

**International Cooperation and Business Archives**  
**An ICA / Section for Business and Labor Archives update**

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The new democratization that took place by the ICA constitution introduced at the world congress in Vienna in 2004 had as one of its aims to activate the international work of the archival profession and to give the various groups of archivists a more visible position and a stronger influence in the whole world organisation. The various groups of archivists were sectioned according to scope of work. Sections as the Business section, section for archivists working with archival education, section for local and municipality archives, for church archives, university archives, parliamentary archives, section for professional associations etc. have since then intensified work due to the change that took place in 2004. New sections have been provisionally adopted, the latest being section for sport archives.

The main obstacle having prohibited a wider range of activities than have been performed so far is lack of money in ICA for professional work. Due to a Task force operation and recent constructive decisions taken by the ICA bodies, Management commission, Executive Board and the AGM ( the Annual General meeting) – the next one taking place in Curacao Nov. 18.-25. 2006 - there is a new revenue and budgeting structure underway that seems to result in sections receiving at least some budget money from 2007 and onwards at an increasing rate. There are signs then of a development that shall make for more visible activities, like projects and seminars, educational offers and conferences etc in years to come. An increase in activities should probably be most easily seen in the so-called larger sections, i.e. sections with the larger number of section members, like section on Business archives, section for educational affairs, section for associations, municipalities and others.

The new SBL steering committee elected in Vienna in 2004 put up a 4-year work plan containing section goals which have recently been audited by the committee. The section committee has expanded in number of members to be as truly international as possible. It comprises representatives from Australia, Cameroon, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, USA. Work is going on to coopt members from Switzerland, Portugal and Spain. To be able to work as expediently as possible the 20 member committee has chosen six members to act as a working committee. At present the section's website, that is found under the ICA main site, has recently been updated and this work is ongoing in order to make the website an important tool of information on matters of interest. A main project has been the creation and development of an international overview on Business archives in the world. This obviously is a far-fetched goal, but we are underway. After Vienna a new structure for the writing of national overviews was made and at present old contributions have been changed according to the new editorial guidelines and new ones are underway.

SBL members are making their utmost to be present and to contribute at national archives meetings. Myself I have been present during the last year at the French, German and American Business Archivists meetings giving presentations about ICA, most recently at the SAA (Society of American Archivist) meeting in Washington July 29-August 5<sup>th</sup> 2006. The

section puts stronger weight on the importance in the sharing of experience. Most visibly has been the demonstrations of the archives policy and results in St.Gobain in France, having been demonstrated by Didier Bondue (the SBL vice chair) at the SAA meeting in New Orleans in 2005, at the French Archivist meeting in Paris in March 2005 and that also will be conveyed at the SBL meeting in Edinburgh 17.-18. November 2006. This is a meeting in which SBL cooperates with economic historian's associations in order to make our presentations in open meetings attendable for archivists and historians. This was also the case in New Orleans and a similar program is being put up for a meeting in Sydney, Australia in February 2007. Due to talks with archives in Japan and China I hope that ICA will be able to participate in meetings for Business Archivists in these countries during the next few years. In order to give broader attention to the importance of Labor Archives, I have myself recently been in talks with the IALHI (International Association of Labor History), the Labor Archives Forum in USA and also with the staff at the Labor Archives at Cornell University to find ways to address this challenge and I have been present at their arrangements in 2005 and 2006. Both IALHI and SBL have scheduled meetings to be held in Italy in September 2007, so there might be a chance for some kind of cooperation to take place, an issue that will be addressed during the next few weeks.

An important issue for SBL is the recruitment of new members. The SBL steering committee hope that the work of the section being intensified and more visible both on the web and by seminars and conferences shall draw attention and have corporations realize that it is of value to join SBL as members in order to build a broader international professional communication and cooperation in the field of the preservation of Business Archives world wide. Without broad support and a variety of initiatives such goals cannot be reach a satisfactory level. ICA has now made a leaflet with information about the section. It is being put on the web and there is also a printed version that is at present being made accessible in English, French, Italian and German The registration form to be filled by new members from institutions and corporations (the C-member form) is found on the ICA web site.

SBL has initiated a work process in order to make Best Practises guide lines for corporations and businesses. This initiative was launched at the SAA meeting in New Orleans in 2005. It is being followed up by a group of corporate archivists within the SAA and it shall be an issue to be discussed at the SAA meeting in Chicago in September 2007. I hope that there shall be proposals for Best Practises guidelines before 2008 to be presented for discussions at seminars and conferences in Europa and in Asia so that Business Archives might be handled according to guidelines that will be agreed upon internationally and that also shall be observed and acknowledged by corporation management world wide.

SBL hopes to be THE attractive international solidarity and professional meeting place for Business archivists. We are working hard to improve our activities to be of value for colleagues in all regions. But the committee members are working off their spare time on a voluntary basis, so if goals shall be reached in short time we depend upon more bussiness archivists join our flock via membership and participation in order to strengthen our endeavours. We are all esasily reachable by our e-mail addresses that are to be found on the SBL web site.