AHRI Assembly Meeting 2016

Utrecht, the Netherlands
3 September 2016
Venue: Janskerkhof 3
Time: 12:45 – 14:15

Minutes (approved)

Member Institutions Represented:
-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
-Centre for the Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
- The Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, the Netherlands
-The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Denmark
-European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation, Venice-Lido, Italy
-Training- and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Graz, Austria
-Human Rights and Globalization Research Group, University of Seville, Spain
-Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, UK
-Human Rights Centre, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK
-Human Rights Law Centre, University of Nottingham School of Law, UK
-Newcastle Forum for Human Rights and Social Justice, Newcastle Law School, University of Newcastle, United Kingdom
-Institute for Human Rights, Åbo Akademi University, Finland
-Human Rights Center, University of Padua, Italy
-Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, Austria
-Maastricht Centre for Human Rights, Maastricht University, Faculty of Law, The Netherlands
-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 (Instytut Nauk Prawnych PAN)
-Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, Lund, Sweden
-Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights, Bern, Switzerland
-The Research Group Law and Development, University of Antwerpen, Belgium
-Transitional Justice Institute, University of Ulster, Jordanstown/Magee, UK

-Centre for Human Rights Studies, University of Zurich (UZHR), Switzerland
-Czech Center for Human Rights and Democratization (CCHRD), Czech Republic
-The Human Rights Program of the Legal Studies Department, Central European University, Hungary
-Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, K.U. Leuven, Belgium
-School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
-Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa
-Human Rights Centre at the Charles University in Prague
-The Centre for Human Rights Research (CHRR), the University of Manitoba, Canada
-The Global Justice Academy, University of Edinburgh

Member Institutions Represented by Proxy:
-Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland
-Centre for the Study of Human Rights Law, the University of Strathclyde, UK
-The Centre on Human Rights in Conflict, University of East London, UK
-The European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano (EURAC)

Candidate Institutions Represented:
-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

Excused absence:
-Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway

The meeting was chaired by Jonas Christoffersen, The Danish Institute for Human Rights

1. **Welcome**

   The Chair opened the Assembly. The Chair and the Assembly expressed, with applause, their gratitude to Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen for his achievements while serving as AHRI chair during his employment at the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

2. **Adoption of Agenda**

   The Chair proposed an additional item no. 11, Utrecht Declaration on Academic Freedom.

   Decision: The agenda, as amended, was approved.

3. **Approval of Minutes from Assembly Meeting, Belgrade 2015 (Annex 1)**

   Decision: The minutes were approved.

4. **Report of the Chair**

   The Chair informed the Assembly about the developments since the Assembly 2015, focusing on the following:

   1. <u>AHRI conference</u>. The Chair commended the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM) for hosting the excellent 2016 conference in Utrecht.
   2. <u>Working Groups</u>. The chair summed up the debate in the Executive Committee.
      a. <u>Education</u>:

         Inga Bostad, chair of the Working Group on Education and Teaching, informed the Assembly about a proposal of establishing a MOOC on Human Rights and Migration, to be led by the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, which will provide staff resources for this initiative. The development will commence in the autumn 2016. An invitation to participate in the initiative will be distributed.

     b. <u>Visibility strategy</u>. The chairs of the Working Groups of "AHRI as Policy Maker" and "An AHRI journal" will at the next AHRI Conference 2017 present a paper on ways to enhance the visibility of AHRI in the academic world and in policy-making.

     c. <u>Expansion of AHRI membership</u>. A strategy for the expansion will be developed. As part of this work, the legal status of AHRI, as well as amendments of the AHRI Constitution, will also be considered. It is the ambition of the chair to finalise the work on the legal status of AHRI as well as amendments of the Constitution at the AHRI Conference 2017.

Decision: The Assembly approved the report of the Chair.

5. **Financial Statement (Annex 2)**

The Chair commended the surplus from the 2015 Conference in Belgrade, and urged AHRI members to pay the annual membership fee.

Antoine Buyse informed the Assembly that part of the conference budget for the 2016 Conference had been spent on travel expenses for participants in need of financial support.

Decision: The Financial Statement was approved by the Assembly.

6. **Admission of New Members (Annex 3)**

The Chair referred to annex 3 and gave representatives of the applying institutions the opportunity to present themselves to the Assembly:

1) <u>"Alfredo Vázquez Carrizoza" Institute for Human Rights and Peacebuilding Universidad Javeriana of Bogotá, Bogotá, Colombia</u>
Director Manuel E. Salamanca, offered a short presentation of the institute and motivated the membership application.

2) <u>Instituto de Democracia y Derechos Humanos de la Pontifica Universidad Católica del Peru, Lima, Peru</u>

Director Elizabeth Salmón offered a short presentation of the institute and motivated the membership application.

3) <u>University College Dublin Centre for Human Rights, Dublin, Ireland</u>
Director Suzanne Egan was absent with apology. Praise for the centre and its expected valuable contribution was raised by several Assembly participants.

4) <u>Human Rights Center, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio, USA</u>
Director Camilo Perez-Bustillo offered a short presentation of the centre and motivated the membership application.

Member of the Executive Committee, Margot Solomon, mentioned that the Executive Committee, before the next Assembly meeting, would consider a revision of the current requirement that membership applications must be supported by an existing AHRI member. The reason is that the foreseen expansion of AHRI may include the admission of members that are not well known to existing members.

Decision: The four institutions were admitted as members of AHRI and the Assembly took note of the information regarding supporting letters.

7. **Election 2017**
There are no elections for AHRI bodies in 2016. The chair stated that the secretariat would add a list of elected institutions to the minutes of the meeting in order to secure a common memory of earlier elections. The list is as follows:

Member institution	Position	Representative	
The Danish Institute for Human Rights	AHRI Chair	**Jonas Christoffersen**	elected 2014
The Danish Institute for Human Rights	AHRI Executive Secretary	**Eva Maria Lassen**	elected 2014
London School of Economics	AHRI vice-Chair	**Margot Salomon**	elected 2014
University of Oslo		**Inga Bostad**	elected 2014
University of Vienna		**Manfred Nowak**	elected 2014
University of Deusto		**Felipe Gómez**	elected 2014

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

Following the timespan for the elected positions, as outlined in the AHRI Constitution, the positions of Chair and Executive Secretary as well as those of four members of the Executive Committee are up for election in 2017.

The Chair recalled that elections are institutional. Institutions and not persons are members of AHRI and the Assembly is made up of the directors of the members.

The Chair further observed that the constitution does not require that the Chair and the Executive Secretary (and the accompanying Secretariat) be based at the same institution. However, the Executive Committee discussed the issue and agreed that it, for practical reasons, would be preferable for the Chair and Executive Secretary to be from the same institution.

One AHRI member has communicated a preliminary expression of interest, but in order to secure and open and transparent process, the Executive Secretary will send out, in September/October, a Call for Expression of Interest for taking over positions of Chair and Executive Secretary (and hence also the Secretariat). Based on the incoming responses, the Executive Committee will make its recommendation to the Assembly in April 2017.

Decision: The Assembly approved the procedure.

8. **The AHRI Conference 2017**

   Professor Jan Wouters gave an update on the conference, which will be hosted by the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies and take place in Leuven 27 and 28 April (Annex 6). All participants will be invited to the FRAME conference 26 April. AHRI members interested in joining the Programme Committee are invited to approach Jan Wouters.

   Decision: The Assembly received the update.

9. **Future Work**

   The Chair informed the Assembly that one AHRI member has expressed interest in hosting the 2018 Conference, which will have the same format as the 2016 Conference. The procedure for electing the conference host will follow previous years: in September/October 2016 the Executive Secretary will issue a Call for Expression of Interest. Based on incoming Expressions of interests the Executive Committee will choose the host of the AHRI conference 2018. The Committee will aim at electing a host before the end of 2016.

   Decision: The Assembly approved the procedure.

10. **Next Meeting**

    The Chair observed that the next Assembly meeting will take place on 28 April 2017 at the conference in Leuven.

11. **Utrecht Declaration on Academic Freedom.**

    A draft Declaration was presented to the Assembly. The draft Declaration was discussed. Members able to translate the Declaration were encouraged to approach the Executive Secretary. All AHRI members were encouraged to disseminate the Declaration as widely as possible. The Executive Committee was recommend to take

contact to Scholars at Risk in order to distribute the Declaration and express support for its cause.

Decisions:

- The Assembly adopted the Declaration (Annex 7)
- The Executive Committee will take contact to Scholars at Risk.

12. AOB

Annexes:

Annex 1: Minutes from Assembly Meeting in Belgrade, September 2015 (distributed prior to the meeting)

Annex 2: Financial statement (distributed prior to the meeting)

Annex 3: List of four applications for membership, four applications and four letters of support (distributed prior to the meeting)

Annex 4: The positions of AHRI Chair and Executive Secretary: experiences of the Danish Institute for Human Rights (distributed prior to the meeting)

Annex 5: The AHRI constitution amended 21 September 2015 (distributed prior to the meeting)

Annex 6: (presented during the Assembly Meeting): Flyer 2017 Conference

Annex 7: (Adopted at the Assembly meeting): Utrecht Declaration on Academic Freedom.

September 2016

Eva Maria Lassen, AHRI Executive Secretary