CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE COMITE INTERNATIONAL DES SCIENCES HISTORIQUES

The History of Diplomatic Document Publishing Programmes

Programme Event

International Committee of Historical Sciences | 26–30 August 2026 | Leipzig, Germany

DATE	LOCATION
28 Aug 2026, 11:00 - 13:30	House 1 T-1003
THEME	CONFERENCE
B - Teaching History and Public History	International Committee of Historical Sciences

Overview

This panel reflects on the historiography of editing and publishing scholarly editions of diplomatic documents over the course of the twentieth century.

In the 1920s many European governments began the systematic publication of documents from their diplomatic archives, originally with the intention of explaining their conduct in relation to the origins of the First World War. Some governments had begun the practice much earlier - 'Foreign Relations of the United States' started in 1861. The practice was continued to cover the diplomacy of the inter-war period and then international relations beyond 1945. Meanwhile more countries started publishing their own series of documents, often produced by institutions independent of government.

In 1988 an international network of Editors of Diplomatic Documents was founded to discuss and investigate common concerns, concepts, problems and methodologies over a diverse range of historical and historiographical areas.

Today, publishing programmes provide resources for the study of international history and provide greater transparency in the process of government policy-making. The volumes of documents not only illuminate national foreign policies but also raise cultural questions relating, for instance, to the nature of diplomatic practice or the under-representation of women as diplomatic actors.

This transnational panel explores the origins of national publishing programmes, along with their aims and objectives, similarities and differences, and changes in methodological approach over time. It will also consider issues such as impartiality, access and editorial freedom, which are still a source of lively debate amongst practitioners and scholars.

Participants

Convenor

- Richard Smith (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office)

Panelists

- Brendan Kelly (Global Affairs Canada)
- Sacha Zala (DODIS/ CISH)
- Helena Pinto Janeiro (Diplomatic Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal)
- Carola Tischler (Institut für Zeitgeschichte c/o Auswärtiges Amt)

Papers

Looking Back While Moving Forward: Six Decades of Documents on Canadian External Relations

Brendan Kelly (Global Affairs Canada)

From Colour Books to Scholarly Editions: The Scientization of Diplomatic Documents

Sacha Zala (DODIS/ CISH)

Hidden in plain sight: searching for women in diplomatic archives

Helena Pinto Janeiro (Diplomatic Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal)

'British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914': where it all began for British document publishing

Richard Smith (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office)

33 Moments of happiness': Working conditions and publications by the Archives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the years 1989 to 2022

Carola Tischler (Institut für Zeitgeschichte c/o Auswärtiges Amt)

Source: https://cish2026.recentglobe.org/events/the-history-of-diplomatic-document-publishing-programmes/
Generated: 24/08/2026 08:40