

Editorial

It would be fair to say that the success of the First European Serials Conference did not bring us immediately closer to the formation of a major European Serials Group. Those who openly expressed their views on the subject adopted a cautious note preferring to think for the moment in terms of national or regional developments as a sensible precursor to a larger European Group which might ultimately include the thriving UK organisation.

This stance is highly realistic, for organic growth based on national experience seems to be a necessary first stage in the possible development of a European Group or Federation. While all the presentations at the First Conference were given impressively in English, language does present something of an impediment. It should be noted, for instance, that French participants requested simultaneous translation at any future Conference.

Account must also be taken of the national contexts in which individual serials groups will develop. We learned from the Dutch that their embryo serials group is operating within the context of their national Library Association, whereas UKSG has only recently specifically rejected any notion of taking its operations into the embrace of the UK Library Association. The Scandinavians will almost certainly choose to operate initially as a regional group becoming an enthusiastic and significant part of the European serials scene.

There will also have to be a period of political restructuring before the contribution of Germany and countries further East becomes clear. Both in numerical and qualitative terms their inputs will be

highly significant in the future, but it will take a little time for them to achieve a helpful operative infrastructure.

Delegates to the Netherlands' session created a pleasurable social atmosphere and were stimulated by the papers, the discussion of them and the many informal conversations. By general acclaim, the success of the First Conference will lead to a demand for future sessions and these may well provide the main European serials link until national and regional groups have found their feet. It may well be that during the present decade these activities will lead to the formation of a Steering Committee, a European Conference Committee and, ultimately, a Federation of serials interest across all the countries of Europe.

Whatever the result, it is clear a spirit of collaboration and common interest already exists. Even if the sole outcome is the holding of occasional European conferences and nothing else, these exchanges of experience and analysis will be well worthwhile. But everyone must be realistic about the amount of work involved for those charged with the organisation of such events. It may not be entirely realistic to rely on the efforts of a largely voluntary force the members of which have other heavy commitments. If it ever comes to the point of creating a European Federation for Serials a realistic assessment would have to be made of the administrative burden involved and for the Federation to make the necessary provision for paid help. □

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