human rights research conferences every second year. Next large conference in 2016.*
* *Member-oriented conference every other year and link it more closely to a specific theme and topic. This gives more time to informal talks about research collaboration, funding etc.*
* *Membership: AHRI is an international association which calls for more global membership representation. There should be a future focus on ensuring strong presence of the developing countries – more members from the global south. The Chair asked for the assembly’s support in this regard, and to make sure that the relevant research institutions are reached out for. Different sizes membership fee might need to be taken into consideration.*
* *Broaden the content of AHRI: The conferences should still be in focus to put AHRI on the researchers’ map. However the Chair suggests to also look into other scholarly content:*
  + - * 1. *A journal or association to a journal where accessibility is taken into consideration for the institutions that do not usually have access to the articles. This might also help the coming members in the global south to be published and to join the regions in this term.*
        2. *Education: exchange of Ph.D. candidates and maybe MA students with inspiration from the Venice programme. The AHRI network consists of many experts within their field which could benefit a lot of people.*
        3. *Policy: AHRI is of such a size that it is possible to lend AHRI’s voice to support existing initiatives and possibly take an independently voice on issues. There need to be made a decision on how and who speaks on behalf of AHRI in the future.*
        4. *Stronger structural identity of AHRI is necessary, for instance to manage funds to make sure that it can go directly to the network. The Executive Committee is larger than first set and a more flexible structure can be taken into consideration.*

*It was proposed from the Vice-chair to set down 4 working groups to find the right approach and more detailed suggestions on the implementation of these future directions. The Vice-chair urged members to join the working groups.*

1. Election: Executive Committee, Chair and Vice-Chair

*Each Executive Committee member whose term had ended chose to re-run:*

* *Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, The Danish Institute for Human Rights (Chair)*
* *Margot Salomon, London School of Economics (Vice-chair)*
* *Manfred Nowak, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights*
* *Inga Bostad, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights*
* *Felipe Gomez Isa, University of Deusto*

*All were re-elected for a three-year-term. Afterwards there was discussion of the need to have guidelines about how many terms Chair and Vice-chair can sit. The secretariat will draft a proposition for the next Assembly.*

1. Appointment of Executive Secretary and host institution of the Secretariat

*Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen was re-elected as Chair and Margot Salomon as Vice-chair. Eva Maria Lassen claimed willing to sit for another term as Executive Secretary.*

1. Topic, time and place for the 2015 and 2016 AHRI conferences

*Belgrade Centre for Human Rights offered to host next year’s conference in September 2015. The Assembly expressed its gratitude.*

*Several member institutions have offered to host the 2016 conference. It was decided that there would be drafted basic criteria for selection and the interested institutions should make a should make a short summary for the Executive Committee. The secretariat will draft a procedure.*

*It was suggested to also look at what impact a conference can have and let it be a criteria for the selection.*

1. AOB:

*Corinne Lennox, University of London informed about the University’s launching of an information sharing network for human rights researchers. There is established a partnership with a publisher and they have been able to provide small staff funding to manage the information. She raised the idea of affiliating this with AHRI.*