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## RESTRUCTURING THE IAHR EXECUTIVE

### *Summary*

This proposal is submitted to the IAHR International Committee for discussion and decision in its meeting at Toronto in August 2010 on behalf of the African Association for the Study of Religions (AASR). It proposes that the IAHR Executive be restructured into four functional triads, as set out below. This model allows all officers to be actively involved in the government of the IAHR and in further strengthening and expanding the IAHR in the decades ahead.

The four triads	Their functions
Presidency	overall leadership and long term policy development
Secretariat	the smooth running of IAHR daily affairs
Treasury	(strengthening and reforming) IAHR finances
Communications Unit	providing the IAHR with the means for a dynamic electronic and print communication, <i>ad extra</i> and <i>ad intra</i>

This proposal is not meant as a critique of the achievements of the present and past IAHR Executives. They have actually done an excellent job in globalising the IAHR since it was founded in Amsterdam in 1950, and more especially since 1985, as we show in a survey of developments since 1950. It is only after detailing these past achievements that we set out why, despite these achievements, we propose that the IAHR Executive should be restructured. Or better, why it should be further restructured, for our historical survey ends by showing that a major structural change was already introduced into the IAHR Executive in 2005 when the number of its functional offices was expanded from six to ten, and the number of its non-functional Members without portfolio reduced from six to two. We propose that the number of Members without portfolio be reduced to zero by structuring the twelve offices into four functional triads, each charged with a distinct task, the duty to develop a program of action for it for their period in office, and the duty to report on what has been achieved in respect of it before the next elections. This structural change is proposed for the purpose of worldwide power sharing: all IAHR officers should be actively involved in the government of the IAHR. It is proposed now because modern communications technology and means of transport provide the means of actively involving all of them, and so of truly globalising the IAHR Executive itself.

### *The globalisation of the IAHR, 1950-2005*

Past IAHR Executives have done an excellent job in globalising the academic study of religions beyond its heartland, Northwest Europe.<sup>1</sup> A first intimation of this was the accession of the Japanese Society for the Study of Religions, founded in 1930, in 1955, and the Special IAHR Congress in Tokyo in 1958. The globalisation by ‘regional diversification’<sup>2</sup> began to gather speed, however, from 1980 onwards, when IAHR admitted the Nigerian and South African societies for the study of religions as affiliates at its congress in Winnipeg, Canada,<sup>3</sup> and held its first congress ‘down under’, at Sydney, Australia, in 1985. An important impetus to IAHR worldwide expansion was the conference at Marburg, Germany, in 1988.<sup>4</sup> It reflected on how the academic study of religions might be promoted in regions that had so far, for various reasons, been inhospitable to it: the countries behind the Iron Curtain and China; the Muslim, Roman Catholic and Orthodox worlds; or in which it was as yet poorly organised and isolated, as in the so called ‘Third World’: Africa, Latin America, India, Southeast Asia, Indonesia, etc.

The results of this articulate strategy through planning and counselling and by financial support to regional and special IAHR conferences<sup>5</sup> is impressive, as is apparent from the list of academic associations from all over the world that have been admitted as IAHR affiliates since 1990. In 1990, at Rome, the Czech, Chinese, Indonesian, and Latin American and Russian associations for the study of religions were affiliated.<sup>6</sup> They were followed, in 1995 at Mexico City, by the African, Cuban, Indian, New Zealand and Spanish associations. And in 2000, at Durban, by the Austrian, Brazilian, East African associations, as well as the European association. And in 2005, at Tokyo, by the Greek, Romanian, Slovakian, South & Southeast Asian, and Turkish associations. IAHR in addition maintains relations with the South Korean, Ukrainian and Kenyan associations that are not formally affiliated (yet), as well as with fledgling associations, such as the Russian that need much cuddling and counselling, and with defunct ones that may perhaps be revived, such as the Belgian, Cuban, East African, Hungarian and Israeli associations.<sup>7</sup> The number of IAHR affiliates has now risen to forty.<sup>8</sup> The globalisation of

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<sup>1</sup> It is the area in which the first seven international congresses were held: at Paris in 1900, at Basel in 1904, at Oxford in 1908, at Leiden in 1912, [an unnumbered one at Paris in 1923], at Lund in 1929, at Brussels in 1935, at Amsterdam in 1950, at which the International Association for the Study of the History of Religions (IASHR) was founded, and at Rome in 1955, at which its present name was adopted

<sup>2</sup> Michael Pye 1994, ‘Report by the Secretary General’, in Ugo Bianchi (ed.) 2004, *The Notion of ‘Religion’ in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI IAHR Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, Rome, 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> September, 1990*. Roma: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, XIV

<sup>3</sup> In 1975, seventeen scholars of religions from Africa – six from South Africa, four from Nigeria, three from Ghana, two from Uganda; one from Kenya; and one from Malawi – had taken part, for the first time ever, in an IAHR Congress. See Michael Pye & Peter McKenzie (eds.) 1980, *History of Religions: Proceedings of the Thirteenth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (Lancaster, 15-22 August)*. Leicester: Black Friars Press, 13-23, 56-58, 83-85, 152, 172-179.

<sup>4</sup> See Michael Pye (ed.) 1989, *Marburg Revisited: Institutions and Strategies in the Study of Religion*. Marburg: diagonal-Verlag.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. <http://www.iahr.dk/pastconf.html>

<sup>6</sup> As well as the Francophone Canadian *La Société québécoise pour l’étude de la religion*, and the North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAASR) (Pye 1994: xv-xvii), the latter soon ousting ASSR, the American Society for the Study of Religions.

<sup>7</sup> On the Russian, Belgian, Cuban and Israeli affiliates, cf. <http://www.iahr.dk/newsletter/dues.html>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. <http://www.iahr.dk/associations.html>. But note that two affiliates have left the IAHR. The American Society for the Study of Religions (ASSR) was disaffiliated in 1995 for its restrictive admission policy (cf. Armin Geertz 1996, ‘Minutes of the Meeting [of the International Committee], August 9, 1995’ in *IAHR Bulletin* 34 (August 1996): 30-37, here 30-31). The Australian Association for the Study of Religions (AASR) discontinued its IAHR affiliation in 2000 because it saw ‘no benefit to our [AASR] members in being members of the IAHR’ (cf. Armin Geertz 1998, ‘Report by the General Secretary’, in *IAHR Bulletin* 35 (May 1998): 5-15, here 7-8) and because it deemed the IAHR Eurocentric and lacking gender balance (cf. [Armin Geertz] 2000, ‘Report by the General Secretary’, in *IAHR Bulletin* 36 (July 2000), 5-23, here 5-11).

IAHR is also reflected in its recent quinquennial congresses: Mexico City in 1995; Durban, South Africa, in 2000; and Tokyo, Japan, in 2005.

This progressive globalisation is also reflected in the IAHR Executive itself. In order to reflect and promote its growing spread around the globe,<sup>9</sup> IAHR executives consisted of five officeholders – the President, two Vice Presidents, the Secretary-General, and the Treasurer – from 1950 to 1990, and a varying number of ‘Associates’ or ‘Members’ without office.<sup>10</sup> In the period 1950-1955, four ‘Associates’ without office were added to the IAHR Executive.<sup>11</sup> In the next two periods, 1955<sup>12</sup>-1965[?], six ‘Members’ without office were added, and even as many as ten Members between 1965 [?] to 1975;<sup>13</sup> and again five Members from 1975 to 1990. In 1990, the office of Deputy General Secretary was instituted.<sup>14</sup> As that raised the number of IAHR Officers to six, the number of Members ‘at large’ and ‘without portfolio’ was also increased to six.<sup>15</sup>

Globalisation was reflected among the Officers in particular in the Vice Presidents: four were Japanese,<sup>16</sup> three were posted in the USA,<sup>17</sup> another was Mexican<sup>18</sup> and again another Spanish.<sup>19</sup> The office of Treasurer, till 1990 the stronghold of two Dutch bankers, W.A. Rijk (1950-1964) and H.J. van Lier (1964-1990), was manned by two North American scholars after 1995: Don Wiebe, 1995-1998, and Gary Lease, 1998-2008. Likewise, the office of IAHR President remained the stronghold of scholars posted in European Universities till 2005, when Prof. Rosalind Hackett (University of Tennessee, USA) was elected to serve in that office.

The other part of the IAHR Executive, the Members without office, was even more fervently used to reflect and promote globalisation. In 1955 a ‘Representative from the USA’, Dr. H. Schneider, and a ‘Representative from Japan’, Dr. S. Miyamoto, were elected in addition to the four ‘Associates’ from Europe, bringing the number of members without office to six. In 1960,

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.iahr.dk/holders.html>

<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Tim Jensen for sending me a detailed history of the IAHR Executive in an e-mail dd. 22.10.-2009.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. C.J. Bleeker 1951, ‘Congress Report’, in C.J. Bleeker, G.W.J. Drewes & K.A.H. Hidding (eds.) 1951, *Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress for the History of Religions, Amsterdam, 4<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> September 1950*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 19-29, here 26

<sup>12</sup> For the list cf. [Teruji Ishizu *e.a.* (eds.)] 1960, *Proceedings of the IX<sup>th</sup> International Congress for the History of Religions, Tokyo and Kyoto 1958, August 27<sup>th</sup> – September 9<sup>th</sup>*. Tokyo: Maruzen, 788

<sup>13</sup> For the list, cf. Eric J. Sharpe 1980, ‘Report of the Acting Secretary General, Dr. E.J. Sharpe, to the Executive and International Committee’, in Pye & McKenzie 1980 (note 3): 156-160, here 156

<sup>14</sup> *Ad personam* Deputy Secretary Generals had served informally already in earlier quinquennial periods. L.J.R. Ort assisted Bleeker as secretary in 1960-1965 and 1965-1970. Eric J. Sharpe acted as Brandon’s secretary from 1970 to 1971 and took over from him after his death. Michael Pye served as Zwi Werbloski’s secretary from 1980 to 1985, and Peter Antes assisted Michael Pye as secretary from 1985 to 1990 ‘in order to make more determined attempts to involve Muslim scholars in the work of the IAHR’ (J.R. Zwi Werbloski in *IAHR Bulletin* 1 (February 1986): 3; cf. also Anonymous 1994, ‘The Congress: Generalities’, in Ugo Bianchi (ed.) 1994, *The Notion of ‘Religion’ in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, Rome, 3<sup>rd</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1980*. Roma: ‘L’Erma’ di Bretschneider, VII-XIII, here X; cf. also Michael Pye 1994, ‘Report by the Secretary-General’, in Bianchi 1994: XIV-XVII, here XVIII.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Michael Pye 1993, ‘Minutes of a Meeting [of the International Committee of the IAHR] held in Rome on 5.9.1990 at 10 a.m.’, in *IAHR Bulletin* 26 (September 1993): 18-22, here 19. Two reasons were adduced for the amendment of art. 4c of the IAHR Constitution. One was ‘the informal practice [of the General Secretary being assisted by an *ad personam* Deputy] of the past fifteen years’ [actually since 1960, see note 14]. The other was that an Executive of twelve would allow ‘for wider representation of various regions of the world’. Actually, the criticism of the severe gender imbalance in the IAHR Executive (see below note 23) during the Sydney congress in 1985 had caused the IAHR Executive to co-opt Prof. Sung-Hae Kim (South Korea) as ‘observer’ already in 1985. It had thereby expanded the number of Members [without portfolio] informally already from five to six during the previous period, 1985-1990.

<sup>16</sup> T. Ishizu, 1960-1965; I. Hori, 1965-1970; M. Abe, 1975-1980; Akio Tsukimoto, 2005-2010.

<sup>17</sup> Mircea Eliade, 1970-1975; Joseph M. Kitagawa (1975-1980, 1980-1985); Rosalind I.J. Hackett (2000-2005).

<sup>18</sup> Y. Gonzales Torres, 1995-2000

<sup>19</sup> M. Abumalham Mas, 2000-2005.

Swami B.H. Bon Maharaj<sup>20</sup> from India was elected as a Member, as were Dr. Sung Bum Yun<sup>21</sup> from South Korea and Dr. Hideo Kishimoto from Japan (in addition to the Vice President T. Ishizu). In Stockholm, in 1970, Prof. Sung Bun Yum was re-elected as a Member. The Canadian New Testament scholar Prof. William Klassen was also elected as Member – in addition to Mircea Eliade as Vice President.<sup>22</sup> When no Japanese scholar served as Vice President after 1980, care was taken to elect one as a Member without office: Prof. Noriyoshi Tamaru in 1980 and 1985; Prof. Michio Araki in 1990 and 1995; and Prof. Akio Tsukimoto in 2000. When the Nigerian and South(ern) African affiliates were admitted in Winnipeg in 1980, Prof. Jacob Awolalu, of Ibadan University, Nigeria, was elected as a Member. He was elected again in Sydney in 1985. In 1990 Prof. Razaq ‘Deremi Abubakre, of Ilorin University, Nigeria, was the first Muslim scholar to serve on the IAHR Executive as a Member. In 1995, after the demise of apartheid, a second Muslim scholar, Dr. Abdulkader Tayob, of Cape Town University, South Africa, was elected as a Member of the IAHR Executive. So was Prof. Jacob Kehinde Olupona, a Nigerian scholar teaching at the University of California, Davis. He was re-elected in 2000, in Durban, South Africa, when Dr. Mary Getui, of Kenyatta University, Nairobi, was also elected as a Member, as were Dr. Paul Morris, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, and again another Muslim scholar, Prof. Alef Theria Wasim, of the State Islamic University at Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

But, however helpful this large Executive was for reflecting and promoting IAHR globalisation, as well as for striving after gender balance,<sup>23</sup> by 2005 the large number of Members ‘without portfolio’, or ‘at large’, was perceived also as unhelpful. Being functionally empty, these positions provided little or no incitement for involvement in IAHR affairs by attending the annual meetings of the IAHR Executive or otherwise. Moreover, Members without portfolio who resided at a great distance from where the IAHR Executive met for its annual meetings were usually unable to attend, being posted in universities in countries with weak currencies which could not afford to have them attend a conference in Europe or North America. But even when they did attend,<sup>24</sup> they could usually not make significant contributions or exercise real power by virtue of their not having an office. Therefore, in 2005, at Tokyo, the number of

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<sup>20</sup> Swami Bhakti Hidraya. Bon Maharaj (1901-1980) was the founder and Rector of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy at Vrindaban, India, later Vaisnava Theological University at Agra. He had worked as a Vaisnava missionary in England, Germany, the USA, Japan and Burma. He ‘tried to imitate Western intellectual approaches to religion, expecting in the process to convince Westerners of the superiority of Gaudiya Vaisnavism’ (Klaus Klostermaier 1994, ‘The Education of Human Emotions: Srila Prabhupada as Spiritual Educator’, in *ISKON Communications Journal* 4, 1 (June 1994), at [http://www.iskcon.com/icj/4\\_1/klostermaier.html](http://www.iskcon.com/icj/4_1/klostermaier.html)).

<sup>21</sup> Sung Bum Yun (1916-1980), a graduate of Doshima University in Japan, was the President of the Methodist Theological Seminary in South Korea. He gained his PhD at Basel University in 1960 where he had studied under Karl Barth (cf. <http://cscstudy.org/cskc/board.php?board=introduction1&command=body&no=8>).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Eric J. Sharpe 1980, ‘Report of the Acting Secretary General, Dr. E.J. Sharpe, to the Executive and International Committee’, in Pye & McKenzie 1980 (note 3): 156-160, here 156.

<sup>23</sup> Till 1995, the IAHR Executive scored dismally on gender balance: **1950-1955: 9 male officers : 0 female officers; 1955-1960: 11: 0; 1960-1965: 12 : 0; 1965-1970: 15 [?] : 0; 1970-1975: 10 : 0; 1975-1980: 10 ; 0; 1980-1985: 9 : 1** (Annemarie Schimmel, as President, 1980-1990!); **1985-1990: 9 : 2** (Prof. Sung Hae Kim, South Korea, was co-opted as ‘observer’ to meet the sharp criticism of gender imbalance voiced during the General Assembly at Sydney in 1985); **1990-1995: 10 : 2** (Louise Bäckman and Yotl Gonzales Torres were elected as Members); **1995-2000: 7 ; 5** (Yotl Gonzales Torres was elected Vice President; Rosalind Hackett was elected Deputy Vice President; Giulia Gasparro, Gerrie ter Haar and Helena Helve were elected as Members); **2000-2005: 7 : 5** (Rosalind Hackett was elected Vice President; Gerrie ter Haar was elected Deputy General Secretary; Mary Getui, Ingvild S. Gilhus and Alef Theria Wasim were elected as Members); **2005-2010: 7 : 5** (Rosalind Hackett was elected President; Gerrie ter Haar was elected as Vice-President; Ingvild S. Gilhus was elected as Deputy General Secretary; Morny Joy and Alef Theria Wasim were elected as Members).

<sup>24</sup> In the past few years, the IAHR Executive did however assist Members from countries with weak currencies at times with a subvention for attending its annual meetings.

Members without portfolio was shrunk to two,<sup>25</sup> and the number of ‘functional’ offices was expanded from six to ten by the institution of four new offices: Deputy Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Publications Officer and Internet Officer.<sup>26</sup>

### *Why restructure the IAHR Executive?*

The one office which has so far not been globalised is that of General Secretary. It signifies that the original heartland of the IAHR, North-West [Protestant] Europe, still constitutes its centre, be it that it has been enlarged by including North America into it, and to a lesser degree also Japan, as is clear from who were elected to what IAHR offices in the past five decades. The remainder of the IAHR constitutes its ever expanding periphery. Together the two – centre and periphery – constitute a huge achievement that must be admired and applauded. However, the IAHR centre needs to expand further and integrate the present periphery, and new ‘periphery’ must be created. Modern communications technology and means of transport provide the means for these tasks. The restructuring of the IAHR Executive proposed below is therefore not proposed as a criticism of past or present IAHR policy but in order to suggest how the IAHR Executive may be even better equipped to face its ever more complex task in the periods ahead. It does so by a critical assessment of the functionalities of some of the current IAHR offices and by offering a model that eliminates these non-functionalities.

At present, several IAHR offices have no, or very little functional content, despite the 2005 reform. The members without portfolio have no functionality at all. They merely serve the purpose of achieving neat gender and regional balances, i.e. a nominal representation of, in particular, new peripheral associations. The two vice-presidents and the deputy treasurer are merely ‘in waiting’. The office of vice-president seems so far also to have been mostly, or even merely, honorary.

The present division between functional and non-functional posts in the IAHR Executive has grave consequences for centre-periphery relations. A dispassionate look at the composition of the IAHR Executive reveals that the current heartland of the academic study of religions (Northwest Europe and North America) occupies all the central posts: the three of old – President, General Secretary, Treasurer – and the more recent one of Deputy General Secretary who is in charge of the upcoming IAHR congress. The remaining non-functional posts (the two Vice Presidents, the Deputy Treasurer, the two Members without portfolio) and the auxiliary posts are, moreover, more or less evenly divided between scholars from the heartland affiliations and those representing the new affiliates, located in the ‘fringe’ of the world of the academic study of religions for reasons of distance, language, religion, culture, or history.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps this was more or less inevitably so in the past two decades. It should, however, not remain so. The process of the globalisation of the academic study of religions needs to be furthered, deepened and completed by ‘de-centring’ the centre and by making sure that the ‘fringe’ obtains a real share in the offices that bestow the power to steer the IAHR. The modern world of electronic communication offers tools for instant worldwide communication. De-centring the planning of the conferences at which the IAHR Executive annually meets will also be necessary. The present relative financial vitality of the IAHR also needs to be made more secure and possibly to be fundamentally reformed, e.g. also in order to ensure that officers can attend meetings of the IAHR Executive.

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<sup>25</sup> Prof. Morny Joy (University of Calgary, Canada) and Prof. Alef Theria Wasim (State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia) were elected as Members without portfolio

<sup>26</sup> Prof. Pratap Kumar (University of KwaZulu/Natal, South Africa) served as the first Deputy Treasurer from 2005 to 2008. Prof. Abraham Ivan Khan (University of Toronto, Canada) is currently the first Membership Secretary. Prof. Brian Bocking (University College Cork, Ireland) was elected as the first Publications Officer. And Prof. Francisco Diez de Velasco (University of Laguna, Tenerife, Spain) serves as the first IAHR Internet Officer.

<sup>27</sup> The IAHR ‘fringe’ affiliates are currently those in Eastern Europe and China, in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim worlds, and in Africa, Latin America, India, Southeast Asia, South Korea, and Indonesia.

To assist in the further globalisation, or decentring, of the IAHR we offer a new model that aims to eliminate all non-functionality from the IAHR Executive by grouping its offices into four functional triads. This model allows all twelve officers to be actively involved in the government of the IAHR and in further strengthening and expanding the IAHR in the decades ahead.

## THE FOUR FUNCTIONAL TRIADS

### **IAHR Presidency**

The IAHR President and the two Vice Presidents will form the first functional triad: that of the IAHR Presidency. Without abrogating the distinct offices of President and Vice Presidents, its three members should share the workload of the IAHR Presidency by discerning, as soon as they have been elected, what major tasks in policy development and structural change lie ahead. Four may be noted.

1. One is the 'North-South'/'centre-periphery' relations;
2. Another is how to promote the academic study of religions, as a first priority, in the Muslim world and, secondly, expand the presence of the IAHR in academic institutions in the Muslim, Roman Catholic and Orthodox worlds;
3. A third, huge task is the problem of IAHR affiliation, voting rights and financial dues posed by the change in the kinds of the societies affiliated to the IAHR. Only national societies were affiliated till 1990, when 'regional' (actually continental) societies began also to be admitted: the Latin American ALER in Rome in 1990, the African AASR in Mexico City in 1995, the European EASR in Durban in 2000, and the South-east Asian SSEASR in Tokyo in 2005. At least one of these, the AASR, is also a global society by the fact that it serves as the worldwide forum for scholars of the religions of Africa. All national and regional affiliates are multidisciplinary in character. A third type of association is applying now for IAHR affiliation: mono-disciplinary and/or mono-thematic societies, promoting a particular approach to the study of religions or focusing on a specific type of religion(s). These are also 'global' associations, for even when they study a specific kind of religion in a specific part of the world, e.g. Western esotericism in Europe, they may be joined by scholars posted in any university who is engaged in its study.<sup>28</sup> One example is the International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion (IACSR, or International Association for the Study of Cognition and Culture?) that will seek affiliation to the IAHR in 2010. Another is the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture (ISSRNC), which is also seeking IAHR affiliation in Toronto.<sup>29</sup> A special case is the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE). It may not apply for IAHR affiliation but it uses IAHR congresses for organising its own panels and meetings. The admission of IACSR and ISSRNC, and the intimate link of ESSWE with IAHR, seem to signal a new phase in IAHR history. Its increasingly pluralistic and diverse types of affiliation demand strategic reflection on how the IAHR should be restructured in terms of voting rights and annual dues. Once IACSR and ISSRNC have been admitted, other associations that are neither national or 'regional', will also seek admission and rapidly change the structure of the IAHR. Lastly, quite a different problem of affiliation is that posed by AAR seeking some affiliated status to the IAHR. Which is like Rome seeking affiliation to WCC, for AAR has many more mem-

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Wouter J. Hanegraaff 2006, 'The Story of ESSWE', in *ESSWE-Newsletter* 1 (July 2006): 2-4, here 3, at [http://www.esswe.org/upload/newsletter/newsletter\\_3.pdf](http://www.esswe.org/upload/newsletter/newsletter_3.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> ISSRNC organises a meeting at the IAHR 2010 Congress in Toronto 'in expectation of a new professional affiliation with the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR)'. Cf. <http://www.aasr.org/index.php?id=927>; e-mail message from Kocku von Stuckrad, dd. 19.01.2010

bers than the IAHR, has a very different financial structure, outstrips IAHR by far in financial vitality, and organises annual conventions whereas IAHR meets only at its quinquennial congresses. Moreover, AAR membership composition<sup>30</sup> is of a different kind from that of the IAHR.

4. The fourth task of the Presidency triad is to assign distinct tasks, and/or distinct spheres of policy development, to one of its members and/or to one of the other three triads, and oversee the execution of these assignments.

The four tasks noted pose huge challenges to the IAHR Presidency triad, for it is likely that they will change the character of the IAHR in fundamental ways. But they will also provide big opportunities for strengthening and expanding the IAHR.

### **IAHR Secretariat**

The second functional triad may be distinguished around the General Secretary. The Deputy General Secretary has already been assigned the specific task of serving as the ‘academic director’ of the next IAHR quinquennial congress, thereby relieving the General Secretary from a major task. The more recent office of Membership Secretary seems also to have been founded to relieve the General Secretary from another laborious duty, that of keeping in close touch with the IAHR member societies for the purpose of keeping track of changes in their executives and constantly updating data on them, and the means of communication with them. The post of the Membership Secretary seems primarily to serve to alleviate the work burden of the General Secretary. An important additional task should be the development of policies to incorporate young scholars of religion into the life and work of the IAHR. The strategic aim would be to provide leadership for the IAHR in years to come. Together the three officers in this functional triad would be in charge, as a unit, of the smooth functioning of the daily affairs of the IAHR, as well as the organisation of the next quinquennial congress.

### **IAHR Treasury**

IAHR finances would constitute a third triad of shared reflection and work to further improve and secure the financial position of the IAHR. The ever recurrent problem of member societies not paying their dues, or claiming that they cannot pay them, has been remedied to some degree by the new provisions that only societies who have paid them will have voting rights in the meetings of the International Committee, and that individual members who have not paid their annual membership fee cannot apply for a grant.<sup>31</sup> But there is also the repeated call for improving IAHR finances by fund raising, e.g. for the African Fund and the Endowment Fund. The General Secretary reported that in 2005,

‘the In-Coming Executive Committee has set up a finance as well as a fundraising sub-committee and seen to it that an IAHR Endowment Fund has been established. The fundraising sub-committee is working on establishing a specific fund-raising “task force” as well as drafting relevant rules and guidelines for the IAHR Endowment Fund.’<sup>32</sup>

It has, however, so far not been reported that the fundraising taskforce was indeed established, neither who sat on it, nor what funds it did gather in for the IAHR or for its Endowment and

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<sup>30</sup> [http://www.aarweb.org/About\\_AAR/Mission\\_Statement/default.asp](http://www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/Mission_Statement/default.asp) : ‘[T]he American Academy of Religion has over 10,000 members who teach in some 1,000 colleges, universities, *seminaries*, and schools in North America and abroad. The Academy is dedicated to furthering knowledge of religion *and religious institutions*. [...] Within a context of free inquiry and critical examination, the Academy welcomes all disciplined reflection on religion — both *from within* and outside of *communities of belief and practice*’.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.iahr.dk/newsletter/dues.html>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.iahr.dk/docs/ebulletinmarch08.pdf>

Africa Funds. We suggest that a treasury triad be installed that reviews thoroughly the financial options of the IAHR, e.g. by a comparative analysis of the financial structure of other international academic societies, both those with fee-paying member societies like the IAHR, and those with fee-paying individual members, such as the AAR and SBL. On the basis of such data and analyses, this triad may develop proposals for a thorough review of the membership contributions to the IAHR in a manner that would secure the financial future of the IAHR.<sup>33</sup> In addition it should try to initiate effective (and realistic) fundraising instead of paying mere lip service to it. It seems that this task is too big for the Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer and that it should be complemented therefore with a third member, e.g. from what are now the 'members without portfolio'.

### **IAHR Communications Unit**

The fourth triad would consist of the Publications Officer, the Internet Officer and again one of the Members without portfolio. The function(ality) of the Internet Officer is clear, and as yet limited to editing the IAHR website. The IAHR internet site will, however, rapidly become the central means of communication between the IAHR and its member societies, and with the public at large. It may also be developed as the internal means of communication between the officers of the IAHR Executive, and between the members of each of the four triads. In addition, other internet options, such as e-publications, an *IAHR e-Journal* (in addition to *Numen*), an (at least) annual electronic *IAHR e-Bulletin*, discussion forums, mail distributions lists, etc., will soon also have to be developed, some of them overlapping with what seems now the province of the IAHR Publications Officer. The function(ality) of the latter is much more opaque now that it is reported that Brill, though it will continue to publish *Numen*, has discontinued the *Numen Book Series* and the *Science of Religions Abstracts*. In addition, it is planned that the printed *IAHR Bulletin* will appear only once every five years, before the quinquennial congresses. It has actually been replaced, for financial reasons, by an occasional electronic *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement*. Being electronic, that bulletin, however, has the major disadvantage that it may go unnoticed for a long time by most of those who need to read it unless its publication is announced through an e-mail distribution list to all who need to read it. In view of this, we suggest that also a communication triad be formed consisting of the Internet Officer, the Publication Officer and a third officer from the 'members without portfolio'.

### ***In conclusion***

In brief, if our suggestions are implemented, the IAHR Executive would consist of four functional triads:

- the presidency for overall leadership and long term policy development;
- the secretariat for the smooth running of the daily affairs;
- the treasury for (the reform of) IAHR finances; and
- the communications unit for providing the IAHR with the means for a dynamic electronic and print communication, *ad intra* and *ad extra*.

It is important to add that each triad should deliberate after it has been appointed which goals it needs to achieve in its term of office and develop an action program for achieving them. It should explicitly consider continuity with policies developed in the previous period(s), and the mandates received from the International Committee and/or General Assembly. These programs should be published electronically soon after they have taken office and be discussed in the International Committee when it meets at mid-term for consultation about the next IAHR

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<sup>33</sup> E.g. reconsider whether, and if so state expressly why, regional affiliates should be exempted from paying annual dues (cf. <http://www.iahr.dk/newsletter/dues.html>).



Congress. In addition, each triad should report towards the end of its term of office what it has, and has not, achieved, preferably shortly before the next Nominations Committee is installed.

*Adapting the IAHR Constitution to the changes proposed*

In the past, changes in the composition of the IAHR Executive and in the functions of its officers have often been *ad hoc* decisions, approved by either the IAHR Executive itself only, or also by the International Committee, but without the relevant passages of the IAHR Constitution being first reformulated and submitted for approval to the IAHR General Assembly. Two options are open to forestall that the changes proposed lack a constitutional basis. One is that the necessary constitutional changes are formulated and discussed in the IAHR Executive now in order that they are communicated to the (boards of the) affiliated societies for discussion at short notice. They may then be put before the International Committee for discussion and decision in its meeting in Toronto in August 2010 and be put before General Assembly for approval. The other option is that the changes proposed are adopted for a trial period of five years, are reviewed in 2015, and if found to be helpful are given a constitutional basis in 2015. Both options seem acceptable.

The following reformulation, italicized and in bold, of the relevant article, 4 c, is offered for discussion, if the restructuring of the IAHR Executive proposed would meet with general approval and if a constitutional basis for it is deemed advisable immediately:

Article 4 (c): ***The Executive Committee is composed of a President and two Vice Presidents; a General Secretary and two Deputy General Secretaries; a Treasurer and two Deputy Treasurers; and a Communications Unit consisting of a Publications Officer, an Internet Officer and a Webmaster. It is organised in four functional triads: the Presidency, the Secretariat, the Treasury and the Communications Unit. These twelve officers shall be chosen in such a way as reasonably to reflect various parts of the world where the academic study of religion is pursued in its various disciplines. A Nominating Committee, appointed by the Executive Committee, shall submit nominations for the next Executive Committee to the members of the International Committee by mail not more than twelve months and not less than nine months prior to each international congress. Members of the International Committee may propose alternative nominations not less than one month prior to each international congress. The International Committee at its meeting just preceding the General Assembly, shall elect the Executive Committee and shall report this to the General Assembly. The members of the Executive Committee shall hold office for one quinquennial term each and be subject to re-election, but not more than two-thirds of the Committee shall be carried on from one term to the next. No one member shall serve in the same office more than two terms and no one member shall serve *as a rule* for a total of more than *three* terms<sup>34</sup> with or without intervening periods. In the event of the death or resignation of any serving officer of the Association, a suitable replacement may be nominated after consultation among the remaining officials, and shall serve, subject to the written approval of a majority of members of the Executive Committee, until the next quinquennial congress.***

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<sup>34</sup> We propose that the maximum of *four* terms be abrogated with the proviso that it may be allowed in special, well-argued cases and only for the central offices of President, General Secretary and Treasurer.