

Konferenzbericht: Founding conference of an umbrella organisation of European Diary Archives (hosted by the Meertens Institute and the Dutch Diary Archive on June 5th 2015)

Participants

The following representatives of European Diary Archives took part in the meeting:

- Stefan Dickers, The Great Diary Project, London, United Kingdom
- Irving Finkel, The Great Diary Project, London, United Kingdom
- Li Gerhalter, Sammlung Frauennachlässe, Vienna, Austria
- Christa Hämmerle, Sammlung Frauennachlässe, Vienna, Austria
- Marlene Kayen, Deutsches Tagebucharchiv, Emmendingen, Germany
- Gergely Kunt, University of Miskolc, Hungary
- Willy Jongenburger, Meertens Institute, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Philippe Lejeune, Association pour l'Autobiographie et le Patrimoine Autobiographique, Ambérieu-en-Bugey, France
- Filippo Massi, L'Archivio diaristico nazionale, Pieve Santo Stefano, Italy
- Bertie van der Meij, Nederlands Dagboekarchief, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Susanne Neugebauer, Nederlands Dagboekarchief, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Mirjam Nieboer, Nederlands Dagboekarchief, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Monica Soeting, Nederlands Dagboekarchief, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Nina Wijsbek, Nederlands Dagboekarchief, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Douwe Zeldenrust, Meertens Institute, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Registered, but unfortunately unable to come to the conference were: Almut Leh, Institut für Geschichte und Biographie, FernUniversität Hagen, Germany; Polly North, The Great Diary Project, United Kingdom and Frauke von Troschke, Deutsches Tagebucharchiv, Emmendingen, Germany.

Programme of the Conference

The conference, chaired by Nina Wijsbek (NDA) started with a word of welcome by Willy Jongenburger, Management Director of the Meertens Institute. Next, Douwe Zeldenrust, coordinator of the research collections at the Meertens Institute, talked about the database policy of the Meertens Institute, after which Marleen Rensen (University of Amsterdam) informed the participants about the submission to a call made by the EU (Horizon 20/20) in which she would like to cooperate with European Diary Archives.

Next on the agenda were presentations by the different representatives of the diary archives, which – especially on the part of the more established archives of Pieve Santo Stefano, Ambérieu-en-Bugey, Emmendingen and Vienna – showed sophisticated ways of acquiring, reading, indexing and exhibiting diaries, which were a rich source of inspiration to the ‘younger’ archives, like the Nederlands Dagboekarchief.

After lunch (courtesy of the Meertens Institute), Philippe Lejeune, in his key note speech, referred to several earlier attempts to found a European organisation of diary archives, and stressed the importance of being practical and easily accessible. Whereas almost all archives offer scholars the possibility to study their collections (or aim to

do so), Philippe Lejeune stressed that the archives themselves should not be scholarly institutions, and should above all connect with non-scholarly diary writers and readers.

Next on the agenda was the actual founding of the umbrella organisation (see below), and Gergely Kunt presented a paper about his personal diary collection and his research on diaries. The conference ended with a conference dinner in Amsterdam.

Founding the umbrella organisation of European Diary Archive

Chair: Monica Soeting (NDA)

The following decisions were taken:

(1) Mission statement

The following mission statement was proposed and accepted: 'The umbrella organisation of diary archives and collections aims to exchange best practices, data and expertise between the different diary archives in Europe, and to promote scholarly research on diaries and other forms of life writing like letters, autobiographies and memoirs.'

(2) Goals

The members of the umbrella organisation of diary archives and collections, who aim to collect and preserve diaries and all other forms of life writing and enable scholars to study them, will establish a network of the different diary archives and collections in Europe by means of a list serv, the exchange of publications and data, and yearly meetings in order to exchange best practices, data and expertise between the different diary archives.

The members of the afore mentioned organization aim to jointly organize projects concerning the reading and researching diaries and other forms of life writing, scholarly and non-scholarly.

(3) Organisation

It was decided that one of the members will act as secretariat for two years, setting up and maintaining a list serv and support the member who organises one of the yearly meetings.

It was proposed and decided to set up a website for the umbrella organization (NDA will see into that).

It was also decided that yearly meeting will – if possible – take place at the festivals of the different members.

Proposed and accepted was the plan to ask the different member organisations for a small member fee (with a minimum of €50 per annum) to support the organisation of meetings and/or the travel costs of representatives of member organisations to the yearly meetings.

(4) Name of the organization

It was decided that the umbrella organization will be called The European Diary and Collections Network. The acronym of the organization will be EDAC.

(5) Plans and decisions

NDA will host the secretariat of EDAC for the first two years (summer of 2016 to summer of 2018), setting up a list serv, which can be used by all members to share information about meetings, publications and other information concerning the diary archives and collections.

A first common project will consist of posting quotes on the EDAC website from diaries, memoirs etc by the different members, dating from the first week of June 1950. On 9 May 1950 the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Schuman, announced the foundation of the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC was also the forerunner of what is now the European Union.

The first EDAC meeting will take place during the festival in Pieve Santo Stefano, Italy, which will probably take place on 18 – 20 September 2016; the second meeting will take place during the festival at Ambérieu-en-Bugey in 2017.

An EDAC logo (and possibly posters) will be designed based on a design by Gergely Kunt (NDA will take care of this). Membership fees for 2015 and 2016 will be collected by NDA.

Li Gerhalter (Frauennachlässe) will distribute a list of all diary archives and collections in Europe; NDA will contact those organisations which were not present at the founding conference and invite them to join EDAC.

Monica Soeting