

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 11–13, 2016
Chicago, Illinois**

**External Representative Report:
International Council on Archives
Section of Professional Associations (SPA)
(Prepared by Becky Haglund Tousey, CA)**

The International Council on Archives (ICA) Section of Professional Associations (SPA) Bureau met in Troyes, France from March 30 to April 1, 2016, in conjunction with a meeting of the Association of French Archivists (AAF). I attended as a representative of both the Academy of Certified Archivists and the Society of American Archivists.

SPA BUREAU MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Other Bureau members present were from the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Switzerland, Israel, France, Norway, and Spain (Catalonia). The Poland association representative sent his regrets.

SPA membership: The Section of Professional Associations currently has 72 member associations in good standing. That number remains the same as last year.

SPA Bureau Membership for 2016-2020 Term: SPA Bureau representatives for 2016-2020 need to be identified and confirmed before the 2016 Congress in Seoul, Korea, in September. There will be significant turnover in the coming term's Bureau roster. Some associations will be sending a new representative. Other association representatives have now served two 4-year terms and therefore, according to ICA guidelines, can no longer serve on the Bureau. I told the Bureau that I expect to continue to serve as the ACA and SAA representative for the 2016-2020 term, but this has not yet been formally confirmed. The SPA secretary will be sending a form to each association's contact of record asking for confirmation of its Bureau representative for the 2016-2020 term.

There was discussion as to whom the Bureau's new chair will be since current chair Fred VanKan will have served two terms and is rotating off the Bureau. It was agreed that a returning Bureau member, not a new member, should hold the chair position, but none of the returning Bureau members at this meeting volunteered to serve as chair. I did not volunteer to serve as chair because the position requires traveling to two additional international meetings per year to attend ICA Executive Board meetings. ICA does not cover these travel costs. It expects the section chair's institution or association to cover the cost.

Report from ICA Executive Board: Fred reported that he would attend the ICA Executive Board meeting later in April. On the agenda for that meeting is the functioning of the sections, branches and groups. New working groups and expert groups are being formed each year, but some question whether ICA should have a formal group or section for every institutional type and every subject area. Some sections have few members and are not active. Each branch, section and group needs a budget and needs to recruit volunteers, so the expansion of affinity groups impacts the overall operations and budget of ICA.

Fred reported that the financial situation of ICA is improving because several countries in arrears have paid their dues. ICA's VP of Finance retired last year; Henri Zuber, VP of the PCOM (Programme Committee), will become VP of Finance and a new VP PCOM will be appointed at the upcoming Executive Board meeting. Fred also reported the Executive Board is considering changing the organization's quadrennial Congress model and may move to a new model that would have an annual conference every year.

Report from PCOM: Henri Zuber, VP of PCOM, met with us in person to report on PCOM. Henri reported that more funds have been earmarked for PCOM projects in the 2016 and 2017 budgets because ICA finances are healthier. He also reported on program planning for the ICA Congress in Seoul in September. Over 550 proposals were received; about 250 of them met the requirements/strategies/theme. The list of accepted proposals was just recently published on the ICA website.

Besides planning for the Congress, PCOM has been focused on how to manage the growing number of expert groups. Two more groups have recently been added – Illegal Trafficking and Legal Issues.

HRWG's "Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists": In 2015 the Human Rights Working Group submitted to ICA for comment the draft of a document titled "Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists in Support of Human Rights." (*See Appendix.*) ICA's Forum of National Archivists (FAN) discussed and commented on the draft. FAN's national archivists look at the political ramifications and this topic is political and sensitive. FAN's position is that the document should not be embraced by ICA in the same way as ICA's Code of Ethics. It can be a document that members look at if it applies to their situation, but it should not be a "requirements" document because not all governments represented by FAN could endorse these principles. In terms of funding, ICA is still predominantly a national archives association. National archivists pay for eighty-five to ninety percent of ICA's budget. The Executive Board recognizes that this document is a problem for many national archivists and it is not reasonable to put them in difficulty with their governments.

ICA Sections look at the document from a more practical perspective. The SPA Bureau is concerned that the document does not include records managers; it refers only to archivists. Fred had some discussions with ICA Executive Board and PCOM about this and SPA was asked to submit another draft of the document that includes records managers in the wording. I volunteered to revise the draft to include the records manager wording, and Fred will submit the revised wording version to PCOM.

International Archives Day: June 9 is International Archives Day (IAD). Previously, ICA's Working Group on Municipal Archives was in charge of the IAD program since the idea for it came out of that group – to commemorate the date ICA was formed. The Executive Board decided that, starting this year, the ICA head office staff will be in charge of this program in order to integrate its messaging and marketing with the Congress theme. The Congress theme this year is “Archives, Harmony & Friendship.” ICA is asking members to organize IAD activities around this theme and to send in pictures of their activities so the pictures can be posted on the ICA website. ICA has developed poster, bookmark and letterhead templates which members can use to communicate their IAD activities. The working group is not happy that the head office has taken over their program, but it does make sense for the professional head office staff to manage the marketing and communications for a more integrated campaign.

Africa Program: The name has been changed from the Africa Strategy to the Africa Program but its goal is the same – to develop capacity and raise awareness about archives on the African continent. After some compromises were made last fall at a meeting in Cameroon, French-speaking Africans are now on board with the strategy which they initially viewed as being too slanted towards English-speaking Africa. The SPA Bureau discussed what it could do to support the African Program. Fred will gather more information about the 3 African country associations that are members of SPA and reach out see if they have specific needs which SPA could address in some way.

Call with David Leitch: The Bureau had a Skype call with Secretary General David Leitch. David gave us an update on the new ICA website. The migration of the ICA website from the previous platform to Drupal took place at the end of March. Only existing content was migrated in this first step, so the layout and structure of the website looks essentially the same. The fully redesigned website will roll out this fall. There was discussion about the SPA professional association list (over 200 associations) which is currently managed manually in a spreadsheet by one of the Bureau members. SPA would like the head office staff to create a simple online database, as part of the new website, to better manage and track the association list. David will get a copy of the spreadsheet and discuss this with the office staff.

Archives and Records Management Film Festival: The remainder of the Bureau's time was spent viewing and ranking the 66 video entries received from the Film Festival Call for Submissions. The call went out in January across multiple channels, websites, and social media. SPA asked for videos which communicate the value of archives and records management to individuals, institutions, or society.

Vilde Ronge from the Norwegian National Archives created a spreadsheet for us with information about each entry. Every continent was represented, but the majority of entries came from Europe. We viewed, discussed, and individually ranked each entry. Our individual rankings were tallied to determine the 9 best entries, three in each of these three categories: Best film portraying Archives; Best film portraying Records Management; and Best film using humor to communicate about Archives/RM. The winning entry in each category will be announced at the ICA Congress in September. Everyone will be asked to vote for their favorite among the 9 entries, the winner of which will receive a “People's” award. (*See Appendix with winning entries.*)

FUTURE ICA MEETINGS

- **2016 ICA Congress:** September 5-10 in Seoul, Korea, hosted by the National Archives of Korea. The theme is “Archives, Harmony and Friendship.” The SPA Bureau meeting and the SPA General Membership meeting will both be held on September 5.
- **2017 Spring SPA Bureau Meeting:** The tentative location is Oslo, Norway, hosted by the National Archives of Norway. The location will be confirmed no later than September.
- **2017 ICA Annual Meeting:** A decision has not yet been made as to the location of this meeting.

FOR THE SAA COUNCIL: DISCUSSION OR ACTION TOPICS

1. Confirm whether or not SAA wishes to continue its representation on the ICA SPA Bureau for the 2016-2020 term.
2. If yes, would you like me to continue in my role as representative?

Nancy Beaumont will receive a form from the SPA Bureau secretary asking for confirmation.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Haglund Tousey, CA
April 14, 2016

ICA Spa Film Festival 2016 – Nine Winning Entries

Best Film portraying the relevance and importance of Archives

Glamorgan Archives

UK

https://youtu.be/q6rO_JUFzmo

Regional Archive Regional Rivierenland & Heritage Guelderland

The Netherlands

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9p4dAuklKo>

City of Vienna

Austria

<https://youtu.be/SMvcIYZkIgk>

Best Film portraying the relevance and importance of Records Management

Ville d'Antibes Juan-les-Pins

France

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLKxg9qE1Zs>

Barcelona Provincial Council

Spain

<http://www.diba.cat/arxiu>

Aust-Agder museum og arkiv

Norway

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSiCd6Xv3D8>

Best Film using Humor to communicate about Archives and/or Records Management

Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv

Switzerland

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtYTgxfweRk>

The City Archives of Bergen

Norway

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFIY5pr0znY&hl=en&cc_lang_pref=escc_load_policy%3D1

Archives departementales d'Ille et Vilaine

France

<https://vimeo.com/123222862>

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES

HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

BASIC PRINCIPLES ON THE ROLE OF ARCHIVISTS IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

DRAFT

2014-06-21

INTRODUCTION

Archives hold records that are useful for human rights purposes. Many of these records are essential to secure rights and benefits: personnel records, records of social insurance programs, records of occupational health and safety, records of military service. Other records help prove civil rights: voter registrations, land titles, citizenship records. Still others provide evidence of the abuse of human rights, such as the records of military and police units from periods of dictatorship, even records of prisons and morgues and cemeteries.

Archivists handling records with human rights aspects deal with concrete legal issues, questions of broad social policy, and matters of personal professional ethics. In many nations, this is complex but manageable using the best professional practice. However, archivists working in nations with weak or failing political arrangements may find themselves under pressure as they attempt to protect such records. And all archivists look for support from the profession at large as they seek to show the archival profession in its best, most competent light.

During the past ten years, the Human Rights Working Group of the International Council on Archives (ICA) became increasingly aware of the complex problems facing archivists as they encounter human rights issues. The Group is also concerned that United Nations specialists on human rights issues that include archival problems do not consult archivists or the ICA when developing their reports and recommendations. The Human Rights Working Group and the Steering Committee of the ICA Section of Professional Associations both reviewed and were impressed by the idea and format of “Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers” that the United Nations developed in 1990 to establish the international norms relating to the key aspects of the right to legal counsel. However, both ICA bodies knew that the archival profession did not need a statement that would have the sweep of the lawyers’ document, which aimed to cover the entire activities of the profession, nor did they want to supplant the International Council on Archives’ *Code of Ethics* or deviate from its *Principles of Access to Archives*. Rather, they thought it would be useful to have a statement that would reflect on the three principal archival functions—appraisal and acquisition, arrangement and description, and access and reference—as they relate to human rights. Three persons from the Human Rights Working Group prepared this draft.

The “Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists in Support of Human Rights” is organized in two parts: a preamble and a set of principles, following the structure of the “Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.” The preamble provides the background for the principles, referring to United Nations documents, civil society statements, and archival precepts. The 23 principles are grouped in six sections. The first two sections cover the basic archival functions; the third covers the special situations of displaced archives and of archives that appear to document violations of human rights; the fourth through sixth sections are devoted to the roles and rights of archivists as professionals.

Basic Principles of the Role of Archivists in Support of Human Rights

DRAFT – June 2014

Whereas the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* establishes principles of respect for the dignity of people that can be effectively supported by the use of archives,

Whereas Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* declares that everyone has the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers,

Whereas governments have the responsibility to promote and protect the right to seek and receive information as a fundamental prerequisite to ensuring public participation in governance,

Whereas the *Joint Declaration* by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the Organization of American States' Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression on 6 December 2004 states, "The right to access information held by public authorities is a fundamental human right,"

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' *Updated Set of Principles to Combat Impunity* asserts that it is responsibility of the State to "ensure the preservation of, and access to, archives concerning violations of human rights and humanitarian law;" proclaims that the right to know, including knowing what is in archives, is both a personal and collective right and that the State has a duty to remember; and emphasizes the importance of archives in ensuring that persons will be held accountable while guaranteeing the fair defense of everyone charged with a penal offense,

Whereas the *Global Principles on National Security and the Right to Information* (Tshwane Principles) emphasize the importance of archives, declaring that governments should not be permitted to withhold information that would enable victims of human rights violations to seek and obtain a remedy for their violations,

Whereas the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* affirms that indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, including their archives,

Whereas the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* declares that persons with disabilities are entitled, on an equal basis with others, to recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity,

Whereas the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* declares that children have the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, through the media of the child's choice,

Whereas adequate protection of the human rights and fundamental freedom to which all persons are entitled, be they economic, social and cultural, or civil and political, requires that all persons have effective access to archival services provided by independent archival professionals,

Whereas the archival profession commits to respect the dignity of people in its best practices,

Whereas professional associations of archives have a vital role to play in upholding professional standards and ethics, providing archival services to all in need of them, and cooperating with governmental and other institutions in furthering the ends of justice and the public interest,

The ***Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists in Support of Human Rights***, set forth below, have been formulated to assist governments and non-government institutions in their task of ensuring the proper role of archivists in support of human rights. The ***Principles*** should be respected and taken into account within the framework of national legislation and practice on the safeguarding and promotion of human rights, non-governmental institutions employing archivists should respect the ***Basic Principles*** and apply them, as appropriate, within their institution, and all United Nations Special Rapporteurs and other international officials dealing with human rights issues should be aware of the importance of the issues covered by the ***Basic Principles***.

1. Selecting and Retaining Archives

1. Institutions and archivists maintain recordkeeping regimes that protect records that document human rights and act to ensure that mismanagement of records does not contribute to impunity for human rights violations.
2. Archivists ensure that they select, acquire and retain historically and legally important materials without discrimination based on race, color, ethnic origin, gender, sexual preference, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, economic or other status.
3. Archivists consider in each appraisal decision the utility of the records to support or identify a claim of human rights, to assist in the identification of perpetrators of human rights violations, to permit the identification of persons whose service in past regimes may disqualify them from service in the current regime, to clarify the events that led to the violation of human rights, to help resolve the fate of missing persons, or to enable individuals to seek compensation for past violations of human rights.
4. Archivists and institutions prevent the destruction of records that are likely to contain evidence of the violation of human rights.
5. Governments ensure that archives concerning violations of human rights and humanitarian law are preserved and access to them is provided, whether these archives are in State custody or in the control of nongovernmental bodies or individuals, and ensure the provision of sufficient funding and other resources for their professional management.
6. Archivists and institutions ensure that the records of temporary bodies established to assist in transitional justice are protected and preserved, both while the entity exists and after it closes; public notice will be given prior to the disposal of any records from these bodies.

2. Providing Access to Information in Archives

7. Archivists include in the description of their holdings information that to the best of their knowledge enables the user to understand whether the records would be useful to exercise a claim of human rights, to assist in the identification of perpetrators of human rights violations, to permit the identification of the employment history of persons, to clarify the events that led to the violation of human rights, to help resolve the fate of missing persons, or to enable individuals to seek compensation for past violations of human rights.
8. Archivists provide timely description of the records in the holdings to ensure equal, fair and effective access for users.

9. Archivists advocate and support the right of access to government records and encourage institutions to provide similar access to non-government records, in accordance with the *Principles of Access to Archives* adopted by the International Council on Archives in August 2012.
10. All persons are entitled to call upon the assistance of an archivist to assist in establishing their rights. Archivists provide reference service without discrimination based on race, color, ethnic origin, gender, sexual preference, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, economic or other status.
11. Archivists ensure that persons seeking to defend themselves from charges of violations of human rights are afforded access to archives.
12. Governments, institutions, professional associations of archivists and individuals promote programs to inform the public about their right of access to archives and the important role of archivists in protecting their fundamental freedoms. Special attention should be given to assisting the poor and other disadvantaged persons so as to enable them to assert their rights and where necessary call upon the assistance of archivists.

3. Special Safeguards

13. When archivists discover records that appear to document violations of human rights, whether in their holdings or in records or personal papers that are not yet transferred to an archives, archivists notify the pertinent authorities so that the materials can be reviewed for possible use in legal action.
14. Institutions and archivists respect the cultural and legal patrimony of nations and groups and do not acquire materials that would diminish the ability of these entities to protect their human rights or to seek compensation for previous damage to their human rights.
15. Governments, institutions and archivists cooperate with institutions and individuals in other countries to handle displaced archives, including measures to protect the rights of living persons whose lives are reflected in them.

4. Qualifications and Training

16. Governments, professional associations of archivists, educational institutions and individual professionals ensure that archivists have appropriate education and training and are aware of the ethical duties of archivists with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized by national and international law.
17. Governments, professional associations of archivists, and educational institutions ensure that there is no discrimination against a person with respect to entry into or continued practice within the archival profession on grounds of race, color, gender, sexual preference, ethnic origin, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, economic or other status, except that a requirement that a government employee must be a national of the country concerned is not discriminatory.

18. In countries where there exist groups, communities or regions whose needs for archival services are not met, particularly where such groups have distinct cultures, traditions or languages or have been the victims of past discrimination, governments, professional associations of archivists, educational institutions and individual professionals should take special measures to provide opportunities for persons from these groups to enter the archival profession and should ensure that they receive training appropriate to the needs of their groups.

5. Freedom of Expression and Association

19. Archivists, like other citizens, are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the promotion and protection of human rights and the professional responsibilities therefor. In exercising these rights, archivists do not divulge information that they obtained in the course of their professional responsibilities that has not been released by authorized officials for public use.
20. Archivists who make disclosures of information showing human rights violations or international humanitarian law violations, regardless of whether the information is classified or otherwise confidential, and who at the time of disclosure have reasonable grounds to believe that the information disclosed tends to show wrongdoing, have the right to report to an appropriate authority any measure of retaliation or the threat of retaliation in relation to the protected disclosure.

6. Professional Associations of Archivists

21. Archivists are entitled to form and join self-governing professional associations to represent their interests, promote their continuing education and training and protect their professional integrity. The executive body of the professional associations shall be elected by its members and shall exercise its functions without external interference.
22. Professional associations of archivists cooperate with governments and institutions to ensure that everyone has effective access to archival services.
23. Codes of professional conduct established by the archival profession in each nation or subpart thereof shall be in harmony with the *Code of Ethics* adopted by the International Council on Archives in 1996.