



CISH
Board

Minutes

March 8, 2025

Time: 1.30–3.30 pm CET

Online meeting (<https://unibe-ch.zoom.us/my/sacha.zala>)

Present: Catherine Horel, Edoardo Tortarolo, Sacha Zala, Krzysztof Makowski, Gunlög Fur, Hirotaka Watanabe, Katalin Szende, Matthias Middell, Joel Harrington, Nuno G. Monteiro, Flavio Eichmann (minutes)

Excused: Eliana Dutra

- I. Call to order (Horel)
Catherine Horel (CH) welcomes the members of the board to this meeting.
- II. Approval of the agenda (Horel)
The agenda is approved.
- III. Approval of the minutes of the meetings of the board (Eichmann)
Katalin Szende (KS) was present at the last board meeting. Other than that, the minutes are approved.
- IV. Draft minutes of the general assembly in Tokyo (Tortarolo)
Edoardo Tortarolo (ET) sent the draft of the minutes to the board. The board can send remarks until March 26, 2025 to Flavio Eichmann (FE). Afterwards, the draft will be published on the website to be approved by the next GA.
- V. Report president (Horel)
CH reminds the board of the ongoing calls (new board members, CISH prize, panel proposals for Leipzig, activities for the centennial).
SZ adds that a call for edition of CISH-related documents will be sent out shortly to the member organizations.
- VI. Report secretary general (Tortarolo)
ET informs that the Italian national committee organizes a conference on the Italian contribution to CISH in spring 2026 in Rome.

- VII. Report treasurer (Zala)
1. Office365 infrastructure:
 - a. Sharepoint

SZ informs that CISH acquired the Office365 licence. The office will set up a shared file server in the coming weeks.
 - b. CISH email-addresses

FE reminds the board that all board members have now a [first-name.lastname@cish.org](mailto:first.name.lastname@cish.org) mail address that forwards to their own e-mail accounts. All board members can be contacted via board@cish.org.
 2. Graphic concept for new website

FE presents the first graphic concept of the new website. The aim is to have a modern design that works on desktop computers, tablets and mobile phones. Matthias Middell (MM) asks, if dynamic elements will be included.

FE: Yes, it will be possible to have a more dynamic website. We have to evaluate what kind of contents we can include in the website (for example H-Net lists).
 3. Communication concept for CISH
 - a. Discussion

FE presents the communication concepts and underlines the need for coordination between the different channels. Also, he stresses the fact, that the choice of social media channels can be flexible. The CISH office will profit from the experience of the Swiss Historical Association.

KS: This is a straightforward concept. Maybe the wording should be “academic freedom”, instead of “liberty of research”. Also, the indicated working hours are maybe a bit too conservative.

SZ: We also must see, how we can efficiently organize the communication channels.

MM: We have to be careful on external content. Even organizations such as H-NET are not unproblematic, as they had to make compromises to secure fundings.

The communication concept is adopted.
 - b. Outline for a decision-making process for external content

SZ presents the outline for a decision-making process for external content.

The board adopts the outline and mandates the office to work out a by-law.
 4. CISH and freedom of research

SZ presents the Network of Concerned Historians (NCH) and its website. We

had strong feedback at the GA in Tokyo that CISH should be more vocal on the defense of academic freedom. NCH has two pillars: One part is more descriptive and objective: a list of all cases, where historians are hindered in their academic freedom. The other part is more advocative and contains campaigns, open letters, etc. This latter part is more problematic for CISH than the former, as our member organization could be involved. De Baets is open for a cooperation with CISH. In the future, the descriptive part could be taken over by CISH. Until then, its content could be presented on the CISH website. It would give CISH a new task and strengthen our reputation.

JH: This is a really good idea, would give us a leadership in this important topic. Who would do the task?

SZ: De Baets looks for cases, he will continue to do that for the foreseeable future. He also has a highly motivated younger colleague.

NG: Very good proposal. What will our relationship with the NCH be in the future?

SZ: We try to reach an agreement with NCH to share their content. We should be very prudent in the communication and be clear that it's not CISH-content. The exact terms should be defined by the board later.

GF: This project sounds interesting. Are there other organizations that could be partners in this work for academic freedom? What about Historians without borders? Maybe we should formulate a strategy on such cooperations.

SZ: NCH could be a first step. If things work out, then we can think of other organizations to cooperate.

KS: It think this is a good proposal; but how would we be differentiating between reporting and advocacy?

ET: De Baets knows the limits and boundaries of CISH, the difference would be regulated by him. He's in favor of the persecuted, he's not advocating against the persecutors.

MM: I integrated his newsletters in our own newsletter. We can give it a voice, but we have to declare where this information comes from.

JH: We can pass on information and give the source. Only in extraordinary cases we should make a statement.

SZ: We would regulate the cooperation in a concept.

The board mandates SZ to discuss with De Baets a possible cooperation between CISH and NCH.

5. Principles for a New Constitution

SZ presents the principles of a new constitution for CISH

MM: Don't we need a treasurer in the board?

SZ: We could nominate someone who is charged to present the financial situation, but he should not be part of the presidency.

KS: How secure are the subsidies by the Swiss government in the long term?

SZ: We will receive the subsidies for sure until the end of 2028. We're already looking for additional funding in Switzerland. But CISH should come up with additional revenues. For example, in the future the congress should be a source of revenue.

ET: The centennial is a good opportunity for a new constitution, we must take drastic steps and invest money in the professionalization of CISH. I fully support SZ's initiative.

MM: I also support the proposal. Outside Europe, national committees are not very strong. We could think of admitting individual members. This would give CISH more legitimacy and also more revenues.

SZ: We'll present a financial prospectus of our possibilities and also legal questions such as voting in the GA.

HW: We could also think of the regional divisions to strengthen organizations outside Europe.

The board mandates the office to work out a first draft of a new constitution.

VIII. Centennial conference 2026 in Leipzig (Middell)

MM: The call for panel proposals has been sent, the member organizations are working on the submission of proposals. Hotels and rooms are reserved. We need a selection committee for the proposal panels. The political situation in Saxony and on the federal level in Germany are volatile at the moment. Therefore, we don't know our financial resources. Another unknown factor is the number of participants. We must also decide on the participation fee, which will be either 120 or 200 €.

SZ: The conference in Leipzig is our centennial. Consequently, 200 € would be acceptable.

IX. Other events 2026

a. Member activities (Makowski)

MK: We have up to now received several project proposals: Joanna Woydon proposed to do short 3-4 min. video recordings. Second, we have the Rome 2026 conference. Thirdly, the Polish commission will do a conference on the influence on Polish historiography in Krakow (May 26, 2026) and hopefully other Polish cities. Also, essays on CISH's history could be sent to media and academic journals. Biographies of CISH presidents could be combined with Zarate's proposal to do interviews with significant CISH figures.

b. Edition of CISH documents (Zala)

SZ informs that Lili Zeller, a doctoral student from La Réunion, has agreed to

work with him on the edition. Besides a financial support from CISH, SZ will search further funding. The edition will be digital but also published in a book. All those projects should be synergically with our new website. But we'll also have to finance these projects with our own funds. He proposes to have a credit of CHF 50'000 in total for such projects, with a competence of the office to attribute financial aid up to CHF 7000.

Nobody is against this approach.

c. Other activities (all)

ET: The date of the Rome conference is not yet set. It will be financed by the Italian committee.

MM: CIPSH has a journal called Diogenes. In September, a new board will meet to discuss the first numbers. We would be in a strong position to propose a special issue.

X. Comments and announcements (all)

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XI. Varia and adjournment (all)

The next board meeting will be on **May 31, 2025, 13h30–17h00**
FE will come up with a solution to discuss efficiently the panel proposals for Leipzig.
If we receive a large number of panel proposal, subcommittees can be formed.