

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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Strasbourg, ~~27 January 1988~~ 1 February 1988

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EUROPEAN CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION

12th meeting, 27 January 1988
Strasbourg, Council of Europe
Room No. B301

INTRODUCTION

1. The European Co-ordination Committee on Human Rights Documentation held its 12th meeting at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg, on 27 January 1988.
2. The meeting was opened by Mr Peter Leuprecht, Director of Human Rights, who welcomed the participants.
3. The meeting was chaired by Mr Hans Thoolen, Chief of the CDR in the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (Geneva).
4. The list of participants is reproduced in Appendix I, and the agenda, as adopted, appears in Appendix II.
5. The Secretariat received apologies from:

Mr Araceli González Antón, Documentation and Library Service,
Ministry of Culture, Madrid.

Mr Etienne Boumans, Mr Fumagalli and Gillian Roylance, Human
Rights Unit, European Parliament.

Liv Ellen Buttingsrud and Borghild Volckmar, Team for
Refugees in Norway.

Svend Bitsch Christensen, Librarian, RCT-International
Documentation Centre.

Warwick N Harris, British Refugee Council.

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Kate Wild, International Labour Organisation.

Heinz Hunke, International Documentation and Communication Centre (IDOC), Rome.

Friederike Knabe, Article 19, London.

Eleonora Masini, President, World Futures Studies Federation, Paris.

Amanda Castello Parra, Secretary General, Associazione Internazionale Contro La Tortura (AICT).

Daniel Prémont, President, Association of International Consultants on Human Rights (CID), Geneva.

1. Minutes of the 11th meeting

The minutes of the 11th meeting of HURIDOCS European Co-ordination Committee, which took place on 22 July 1987, were approved.

2. Matters arising

There were none.

3. Developments within HURIDOCS International

(a) Secretariat

The Chairman made reference to HURIDOCS News No. 4 which was published in October 1987, and which comments on many of the developments which have taken place within the HURIDOCS International Network.

The Chairman commented on the developments within the international secretariat, and explained that an advice and support unit/secretariat had been operating since August 1987 from a modest office in Oslo. The staff consists of a full-time information officer, Berth Verstoppen, and a part-time administrative officer, Lalaine Sadiwa-Stormorken. The office moves to the dependence of the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights on 15 March 1988. The new address will be HURIDOCS, Norwegian Institute of Human Rights, St. Olavsgate 29, N-0166 OSLO 1, NORWAY.

The Chairman referred back to the Second General Assembly of HURIDOCS in Rome in 1986, at which it was agreed that a number of HURIDOCS Task Forces should be established, with an independent mandate, and a task of bringing together available expertise in order to undertake specific tasks.

The four Task Forces set up were:

1. Task Force on Human Rights "data-basing", (ie. exchange of data and possible division of labour).
2. Task Force on Standard Formats and Terminology.
3. Task Force on Directories of Human Rights organisations.
4. Task Force on Communication.

(Details of these Task Forces are contained in HURIDOCS News No. 4, which may be obtained from HURIDOCS, Oslo).

Donor Consortium

The first consultation with 10 possible donor agencies took place in April 1987 in Geneva and has been followed up in several other bilateral contacts. There is emerging consensus that HURIDOCS requires stable multi-annual support from a variety of sources as well as active donor support in the dissemination of HURIDOCS' concepts.

Training courses

The Chairman made reference to the training courses which had been held during 1987 in Colombo, London and Strasbourg. Mention was also made that a course on "Human Rights Information Handling in Developing Countries" is scheduled to take place during November/December 1988 in Manila.

(b) "Data-basing" meeting in Oslo, October 1987

The Task Force on Human Rights data-basing met in Oslo in October 1987 and a copy of the policy statement on exchange of information and division of labour adopted by the Task Force is attached as Appendix III.

In brief, the Task Force adopted technical standards for electronic exchange of information within the network, reinforced the division of labour among specialised centres and discussed the conditions for participation in the network.

James Lawson informed the Committee that one positive step had been taken following the meeting in Oslo in that the Directorate of Human Rights of the Council of Europe had, as requested, invited the other regional Human Rights Institutions, the OAU and OAS to participate in a meeting to discuss similar matters to those being examined by the Task Force.

4. Developments in the international refugee documentation network

The Chairman referred to the outcome of the meeting held in Bergisch-Gladbach in November 1986, in which it was generally agreed that there was a need for a network on refugee documentation, and that the co-ordination of such a network should be run by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as an organisation with a global mandate for refugees. A note on progress had been distributed to this meeting.

General discussion

A number of points arising from the information given earlier in the meeting were discussed.

Comment was made that amendments had been proposed and accepted for the "HURIDOCS Standard Formats for the Recording and Exchange of Information on Human Rights". It was requested that Bjorn Stormorken, or a member of the Secretariat in Oslo be requested to ensure that the amendments that had been agreed on, be printed in HURIDOCS News No. 5.

Note was taken that Fernando Avila had completed translations of these standard formats into French and into Spanish. Copies of these were made available to participants at the meeting.

Insofar as there would be a new publication in the future of these standard formats, it was suggested that there should be included a section on audio visual standard formats.

Note was taken that some work had already been done on audio visual standard formats, and it was agreed that James Lawson and Lise Bruun, should exchange drafts of what information they have in order to ascertain how matters are progressing, and then forward to Agneta Pallinder at Amnesty International, the outcome of their joint examination. Agneta Pallinder would then examine this in the light of the work that is currently being done within Amnesty International's International Secretariat, and she would then make whatever suggestions she thought appropriate.

With regard to other standard formats, note was made of the fact that there already existed standard formats for case law and legislation in use by the network of national correspondents of the Human Rights Documentation Centre of the Council of Europe. It was however highlighted that there was still a need for formats on "events and violations".

The presence at the meeting of a member of the secretariat of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights was welcomed by the Co-ordination Committee, and it was hoped that the United Nations contribution would be a continuing one.

Amnesty International, whose presence was similarly welcomed, was asked, through its two representatives, Agneta Pallinder and Tony Mead, to detail developments within Amnesty International's International Secretariat. Agneta Pallinder explained that the International Secretariat was working on their data bases with a view to first making them available internally to their own international and national secretariats. They eventually wish to also open certain of the data bases to other organisations insofar as possible, and in this respect they were anxious that compatibility could be achieved with the HURIDOCs Standard Formats.

5. Follow-up to 11th meeting held on 22 July 1987:

(a) Structure of European Co-ordination Committee (including secretariat)

The British Refugee Council had informed the HURIDOCs European Co-ordination Committee, that it was no longer able to fully carry out its function as Secretary to the Committee. Following a call for volunteers for a new Secretary, the Human Rights Documentation Centre of the Council of Europe was requested to take up, once again, the secretariatship. The Human Rights Documentation Centre accepted this task, but it was pointed out that there was a need for greater involvement by Southern European countries, who were underrepresented at the current meeting.

Christa Keller of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM) stated that if assistance was needed in the secretariat role, SIM would be prepared to help when called upon to do so.

The question of how many meetings a year should be held by the European Co-ordination Committee of HURIDOCS was raised. The conclusion reached was that one meeting a year was sufficient and that this meeting should take place in January.

A request was made that if meetings were only to be held once a year, then it was imperative that information should circulate within the network. With this aim in mind it was agreed to establish a centralised mailing list, and a questionnaire would be sent to all members in order that they could include details of their organisation which could then be disseminated to all those on the mailing list.

(b) Training

I. Training of trainers:

Fund-raising. Fernando Avila and Mark Neville undertook to draft a letter requesting financial assistance in order to hold a training course to train trainers at the end of June 1988. It was agreed that this letter should be circulated to Hans Thoolen, Lise Bruun and Anne-Lise Perrier, for their suggestions and comments.

Hans Van Aggelen of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights was asked to see whether any support could be given by the United Nations, and he confirmed that he would propose that the United Nations support the activities of the European Co-ordination Committee of HURIDOCS.

Programmes. It was agreed that the course for training trainers should include approximately 10 people, and it was noted that Bjorn Stormorken was prepared to do the teaching. It was requested that the training course take place immediately before the International Institute of Human Rights session in July. Provisional dates were therefore made for 27 June to 1 July 1988 for the course.

II. Training of documentalists

Reference was made to the earlier information given by the Chairman on the training courses which took place during 1987, and also of the international course, to last five or six weeks, to be held in Manila, in November/December 1988.

(c) List of documentation centres in Europe

The Committee was informed that Friederike Knabe of Article 19 had been unable to make any progress on this matter as she had been absorbed in the production of Article 19's World Report for 1988, but was still willing to engage in this project.

The Committee was anxious to give whatever support was possible on this matter, and the Human Rights Documentation Centre of the Council of Europe together with José Santos Pais of the Portuguese Procurer General's Office, agreed to make a start with the preparation of such a list.

(d) List of illustrated examples of standard formats

Lise Bruun confirmed that she was still working on preparing "illustrative" examples of the use of standard formats.

6. Any other business

A list was prepared, from information gathered from the delegates, of organisations in Europe known to them who were using HURIDOCs' standard formats. The HURIDOCs secretariat in Oslo would add to this list other organisations in contact with HURIDOCs. The amalgamated list is reproduced in Appendix IV.

7. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in January 1988, if possible on a Monday to take advantage of cheaper travel, and arranged in conjunction with the ONG meeting held annually by the Council of Europe.

APPENDIX I

List of participants

THOOLEN Hans (chairman)	Case Postale 2500 1211 GENEVE DEPOT 2 SWITZERLAND	U.N.H.C.R CDR
LAWSON James	Human Rights Documentation Centre, Council of Europe	
NEVILLE Mark	Human Rights Documentation Centre, Council of Europe	
AVILA Fernando	Human Rights Documentation Centre, Council of Europe	
PETTITI Louis Edmond	4 Square La Bruyere 75009 PARIS FRANCE	CEDIA Institut de formation en Droits de l'homme du Barreau de Paris
NIELSEN Jena	Kessergade 2 PO 38 1002 COPENHAGEN DENMARK	Danish Centre of Human Rights
KELLER Christa	Boothstraat 6 3512 BW UTRECHT NETHERLANDS	SIM Netherlands Institute of Human Rights
SANTOS PAIS José	Rua Escola Politécnica 140 1200 LISBON PORTUGAL	Bureau de Documentation et de droit comparé Office du Procureur- Général de la République de Portugal
BRUUN Lise	Borgergade 10 PB 53 1002 COPENHAGEN DENMARK	Danish Refugee Council
BUNDEGAARD ANDERSEN Karen	Fiolstraede 10 B 1171 COPENHAGEN DENMARK	I.W.G.I.A.
VAN AGGELEN Hans	Palais des Nations Office D105 1211 GENEVA 10 SWITZERLAND	UN. Centre for Human Rights
MATUNOG Samuel	Stafflenbergstr 76 7000 Stuttgart 1 FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	Human Rights Desk Diakonisches Werk der EKD

MEAD Tony	1 Easton Street LONDON WC1X 8DJ UNITED KINGDOM	Amnesty International International Secretariat
PALLINDER Agneta	1 Easton Street LONDON WC1X 8DJ UNITED KINGDOM	Amnesty International International Secretariat
GERMERSHAUSEN Andreas	PO Box 1125 Potsdamer Str 91 D-100 BERLIN 30 FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research
MULLER Pieter	23 avenue d'Audershem B 1040 BRUSSELS BELGIUM	Churches' Committee for Migrants in Europe
WEISSGERBER Michèle	1 quai Lesay-Marnésia 67000 STRASBOURG FRANCE	Institut International des Droits de l'Homme
PERRIER Anne-Lise	1 quai Lesay-Marnésia 67000 STRASBOURG FRANCE	Institut International des Droits de l'Homme
IGNACIO VICUNA L.	c) Duque de Wellington N.2 01011 VITORIA SPAIN	Departemento Presidencia y Justicia (Gobierno Vasco)
PICHLER W. Johannes	Internationales Forschungszenrum Edmundsburg-Monchsberg 2 5070 SALZBURG AUSTRIA	Austrian Institute of Human Rights

APPENDIX IIAgenda

1. Minutes of Meeting.
2. Matters arising.
3. Developments within HURIDOCs International:
 - Secretariat
 - "Data-basing" Meeting in Oslo, October 1987.
4. Developments in the International Refugee Documentation Network.
5. Follow-up to 11th Meeting (22.7.1987):
 - Structure of European Co-ordination Committee (incl. Secretariat)
 - Training: of Trainers: - Fund-raising
- Programmes
 - of Documentalists: - language-specific courses
- focal points
 - List of Documentation Centres in Europe
 - List of illustrated examples of Standard Formats
6. Any other Business.
7. Date of Next Meeting.

APPENDIX III

POLICY STATEMENT ON EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND
DIVISION OF LABOUR

as agreed at the first meeting convened by
the Task Force Leader on the division of
labour between documentation centres in
the HURIDOCS network*

Oslo, 15 to 17 October 1987

1. The Task Force was established at the 2nd Assembly of HURIDOCS, held in Rome in April 1986, with a view to promoting worldwide the division of labour among human rights documentation centres, and in particular among those centres which have already established or are in the process of establishing databases.
2. This first meeting of the task force, convened by the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights in Oslo from 15 to 17 October, brought together over 15 organizations active in the area of information and documentation on human rights. Although there are far more information and documentation centres which focus on human rights, and their number is growing fast, the majority of those centres which are already computer-based and operational were represented at the meeting. The list of participants is attached.
3. The world of human rights documentation is unlimited. Hence, the need for more cooperation and sharing is obvious. Through a real division of labour, rather than prestige, it is the intention of participating centres to make the coverage of human rights material more comprehensive and more accessible to all.
4. The technical prerequisites for the electronic exchange of information on human rights were discussed at the meeting and the conclusion was reached that HURIDOCS should develop detailed standards based on the following basic agreements:

(a) Standard for the structure of the information for exchange:

HURIDOCS Standard Formats, tagged with identifying character strings and document separator. No fixed lengths, but attempts should be made to stay within certain limits, e.g. by using agreed abbreviations.

(b) Standard for packing in file:

Flat ASCII file, no header or structural information. Only one type of bibliographical unit per file; preferably maximum 75 characters per line.

* See brochure attached

(c) Standard for physical transfer:

- c.1 by floppy disks: MS-DOS or PC-DOS, 5 1/4", 9 sector, 40 tracks (360 Kbyte, IBM format)
- c.2 by telephone transmission: using a modem which can handle at least 1200 baud and 300 baud, full duplex, CCICT and Bell (the mode to be agreed bilaterally before each transfer)

Organizations could use modems which can handle, in addition, higher baud rates, as they are cheaper to use, and not necessarily much more expensive to buy, but the quality of the transfer may sometimes suffer on normal telephone lines.

5. The Task Force undertakes to reinforce the existing division of labour among specialized centres, and to strengthen the cooperation with related networks, such as the emerging refugee documentation network.

It agrees that a division of labour in the HURIDOCS network would greatly benefit from more regular communication among all the documentation centres. Where possible, the Task Force should encourage a further division of labour by convening those non-specialized centres which have documentation work as part of their mandate, and devote a significant part of their resources to this purpose.

The meetings should be open-ended for those who believe they fulfill the above criteria.

Participants at the meetings will cover their own expenses.

6. Conditions for participation in the network will have to be developed further, taking into account the following general guidelines which have been agreed upon at the present meeting:

- (a) There should be a reciprocal commitment to participate in the network and to make available to the other participants the information held at the different centres, in as far as the information is public and not of a confidential or restricted nature.
- (b) Participants in the network will not treat this information as a commodity for profit-making purposes; further harmonization of policies will be necessary in the longer term.
- (c) Consultations held within the Task Force should seek to achieve a common policy aimed at the lowering of possible obstacles for access by those who need the information most.
- (d) A working group composed of the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights, SIM, Council of Europe (doc. center), Article 19 and Human Rights Internet, will look into the question of fees for use and exchange of information and will report within 6 months to the HURIDOCS secretariat and the Task Force leader.

7. While the division of labour has the purpose of obtaining larger access for all, it could be approached from different angles: by source, subject or geographical scope.

Where material risks to be inaccessible to the international human rights movement because of the language in which it is written, there is a special responsibility for national and local centres to make that material available in English or French.

This apart, the nature of each documentation centre will determine whether the focus will be on source, subject or region. It will be desirable, however, to establish a division of labour on sources, such as the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations, on established human rights periodicals and on government publications (which should be covered by the national institutes where these exist).

A separate focus on the activities of non-governmental organizations could, at the general level, be covered by an organizational database and directories.

8. A referral and current awareness function for the whole HURIDOCS database network should be the subject of special attention. It could include a directory of documentation centres and the areas they cover. For these purposes, Human Rights Internet is urged to convene the HURIDOCS Task Force on human rights directories and to begin producing the directories.
9. In order to solve the most pressing problems raised in this meeting, and to make speedy progress in establishing a working network, it is essential that the participating centres communicate more frequently, using modern forms of communication. To this end, HURIDOCS is urged to activate the Task Force on Communication and Message Switching.
10. The meeting recommends that HURIDOCS investigate the feasibility and funding of a project concerning the automatic conversion of records presently in MARC format into the HURIDOCS standard format.
11. The task force calls on HURIDOCS to ask the Council of Europe to convene a meeting of documentalists of the regional intergovernmental organizations in the area of human rights.
12. The meeting agrees that in order to ensure effective exchange of information and databases, it is necessary to use an agreed set of indexing terms/terminologies. It is accepted that there cannot be one global human rights thesaurus which will satisfy the needs of all organizations in the network. There has to be some sort of reconciliation between a thesaurus based on the "rights" approach and one on "violations".

The meeting therefore calls upon the HURIDOCS Task Force on Standard Formats to compile a standard HURIDOCS vocabulary, bearing the following limitations in mind:

- (a) The standard vocabulary should comprise general terms only, based on the terminology of "rights" and "violations".
- (b) Any network member is free to use a secondary indexing vocabulary for full retrieval capacity.
- (c) The vocabulary should be reflected in the upcoming revision of the HURIDOCs standard formats.

13. One of the principal aims of the HURIDOCs documentation network, as well as of the individual centres participating in it, is to make their information available to the public. The participants confirm that they feel a special responsibility to strengthen human rights organizations in developing countries, in particular by freely sharing with them experience and information.

Oslo, 17 October 1987

List of organizations

1. Those using the HURIDOCs Standard Formats

Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, Santiago de Chile, Chile
 Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos, Mexico, Mexico
 ARTICLE 19, London, United Kingdom
 Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (APDH), Madrid, Spain
 British Refugee Council (BRC), London, United Kingdom
 CIIDU, Montevideo, Uruguay
 Council of Europe - Human Rights Documentation Centre,
 Strasbourg, France
 Danish Center of Human Rights, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Danish Red Cross, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Danish Refugee Council, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa,
 Ottawa, Canada
 International Defence and Aid Fund, London, United Kingdom
 Intergovernmental Commission on Migration (ICM), Geneva,
 Switzerland
 International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka
 International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA),
 Copenhagen, Denmark
 Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM), Utrecht, the
 Netherlands
 Minority Rights Group, London, United Kingdom
 Norwegian Institute of Human Rights, Oslo, Norway
 Norwegian Refugee Council, Oslo, Norway
 OASIS, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Procurator General of Portugal - documentation centre, Lisbon,
 Portugal
 Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, United
 Kingdom
 Refugees Documentation, Paris, France
 Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Sri Lanka Human Rights Database Project, PRIO, Oslo, Norway
 Tamil Information Centre, Jaffna - Sri Lanka; Madras and Madurai,
 India
 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - Centre for
 Documentation on Refugees, Geneva, Switzerland

2. Those intending to use the formats in the near future

Amnesty International, International Secretariat, London, United
 Kingdom
 Amnesty International - Dutch section, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Amnesty International - German section, Bonn, FRG
 Austrian Institute of Human Rights, Salzburg, Austria
 Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, Dhaka, Bangladesh
 Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Lahore, Pakistan
 Red de Informacion y Documentacion Cientifica en Salud Mental y
 Derechos Humanos, Capital, Argentina
 Southeast Asian Refugee Studies Project, Minneapolis, United
 States
 Uganda Human Rights Activists, Kampala, Uganda
 Women's Resource Centre, Lahore, Pakistan
 Zentrale Dokumentationsstelle der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege für
 Flüchtlinge (ZDWF), Bonn, FRG

3. Those who have implemented the Standard Formats with some modifications for their own purposes.

Human Rights Internet, Cambridge MA, United States

4. Those we are involved in the HURIDOCs network, but do not yet use the Standard Formats

Caribbean Rights, Guyana / Barbados

CODEHUCA, San José, Costa Rica

Defence for Children International, Geneva, Switzerland

Diakonisches Werk der EKD, Stuttgart, Federal Republic of Germany

Henry Dunant Institute, Geneva, Switzerland

IDOC, Rome, Italy

Institute of Southern African Studies (ISAS), Roma, Lesotho

INTERDOC, Hongkong

International Alert, London

International Service on Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland

Law in the Service of Man / Al Haq, Ramallah, West Bank

LBH, Jakarta, Indonesia

RUDOC, Bangkok, Thailand

SIJADEP, Paris, France

Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines

UNESCO, Paris, France