

**SOCIÉTÉ INTERNATIONALE D'ÉTUDES DU DIX-HUITIÈME SIÈCLE
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES**

**General Assembly, Graz
Thursday, July 28th 2011**

MINUTES

Apologies: Andrew Carpenter was unable to attend the General Assembly and sent his apologies.

1. The President, Keith Baker, opened the meeting. He welcomed members to the meeting and outlined the agenda.

2. Minutes of the General Assembly in Montpellier (12 July 2007)

Approved.

3. President's opening remarks

Keith Baker summarised the areas that the EC's work had focused on since the Montpellier 2007 General Assembly meeting:

- improving communication between ISECS and its members
- making the affairs of the EC more transparent to ISECS members
- ensuring that ISECS' work is more visible to National Societies
- resolving the question over the format of the ISECS directory

The EC had made much progress on each of these points through fundamental organisational changes. These involved the separation of the 'traditional' functions of the Technical Secretariat as follows:

- administration, financial services and election organisational services. These services are provided by the Voltaire Foundation free of charge to ISECS.
- management of ISECS' website and online directory. These services are provided by a team in Canada: Nelson Guilbert as the website content editor, APTI, Université Laval the online directory, with Pascal Bastien acting as the co-ordinator and link between ISECS and APTI.

The Voltaire Foundation was especially thanked for continuing its support of ISECS, and for providing services free of charge. This has enabled ISECS to focus on improvements to the website and directory with no long-term financial impact for ISECS. Keith Baker also warmly thanked Canadian colleagues for arranging the technical services provision with APTI.

This reorganisation has facilitated a clearer division in the functions of ISECS. One key result of the reorganisation was the way in which the 2011 EC elections were managed (see below for details), with an increased voter participation of 116% compared to the 2007 elections. This is still a low figure in terms of overall membership (14% voter participation), but progress is clear.

Keith Baker also outlined issues that still needed consideration:

- ISECS-direct. This is an important mode of communication between ISECS and

individual members. More members must be urged to provide their up-to-date email address to be kept informed of ISECS matters, and to be able to participate in ISECS affairs.

- the elections nominations procedure and elections process needs clarity.
- a gradual fall in individual membership numbers of National Societies (and thus of ISECS), which would impact on ISECS' finances. However, changes in budgeting and spending would better equip ISECS to deal with any future financial consequences.

4. General Secretary's report

Lise Andries, the General Secretary, introduced the main points from her report:

a. Conferences organised during the EC meetings:

Conference on 'Ancients and Moderns in the eighteenth century' (Dublin, 2008), on 'Scholars' careers in the time of Enlightenment' (Graz, 2009), and 'Joy and laughter in the eighteenth-century' (Kolding, 2010). These conferences were fruitful and engaging.

b. Early career researchers' seminars

Four seminars had taken place:

The 2008 seminar in Pardubice (Czech Republic) on 'Friendship, conviviality, hospitality', the 2009 seminar in Lisbon and Sintra on 'Europe and the Colonial World in the 18th century' the 2010 seminar in Belfast on 'Cultural Intermediaries', and the 2011 seminar in Graz (prior to the Congress) on 'Providing for the Future: theory and practice in the eighteenth century'. These seminars represent important activities for ISECS, and are key for the society's future.

c. ISECS visibility and communication

ISECS' work was not very visible to its members in 2007. To this end a Committee on Communications (chaired by Andrew Carpenter) was set up in 2007 to improve ISECS' communication with its members. Significant developments had been made as follows:

- in 2008, the appointment of Nelson Guilbert as website content editor, who has vastly improved the ISECS website by changing the design and layout, adding more columns and items, and regular updating.
- in 2008 the Technical Secretariat (Voltaire Foundation) informed ISECS that it was no longer in a position to support ISECS' technological needs due to changes in its own IT provision. The EC researched alternative providers, and thanks to Canadian colleagues Marc André Bernier, Pascal Bastien and Thierry Belleguic, were put in touch with the IT department (APTI) at the Université de Laval. A contract (for an initial period of 6 years until April 2015) was then signed with APTI to run and manage ISECS' website and overhaul ISECS-direct. At the same time the Technical Secretariat (Voltaire Foundation) offered to provide ISECS' administrative services free of charge. This dual system has worked very well: ISECS-direct is now a very powerful research tool, and National Societies also have the option of printing out the lists of their own members. Pascal Bastien has worked tirelessly on this, and deserves special thanks.
- These significant developments have been achieved with no long-term costs to ISECS. The one-off cost of the ISECS-direct and website redevelopment by APTI came to c.£9,000, but is offset by the Voltaire Foundation providing its services free of charge; Nelson Guilbert receives c.£2,500 per annum and APTI receives a small annual fee of £250 for website hosting. This has enabled ISECS to better fulfill its mission as a scholarly Society: ISECS doubled its bursary contribution for the 2011 Congress (£20,000 awarded in 2011; £10,000 awarded in 2007), and provided an additional

£1,000 per annum to the Early career researchers' seminars (now £3,800, previously £2,800).

The General Secretary stressed that the dual support system (Voltaire Foundation and APTI) was working very well.

The General Secretary concluded her report by saying how much she had enjoyed the richness of her role over the past 4 years.

5. Treasurer's report

Keith Baker presented the Treasurer's 4-year report, in the absence of the Treasurer.

The overall balance as at 1 August 2007 was £49,192. At May 31st 2011, the balance was £34,158. This highlights a deficit of £15,035, which would be explained in the ensuing report.

During the past 4 years, income from member subscriptions totalled £48,470, and income received from National Societies towards the Graz Congress bursaries was £11,045.

Expenditure entailed costs associated with the website (£5,514 in payments to the website content editor; £8,995 for the ISECS-direct and website infrastructure redevelopment by APTI; £236 for website hosting), Early career scholars' seminar bursaries (£14,718 allocated to four seminars), the Technical Secretariat service agreement, which ended in October 2009 (£11,638), and the Graz 2011 elections (£1,361). Significantly, ISECS also provided a bursary of £20,000 for the Graz congress, which is double the amount it was able to provide for the 2007 Montpellier congress. Along with other running costs, the total expenditure for the last four years amounted to £74,550.

Keith Baker stated that the deficit this year resulted largely from the £20,000 ISECS contributed to the bursary awards for participants in the Congress. Because there is no annual payment to the Technical Secretariat, ISECS' income would increase over the next 3 years to recover the current deficit. This is part of a usual 4-year cycle in which significant expenditure occurs in the year of the International Congress.

There were no questions from the floor on the General Secretary's report or the Treasurer's report. Votes to approve each report were accepted unanimously.

6. Technical Secretariat's report

The Technical Secretariat submits a written report on activities undertaken to each meeting of the Executive Committee. The main duties over the past 4 years encompassed:

- Administrative services (meeting preparation, meeting minutes, revisions of ISECS documentation, preparing contracts, e.g. for website content editor)
- Financial services (professional management of the ISECS accounts, receipt of subscriptions and other income, financial reporting, draft reports for the Treasurer)
- Elections services (running of the postal ballot, receipt of electronic ballot results, overall compilation of results and overall management of the elections)

More detailed reports on these duties are subsumed under the separate reports of the General secretary and the Treasurer to this meeting, also under the items on the website and the elections.

7. ISECS website / Committee on communications report

a) Andrew Carpenter, Chair of the Committee on communications, was unable to attend the GA and had sent his apologies. The key developments in the website and ISECS-direct had

already been covered above (see General secretary's report and President's remarks). Brief presentations were given by Nelson Guilbert, Website content editor, and Pascal Bastien, communications liaison member between ISECS and APTI.

Nelson Guilbert presented a visual (PowerPoint) overview of the new ISECS website, highlighting the restructuring that had taken place, notably of the homepage, the new columns that had been added (photo gallery, awards and grants section, call for articles, online availability of ISECS documents such as the annual budgets and meeting minutes). The website is updated on a weekly basis. The future of the website will involve technical upgrades and new features such as audiovisual content, a publishing platform for news and a call for papers section. Members are urged to view the redeveloped website at www.isecs.org, and send Nelson Guilbert suggestions for further features, or feedback on existing features (nelson.guilbert@uqtr.ca).

Pascal Bastien gave an overview of the main changes to and features of the ISECS directory (ISECS-direct). ISECS-direct is a very useful tool for members communicating with each other, for ISECS communicating with members, and for members to be able to participate in elections through e-ballots. As such it is crucial that members update their profile and supply as much correct information as possible. Members are assured that their data is secure. Members can also control the way in which their email address is used, by choosing for it not to be displayed within ISECS-direct. Any queries should be addressed to admin@isecs.org

Although a paper version of the current directory no longer exists, National Societies are able to print off the list of members in their society.

b) Review of statute 1.4 (ii) - format of the international directory

After significant discussion of the format of the directory during the Montpellier 2007 General Assembly, the matter had been referred back to the Executive Committee. The EC had considered this important issue to seek the best resolution for current and future members, and for the needs of a developing international society. It had concluded that the format of the directory that has now been developed (an online directory with the facility for National Societies to print off the list of their members) provides the best solution. Keith Baker therefore proposed the amendment of statute 1.4 (ii) to read: 'the creation of an international directory for eighteenth-century researchers.'

After discussion, this proposal was agreed by members present (with one abstention), and will be put to the next General Assembly for final ratification, following the procedures laid down for amendment of the statutes.

8. Elections 2011

a) In the absence of Andrew Carpenter, the appointed Elections Officer, Keith Baker reported that the Technical Secretariat had administered the postal ballot, and APTI had administered the e-ballot with a system called 'SimplyVoting'. The Technical Secretariat also compiled the results of both postal and e-ballot. The count took place on June 30th 2011 at the Voltaire Foundation, with Andrew Carpenter in attendance. He verified the count and was entirely satisfied that all procedures had been correctly followed.

Results:

Valid votes: 957 (97 postal votes; 860 electronic votes).

Invalid votes: 21 (reasons: no name, name illegible, or name not on ISECS member register)

Double votes: 9 (members had voted both by post and electronically ; in these cases, the paper

votes were eliminated as e-votes cannot be eliminated once cast. This will be the procedure for all future elections).

The elected officers, with votes cast, were as follows: President: Marc André Bernier (792); 1st Vice President: Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (345); 2nd Vice Presidents: Lise Andries (423) and Penelope Corfield (421); Secretary General: Anne-Marie Mai (436); Assistant Secretary: Rosamaria Loretelli (362); Treasurer: Byron Wells (445); Assistant Treasurer: Wiep Van Bunge (434).

The eight elected members were as follows: Lorenzo Bianchi (345), Laura Brown (341), Anna Cullhed (420), Michel Delon (407), Heather McPherson (346), Tanehisa Otabe (375), Wolfgang Schmale (349), Geraldine Sheridan (402).

b) Keith Baker stated that Andrew Carpenter had informed the Executive Committee that, in his appointed role as Elections Officer, he had taken and executed decisions on certain matters that were unclear or ambiguous in the bylaws or statutes. In response, the Executive Committee had made some changes in the bylaws and needed to consider changes in the statutes to be proposed at the next General Assembly.

- i) Bylaws: To encourage Constituent Societies and their members to participate in the nominations process, Bylaw A1 has been amended to state that the initial list of nominees proposed by the Executive Committee will be circulated electronically through ISECS-direct and posted on the ISECS website, in addition to being forwarded to the Constituent Societies.
- ii) Statutes: Ambiguities exist relating to the rules limiting service on, and eligibility for election to, the Executive Committee. Statute 6.2 limits service by “elected members” to a maximum of twelve years, but leaves unclear whether this limitation applies only to the “eight elected members” listed in Statute 6.1 or also to the “officers of the Society” listed separately in Statute 6.1. Statute 6.5 “encourages” Constituent Societies to appoint their delegates to the Executive Committee for a maximum of three terms (twelve years) but does not require them to do so (consistent with Statute 6.3 which states that “each Constituent Society shall make its own rules for the selection of these members.”), thus acknowledging that the constituent societies have a sovereign right to nominate delegates of their choice. But Statute 6.5 then goes on to contradict that position by restricting “delegates who become elected members, whether or not with specific posts” to a total twelve years of service on the Executive Committee. Keith Baker proposed that this matter be referred to the new EC for consideration leading to proposals for a clearer set of rules for vote at the next General Assembly.

The incoming President, Marc André Bernier, took the chair, joined by the First Vice president, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, the Treasurer, Byron Wells, and the Assistant General secretary, Rosamaria Loretelli.

Marc André Bernier warmly thanked the EC for their work since 2007. He noted that remarkable progress has been made under the presidency of Keith Baker, and especially thanked Lise Andries and Andrew Carpenter for their commitment. Marc André Bernier said that he was looking forward to his term as president, thanked all candidates who had stood for election, and lastly, thanked the ISECS members for taking part in the vote.

Before continuation of the meeting, Marc André Bernier wanted to highlight the fact that ISECS is an international society whose vision was to share knowledge in the spirit of the Eighteenth-century Republic of Letters. ISECS is also a federation with governing statutes and bylaws, and the Society's activities must work within these. On this basis, the key areas of attention for the new President for the next 4 years were:

- increasing membership by encouraging the formation of new societies, especially in Latin America, Asia and North Africa.
- developing communication with members through ISEDS-direct and the ISECS website.
- developing the parallel support offices (the Voltaire Foundation for administrative, financial and elections services, and APTI, through Pascal Bastien for all technology).
- resolving the ambiguities in the statutes regarding the elections nominations.

9. Early career researchers' seminar

2011: Wolfgang Schmale gave an overview of the 2011 Graz seminar: 'Providing for the future: theory and practice in the eighteenth century'. There were 14 participants (11 female, 3 male) from six different countries, working on literature, history and musicology. The distinct approaches provided fertile ground for discussion and allowed participants to see their own research in a more global and multidisciplinary context.

2012: Bloomington, IN, USA, July 2-7th, will be organised by Catriona Seth and Guillaume Ansart, on Enlightenment Liberties (Liberté des Lumières).

2013: a joint proposal had been made by John Dunkley (BSECS) and Nicholas Cronk (Voltaire Foundation) at the July 24th EC meeting to co-host the 2013 seminar. This proposal needs to be discussed further between John Dunkley and BSECS, and Nicholas Cronk, before any firm proposal is submitted.

Marc André Bernier encouraged members to put forward proposals for the 2014 seminar.

The 2015 seminar will take place prior to the 2015 Congress in Rotterdam.

10. International Congress, Graz 2011

Wolfgang Schmale presented the key points of the Congress: 967 participants had registered, from 48 different countries, with the majority from Austria, Germany and France, the USA, Italy and Great Britain. Bursaries had been awarded to 78 participants, most of whom came from Russia and Eastern Europe. Wolfgang Schmale and the Austrian Society were warmly thanked for an excellent Congress.

11. International Congress 2015, Rotterdam

Wiep Van Bunge (Dutch-Belgian Society) handed out brochures on the proposed Rotterdam congress, which would have the theme of 'Opening markets: trade and commerce in the Age of Enlightenment'. The Congress would be hosted by the Dutch-Belgian Society, which was formed in 1968 and now consists of *c.*300 individual members and *c.*100 institutional members. Rotterdam is a thriving seaport and the second city of the Netherlands. It has excellent travel links and is close to the cities of Delft, the Hague and Haarlem for potential cultural excursions. Erasmus University, the proposed venue, was established in 1913 and the University would allow use of the campus for the Congress free of charge. A vote on accepting the proposal from the Dutch-Belgian Society to host the 2015 Congress was accepted unanimously.

12. ISECS Publications

Jean Mondot, chair of the Publications Committee, said that the ISECS series by Editions Champion would publish the Montpellier 2007 seminar in August 2011. The Lisbon 2009

seminar was in progress and the Belfast 2010 seminar papers were being submitted. Nothing as yet had been received from the 2008 seminar in Pardubice, Czech Republic. After the publication of the Belfast 2010 seminar papers Jean Mondot would hand over responsibility for the series to a new EC member, as decided by the 2011-2015 EC.

13. Other Business

No other matters were raised.

Before terminating the meeting, Marc André Bernier thanked the Austrian Society for hosting this congress, and wished ISECS members well for the ensuing days' talks and activities.