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European Association for South Asian Studies

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EASAS Newsletter Winter 2012-2013

1. Report on the 22nd European Conference on South Asian Studies, Lisbon, 25-28 July 2012

Rosa Maria Perez, the conference organizer, sent us a report of the conference which we print here in abbreviated form. “Until recently, South Asian studies in Portugal was dominated by historians, and carried out by senior scholars. By contrast, the Lisbon ECSAS local committee integrated the widest possible diversity of specialists, across life-experience, in the Humanities and Social Sciences, with a significant number of young researchers, who turned out to be a major asset, given their greater availability of time and their enthusiasm.



The number of panel proposals – 149 – was absolutely unexpected and astonishing. The selection criteria were defined by the local committee, and the final selection was subsequently carried out by the local committee in association with the president and vice-president of EASAS. The main criteria adopted by the local committee for selecting panels were: to integrate the greater diversity of disciplines, and ensure delegates from different countries of South Asia without unduly privileging India alone. A part-time Conference Organiser was hired, and then a Conference Administrator, NomadIT. In addition, Mafalda Melo Sousa was hired as a local executive producer, and her previous experience in producing large scale conferences ensured fulfilment of all of the targets in direct and daily contact with the convener and the Conference administrator. The creation of a group of volunteers coordinated by three students of the Department of Anthropology of ISCTE-IUL was fundamental to achieving a wide range of tasks and to support to delegates. The generous commitment of these volunteers outshone the Convener’s expectations and their contribution should therefore be emphatically underlined.

The ECSAS2012 was achieved on groundwork of about 2 years alongside the above steps. All the activities are listed in the conference book. Two important details should be taken into consideration for the next ECSAS: the difficulty in obtaining visas by delegates from Pakistan, which led to some last minute withdrawals; and the fact that some panels did not have the number of participants initially expected. This latter situation was a result of many panel conveners having included, in their panel proposals, researchers whose presence was not actually secured. Given the limit of participants defined by the Board for the next ECSAS this matter should be considered relevant.”



2. Preparations for the 23rd European Conference on South Asian Studies, to be held in Zürich, 23-26 July 2014

Professor Ulrike Müller-Böker has established a local organising committee, and has booked rooms at the Irchel campus of the University of Zürich. Because the exchange rate between Swiss Francs and other currencies has become much more favourable to the Swiss Franc, efforts are being made to ensure that participants' costs are kept as low as possible. Professor Müller-Böker is applying for subsidies to make sure that the conference registration fee can be kept at an affordable level. As has



been the case since the Bonn conference in 2010, the 2014 conference will be "membership-only." The cost of not paying membership in EASAS in 2013 and 2014 will result in a higher registration fee – i.e. there will be no benefit from not paying the membership fee, even in the conference 'off' year. The 'call for panels' has gone live on 7 March 2013, and can be found at

<http://www.easas.org/european-conferences-south-asian-studies> and at <http://www.nomadit.co.uk/easas/ecsas2014/cfpan.shtml>.

3. Report on the European Doctoral Workshop, Falsterbro, 17-19 September 2012

The Council decided to support the doctoral workshop in Lund in September 2012 with € 800. Dr Anna Lindberg provided a report, which is briefly summarised here; for more details see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sasnet/sasnet-organised-sixth-european-phd-workshop-south-asian-studies>

"The workshop was attended by graduate students from Heidelberg University, Germany; Ghent University, Belgium; University of Edinburgh, UK; Le Centre d'Études de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud (CEIAS), Paris, France; University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL), and SASNET/Lund University, Sweden. It was financed by SASNET but with additional funding provided by the European Association for South Asian Studies (EASAS). PhD candidates were given the responsibility of introducing the papers of other participants and raising preliminary questions. A senior scholar then acted as discussant, providing feedback and prompting further debate. This format broadened perspectives on research methods, concepts, and theory by helping students consider questions from the point of view of a variety of disciplines. Each paper was presented and discussed for approximately one hour, providing the authors with adequate feedback and giving the group sufficient time for in-depth discussions.

The senior European scholars who participated in the 2012 workshop were Claude Markovits, Paris; William Sax, Heidelberg; Bert Suykens, Ghent; and Roger Jeffery, Edinburgh. Lund University was represented by Lars Eklund, Anna Lindberg, Staffan Lindberg, and Jan Magnusson. Dr. Swati Banerjee from the Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) in Mumbai, India, also took part in some of the workshop."



4. Paris meeting in November 2012

As a result of a technical challenge by the German Charity regulator to the procedures we adopted during the elections in Lisbon for the Council for 2012-14, it was necessary to hold an additional general meeting to run the elections again. This was held in Paris at CEIAS on 13 November 2012. The result of the elections is as follows:

President	Professor Roger Jeffery, University of Edinburgh
Vice-President	Dr Margret Frenz, University of Oxford
Treasurer	Professor Ulrike Müller-Böker, University of Zurich
Council Member	Professor Danuta Stasik, University of Warsaw
Council Member	Dr Nicolas Jaoul, CNRS, CEIAS, Paris
Council Member	Dr Anna Lindberg, University of Lund
Council Member	Dr Heinz Werner Wessler, University of Uppsala
Council Member	Professor Rosa Maria Perez, University Institute, Lisbon
Council Member	Dr John Zavos, Universit of Manchester

5. Professional management of EASAS membership administration

After discussions at Lisbon and within the Council, it has been decided to enter into a contract with NomadIT (who organised the Lisbon conference). NomadIT will handle the membership administration of EASAS (recording of membership applications and withdrawals, sending out of membership invoices & receipts, and payment control), to ease the job of the treasurer. The contract will run for one year in the first instance. The Council believes that by putting the affairs of EASAS into the hands of professional administrators the Council will be able to focus on academic activities.