



European  
Coordination  
Committee on  
Human  
Rights  
Documentation

## **Draft report of the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the European Coordination Committee on Human Rights Documentation (ECCHRD)**

**16-17 June 2005, Warsaw, Poland**

*Minutes: Fiona Bolt, Iris Reiss-Golumbeck (Amnesty International)*

The 28th meeting of the European Coordination Committee on Human Rights Documentation (ECCHRD) was organised by the OSCE / Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and its Tolerance and non-Discrimination Programme, in collaboration with the International Secretariat of Amnesty International in London, acting as Secretariat for the meeting. The meeting was held at the OSCE-ODIHR office in Warsaw, Poland.

### **Thursday 16 June 2005**

#### **1. Opening address**

The meeting was opened by Ambassador Christian Strohal, Director of OSCE/ODIHR who spoke of the urgent need for non-governmental organizations to contribute to ODIHR reports and the importance of good practice in the documentation of human rights. He emphasized the relationship of HURIDOCs and ODIHR and asked the participants to build and maintain a network with ODIHR. ODIHR relies on information from NGO networks.

#### **2. Election of chairperson**

Patrick Müller (Council of Europe) was elected chair. He welcomed the participants and expressed his appreciation for the good meeting place.

#### **3. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted with the provision that those who were interested in meeting as part of a special interest group would be given the opportunity to do so on an ad hoc basis, and that reports from these groups could be presented as part of AOB.

#### **4. Presentation of participants and their organisations**

All the participants gave a short presentation of themselves and their organisations.

#### **5. Minutes of the 27<sup>th</sup> meeting**

The draft minutes of the 27<sup>th</sup> meeting were adopted without amendments.

#### **6. Reporting back on training events from the days before**

Floriane Hohenberg and Dennis van der Veur reported back on the OSCE-ODIHR capacity building training on the monitoring and reporting on hate crimes and hate-related incidents. The training participants came from different backgrounds – anti-Semitism, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and from a number of countries including the Russian Federation, Georgia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Poland and Ukraine.

The training lasted for three and a half days and concentrated on skills building for civil society representatives. The emerging network of relatively new organisations dealing with “hate crimes” does not yet have the necessary tools and techniques for monitoring and documenting violations, and this training provided them with an overview of what is already available in this field.

The training consisted of three groups.

- Group one examined the definition of hate crimes and why they should be tackled.
- Group two looked at the main drivers for the debate, action and legislation
- Group three looked at developing strategy

There was agreement that a template was needed to record incidents and this is something which will be subject to future work with HURIDOCs.

Questions were asked about whether future training will be held with the same group of participants or whether new groups will be approached. The original training session concentrated on participants from Eastern Europe but it will expand to cover the West in future – especially targeting those NGOs who are already monitoring related abuses

Laurent Mousson from Amnesty Switzerland said that he had a template for recording excessive use of force by the police and he would send it to ODIHR.

There were comments about how to reconcile the monitoring tools used by government bodies such as the police with other data collected by NGOs. There is no clear idea on how to solve this problem as yet but encouraging monitoring is necessary to start with. It was felt that a framework for monitoring was needed as it could happen on many different levels – reporting, tracking, website monitoring etc...

Jeff Howarth reported back on the Training for Trainers session. This session was aimed at those who needed to train people in the use of the WinEvsys. The training covered issues such as formats, editing and customization as well as searching the database. Trainers learnt that they needed to be informed, prepared adaptable and good motivators to run successful training sessions. The advantages of using anecdotes and role playing were also discussed. It was felt that future T4T sessions would be useful. HURIDOCs always needs trainers and several people participating in the T4T training already performed in the beginners training in the parallel session.

## **6.b Various issues**

In response to questions from participants, Thomas Schwarz from the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia told the meeting of the EU decision in 2003 to extend the mandate of the EUMC to cover Fundamental Rights, starting from January 2007. The EUMC is calling for expressions of interest in the consultation process. The call is not restricted to those who are researchers on racism and xenophobia. However, only those who register their interest on the EUMC website will be invited for future calls.

Sven-Erik Baun Christensen from IRCT- spoke about the ongoing work to develop a torture thesaurus. The thesaurus working group met in 2004 and hopes to have a first draft by the end of 2005. They are using a thesaurus software package called TCS (Thesaurus Construction System; see <http://www.webchoir.com>). Hopefully there will be a presentation of the thesaurus at the 29<sup>th</sup> ECCHR meeting in 2006. People interested in participating in this project should contact Sven-Erik.

## **Friday 17 June 2005**

### **7. Developments within HURIDOCS, by Bert Verstappen**

Bert Verstappen spoke about HURIDOCS progress on its 2004-2006 strategic action plan. Developments include:

- New HURISEARCH – including lemmatization and an increase in the number of languages available.
- Improvements to WinEvsys – it is now possible to create a new database from two separate databases and create combined reports.
- Three new manuals on ESC rights – health, labour and food
- Training courses have been held in Geneva (for Indigenous Peoples NGOs meeting at the UN), Haiti (Women's organisations), Uganda (Women rights violations), Albania (Maria Lazslo reported on training at Albanian Centre of HR), Uzbekistan and the Great Lakes. A presentation was made to the Gay and Lesbian Association in Poland. Future training is being planned in Tajikistan, Sudan and South East Asia.
- Improvements in the HURIDOCS website – easier navigation, RSS feeds etc.

Bert gave a demonstration of the new HURISEARCH tool. The updated version is due to be published by the beginning of September. He asked that people try out the site and make suggestions for improvements and recommendations for new site to be added.

### **8. Using audiovisual material in Human Rights work, Wayne Minter**

Wayne Minter from Amnesty International, International Secretariat gave the meeting a demonstration of Amnesty's new ADAM (Amnesty's Digital Asset Management) database. ADAM allows Amnesty users to search for images, research information relating to the images and download different sized images for use in their work. The current Adam system contains already over 5000 images. It is hoped that future developments in ADAM will allow Amnesty to make some of the images publicly available for use on the web.

## **9. Updates on RSS and Semantic web, James Lawson**

James Lawson of the Council of Europe gave a presentation to update participants on last years item on the Semantic Web.

James asked participants to send him details of any human rights website which is making good use of RSS.

It was also announced that the EU is running a funding project called E-Content plus which has the overall aim of making digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable. Any of the participants interested in finding out more about the project were invited to join James, Bert and the Amnesty International participants in a meeting over lunch.

Patrick Müller reported that he uses RSS for his regular press monitoring. He paid \$30 for a search software (<http://www.bradsoft.com/feeddemon/>). The web browser Firefox also has a free RSS reader included, but not a search function.

Anne Siebern reported that she uses a software to share RSS newsfeeds. For more information see [www.bloglines.com/public/dmr](http://www.bloglines.com/public/dmr).

Lena Olsson reported about the launch of a new UN blog. There is a link on her website [www.rwi.lu.se](http://www.rwi.lu.se).

## **10. Presentation of HURLIST, Harriet Nyback**

Harriet presented the development on the Human Rights Libraries Search Tool called HURLIST (<http://www.abo.fi/instut/imr/commondb/index.php>). HURLIST gives you the possibility of parallel searching in three different HR library databases (Findoc, Simdoc, German HR Institute). You can do a freetext search and/or search for the publication date and/or the entry date. So far the search on publication date and entry date does not work for the catalogue of the German HR Institute. Unfortunately the catalogues of the Danish Institute of HR (DIHR) and the Norwegian Institute of HR are not yet connected to HURLIST. The catalogue of the DIHR is incorporated in the catalogue of DCISM (Danish Centre for International Studies and HR) [DCISM library catalogue](#).

## **11. Presentation of new database used by ODIHR, Hanne Stemann**

Hanne Stemann from OSCE-ODIHR gave a presentation of the new database which is planned to be launched in September 2005. Her presentation is available on the ECCHRD website

<http://www2.law.uu.nl/english/sim/library/ecchrd/ecchrd.html>.

She explained that the mandate of ODIHR is to follow incidents rather than monitor. ODIHR will take the decision as whether to follow or monitor in the future.

## **12. Any other matters**

Damon Rand (AI), Wayne Minter (AI) and James Lawson (CoE) reported back from the working group "e-content-plus". It is planned to have a project meeting in July in London with AI, HURIDOCs and other business partners with the aim to come up with a proposal for the EU. The description of the project and the progress will be posted on the discussion list on the ECCHRD website.

## **13. Report back from ECCHRD secretariat**

James Lawson presented the idea of making ECCHRD a legal body. There would be various advantages to this, among them that it would make ECCHRD eligible for EU funding. There are disadvantages to this idea as well. After some discussions it was decided that people who are interested in this idea should try to get some information in their own country about the regulations to set up a legal body. They should report back at the meeting in 2006.

## **14. Date and place of the next meeting and closing**

Fiona Bolt and Iris Reiss-Golumbeck (Amnesty International, London) kindly offered to be the ECCHR Secretariat for the next meeting. They also offered to host the next meeting 2006 in London.

Lena Olsson from the Raoul Wallenberg Institute in Lund offered to host the meeting in 2007.

After thanking the secretariat and the local organiser and emphasising the importance of meeting colleagues and keeping in contact, Patrick Müller closed the 28th ECCHR meeting.