

ESA President's Report

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ESA Structure

The association has lived two relocations.

First, our secretariat has settled in its new headquarters in IRESCO, Paris. This has helped to consolidate the organizational structure of the association greatly. We now have access to a permanent secretary and office, provided by the courtesy of IRESCO (CNRS covers the secretarial and office costs). This is a crucial step towards institutionalizing the functioning of the secretariat independent of the ESA president and executive committee (since they change every two years) and inducing continuity and transparency to the activities of the ESA. IRESCO is undergoing structural changes at the moment; however, we do not expect our arrangement to be effected. The contract between the ESA and IRESCO will be renewed in January 2004. Our thanks to IRESCO for hosting our secretariat, and especially to Jean Charles Lagree and Claudine Attias-Donfut for their efforts on our behalf.

Second, we acquired a new home for our journal. European Societies has moved from University of Munich to the Institute for Advanced Studies in Vienna, Claire Wallace taking over the editorship (the Institute covers main administrative costs). The ESA publications committee and the editorial board have gone through organizational re-arrangement, with the aim of creating a more fruitful communication and support between the ESA and the journal and the book series. The executive committee has been keen on making the ESA publications more visible and more representative of the discipline. The vice-chair for publications will report in detail on these changes and activities. Here I would like to express our thanks to Claire Wallace, the editor of the journal, Thomas Boje, the chair of the editorial board, Dennis Smith, the vice-chair for publications, and the publications committee for all their efforts.

ESA Activities

ESA has been created in order to provide a forum in which to facilitate sociological research, teaching and communication on issues of concern to European sociologists. The activities of the ESA until now have mainly focused on the development of European research in sociology (as evidenced by the thriving activities of the RNs and the ESA conferences), mainly leaving teaching and communication aside. ESA should have an influence on the development of European academic life and the formation of the younger generation of sociologists.

The executive committee has decided to prioritize communications and teaching. To this end, in our first meeting, we set our goals as follows:

- To gain visibility within the profession and among the broader research policy community
- To make the association the reference point for European sociologists, both intellectually and organizationally
- To serve the professional needs of our members, both in research and teaching
- To strengthen sociology discipline for teaching as well as research

Accordingly, we have introduced a set of specific initiatives and activities:

Communications:

We initiated contacts with European level research and policy communities and made visits to the European Science Foundation and EU-DG12. Within the programme of the Murcia conference, we organized a panel with research programme directors of several major research bodies (ESF, ESRC, CNRS, EU Directorate for Science, Technology, Research and Development) to discuss the priorities and future of European research. We realize the importance of the engagement with research policy circles. ESA should have a say on current sociological debates and research, and on main European sociological developments. We do not expect an immediate partnership/collaboration between the ESA and these bodies (rather bureaucratic and enclosed nature of their structure prevents such an outcome) however we see these engagements as a step towards promoting sociology in the larger research community.

We need to liaison more closely with national associations to strengthen the organizational and membership basis of the ESA. Until now the interaction between the national associations and the ESA has been more or less sporadic. The executive committee has made efforts to revive the contacts with the national associations and we hope that these efforts will continue. The ISA recently introduced a set of measures to strengthen their ties with the national associations. We do not have the same organizational resources and coverage as the ISA, but some of their suggestions are quite relevant.

We suggest:

- National Associations meeting at ESA conferences should be used as a forum for exchange and collaboration
- One executive committee member should be responsible from the liaison with the National Associations
- ESA should contact each national association to re-institute their collective membership (some of the memberships have lapsed) and also invite new members.
- National Associations should be invited to link their websites to the ESA website. ESA should offer help with this. We can provide a short description of national sociological traditions and institutions on the ESA website, which would be a good way of presenting the diversity of European Sociology to general public.

- Research Networks should be encouraged to collaborate with National Associations to organize their mid-term conferences and workshops. Such collaboration should be eligible for certain amount of funding from the ESA towards their expenses.
- ESA should offer publicity on its website and in its publications to the activities of National Associations, their conferences, programmes, publications, etc. Publications and journals of National Associations can be advertised in the ESA journal. ESA can also distribute this information to its individual members via electronic mail and the Newsletter.

Ulla Bjornberg was appointed as the coordinator of national associations. Her efforts have been invaluable. Many thanks.

We also aimed a much closer communication with Research Networks, especially on the conference programme. We have introduced a financial support structure for the RNs, to support their interim conference and communication activities (setting website and electronic list, newsletter, publishing). With a more secure financial status, the ESA should be able to maintain its support. The vice-chair for RNs, Margareta Bertilsson will report in more detail. Her efforts are much appreciated.

Teaching:

We have organized the first young-scholars pre-conference workshop on 'the Europeanization Process: A Challenge to Sociology'. Thirty students from no less than twenty countries (including Russia, Ukraine and Romania) participated in this two-day activity, where eight sociologists held lectures on different aspects of the Europeanization process. Students were also given the chance to present their own work, on which they received feedback. We hope that this activity will be an established part of our conferences, with subsidies from the ESA and other sources. Bart van Steenbergen and the ESA general secretary Jean Charles Lagree put a lot of time and energy into this programme. Our thanks to them.

ESA should act as a forum for exchange on teaching related to European affairs. We propose to form an ESA teaching consortium in collaboration with national associations and research networks. We have planned to make available on our website collections of syllabi and reading lists of courses with European content. This would serve as a database for those who would like to enrich the European content of their teaching. We invite the next executive committee to continue with this project.

Website, the ESA electronic list and the Newsletter:

Thanks to Rene Bekkers, we now have a revamped website and electronic list: more functional, informative, and accessible. We would like to think of our website as professional reference for our members and we hope to make it more visible to social scientists inside and outside Europe (the number of visitors to the website grew three times since we revised our website!). The website now makes available information on research grants, prizes, fellowships, courses, faculty positions, upcoming conferences and

publishing possibilities. Along with the website and the electronic list, our Newsletter continues to be a forum for debate for European Sociology. We encourage the RNs and national associations to use this forum for publicity but also for introducing new debates. Eva Cyba kindly served as the editor of the Newsletter.

ESA Conference:

We now seem to have stabilized our conference participation around 1000 (see the attached chart for the exact number of participants in Murcia and their distribution on the basis of country-origin). This puts us financially on a stronger ground. Our heartfelt thanks to the each member of Murcia organizing committee, especially Juan Monreal Montero, the chair of the committee, and Capitolina Diaz, the vice-chair for the conference programme. We have been spoiled by the local organization committee, who have been working non-stop since we have given them a go. They have even forgone their summer holidays--a big sacrifice in their part of the world. Also our thanks to all the hardworking RN coordinators and stream organizers, whose exceptional work produced an exciting conference programme.

The next ESA meeting will take place in Torun, Poland, to be organized by the Institute of Sociology, Copernicus University. Our thanks to our Polish colleagues for offering their hospitality and Elzbieta Halas for her role in taking the next ESA conference to eastern Europe.

ESA Elections:

This is our first year with the new statutory changes to the elections. Ulla Bjornberg, Martin Kohli, Max Haller, Elina Haavio-Mannila, and Chiara Saraceno kindly offered their services to organize the elections. The transition required a lot of strategic arrangements. Their hard work guaranteed a smooth transition.

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We do hope that with all these structural changes and activities we are leaving a much more consolidated ESA--organizationally, financially and intellectually, and we have gotten closer to our goal of sustaining the development of European sociology and European sociologists.

Finally my greatest thanks to the members of the executive committee, whose organizational talents excelled beyond boundaries. My work has been made easier by our very energetic vice-chairs. I owe a special thank you to our treasurer, Anne Kovalainen, for her unceasing support and meticulous work. Our executive meetings have been energizing and animated. My thanks to the executive committee for constant inspiration and challenge and for great friendship. I thoroughly enjoyed their company.

With these acknowledgements my four year of service in ESA, first as the vice-chair for Research Networks and then as the president, comes to an end. It has been most

educational and challenging for me. I am looking forward to being an ordinary member of this great association.