

Nordic IMER is founded.

A Nordic IMER association was formally founded at the 14th Nordic Migration Researchers' Conference in Bergen on November 14th. 2007.

History

The research, education and professional work in relation to International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER) have developed in each of the Nordic countries over the last decades. Research institutions and academic networks in the field are established in each country. However an established association uniting the different initiatives and interests on a Nordic level has been missing. In June 2006 the steering group of the Swedish IMER association took the initiative and invited colleagues from the Nordic milieus to a meeting in Stockholm for a first discussion of possible Nordic cooperation. Invited were Ulf Hedetoft, AMID, Academy for Migration Research in Denmark, Matti Similä, CEREN, Center for Ethnicity and Nationality Research, Finland, Yngve Lithman, IMER-Bergen, Norway.

The background for calling the meeting was formulated by the Swedish IMER steering group in relation to three main areas of interest: *i.* The need to stimulate and facilitate further Nordic research cooperation and formation of research networks, and initiating Nordic research projects. *ii.* The need for cooperation and exchange in relation to ph.d and master courses especially since the internationalization of higher education was now fast developing with the Bologna process. *iii.* The need to develop a Nordic scientific journal to disseminate research results from Nordic as well as international researchers.

The meeting found that this initiative was important and well timed, and that the efforts towards Nordic cooperation and formation of an association and establishing a journal should be further developed. It was decided that for the following meetings each country should try to be represented by two participants, if possible from academic centres and from IMER associations in each country and that the participants in the meeting should inform about the initiative. The next meeting was called by the Swedish IMER association in relation to the Conference on the status and future of IMER research organised by the IMER association in November 2006 in Göteborg. At this meeting we decided to go on as an interim steering group that came to be made up of two representatives from each country. From Sweden Maren Bak, representing the IMER association and Björn Fryklund, IMER Malmö representing the established Swedish research centres. From Denmark Ulf Hedetoft, AMID and Chantal Maria Pohl Nielsen (later in the process replaced by Kræn Blume Jensen), Danish Institute of Governmental Research. From Finland Matti Similä, CEREN and Tuomas Martikainen ETMU (Finnish IMER association) and from Norway Yngve Lithman, IMER-Bergen and later on in the process Sharam Alghasi, University of Oslo, The CULCOM project.

The members of the interim group had three meetings in 2007: In Copenhagen, In Oslo and in Turku. The group made an overview of IMER related master courses in the Nordic countries, investigated possibilities of launching an academic journal, looked into financing, worked on the statutes for a Nordic association and prepared for an official launch of the association at the 14th Nordic Migration Researchers' Conference in November 2007, which was the unique possibility of having a Nordic audience to confirm the official establishment. The next chance would be the next Nordic conference three years ahead in time.

Establishing the association formally

The conference programme for the 14th Nordic Migration Researchers' Conference announced an information meeting about Nordic IMER for November 14th. At this meeting Maren Bak gave a short overview of the history of the initiative, and the work of the interim group, which so far had worked on a voluntary basis without any specific funding. The proposed statutes were distributed and a call was made for a formal general assembly later the same day, where the statutes should be discussed and 3 steering group members, 1 election committee member and 1 auditor from each of the four countries should be elected.

The general assembly was chaired by Maren Bak and Ulf Hedetoft and convened a majority of the conference participants. The following decisions were made:

i. The official formation of the Nordic IMER was approved with the main objectives and organisation as indicated in the statutes. Some adjustments in the formulations in the statutes were decided upon.

ii. Suggestions for further adjustments of the statutes could be mailed or otherwise communicated to Kræn Blume Jensen before January 1st 2008

iii. The following persons were proposed and approved by the assembly for a 3 year period:

Sweden

Steering Group:

Maren Bak, IMER association and Göteborg University, Department of Social Work:

maren.bak@socwork.gu.se

Maja Povrzanovic Frykman, IMER Malmö: maja.frykman@imer.mah.se

Annika Rabo, CEIFO, Stockholm University: annika.rabo@ceifo.su.se

Election Committee

Ella Johansson, Multicultural Centre, Botkyrka: ella.johansson@mkc.se

Finland:

Steering group

Matti Similä, CEREN: matti.simila@helsinki.fi

Östen Wahlbeck ETMU: osten.wahlbeck@abo.fi

Karina Horsti: karina.horsti@helsinki.fi

Election committee

The deputy member is Tuomas Martikainen, the main representative will be announced later.

Denmark:

Steering group

Ulf Hedetoft, AMID and Copenhagen University, SAXO institute: ulf.hedetoft@hum.ku.dk

Kræn Blume Jensen, Danish Institute of Governmental Research /AKF: KBJ@akf.dk

Garbi Schmidt, The Danish National Institute of Social Research/SFI: gs@sfi.dk

Election committee

Birte Siim, Aalborg University, Institute for History, International and Social Studies:

siim@ihis.aau.dk.

iiii. The nomination of Norwegian representation was postponed till January 1st 2008 since the Norwegian participants in the assembly felt that they needed more time to elect their

representatives. This was agreed upon and names should be communicated to the elected steering group, contact person Maren Bak, not later than January 1st. 2008

iiii. Nomination of auditors was postponed as well.

iiiii. The new steering group should disseminate the information about the new association and its statutes to the relevant homepages in the Nordic countries and even use the conference maillist to spread information.

The new steering group decided to have its first meeting on January 14th 2008 at 10 am in Copenhagen at Copenhagen University Amager, with Ulf Hedetoft as host.

Maren Bak, Nordic IMER
November 28th. 2007