

**Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the  
International Association of Theatre Critics,  
Held in Wroclaw, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009.**

**1. Attendance**

Those present : Yun-Cheol Kim (President), Michel Vaïs (General Secretary), Margareta Sörenson (Vice-president, Sweden), Jean-Pierre Han (Vice-President, France), Irène Sadowska-Guillon (Treasurer, France), Kalina Stefanova (Director of colloquia, Bulgaria), Paulo Eduardo Carvalho (Director of seminars for the new critics, Portugal), Don Rubin (Canada), Katayoun Hosseinzadeh Salmasi (Iran), Akiko Tachiki (Japan), Tomasz Milkowski (Poland), Ivan Medenica (Adjunct General Secretary, Serbia), Mark Brown (Great Britain), Randy Gener (USA)

**2. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted unanimously.

**3. Approval of Minutes of the ExCom meeting in Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake (Canada), 11-12 October, 2008**

Paulo asked for the name of the city in which the seminar for the young critics in Canada was held to be added in paragraph 3. It was Jonquière, Quebec.

**4. Matters arising from the minutes**

None.

**5. Reports:**

**5.1. President**

Yun-Cheol has already sent the written report to all ExCom members. There was one addition: He participated in the Latvian showcase theatre in early March, and had meetings with Latvian critics and many others mostly from Eastern/central Europe, and encouraged their interest in IATC activities including up-coming *Critical Stages*, the IATC webjournal.

**5.2. General Secretary**

Michel has already sent his written report. He underlined a few technical details: the name of Macedonia on our web site was reformulated according to its official name (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - FYROM) and there were some changes of e-mail addresses.

**5.3. Treasurer**

Irene has also sent a report. Only a few national memberships have paid the fee by the time of the Wroclaw meeting. She stressed a virtually eternal problem with the colleague from Columbia Mr Prada Prada – he is always promising to pay his fee, which would allow him to take part in our projects, but he never does it. Michel asked Irene to explain what the “divers” (miscellaneous) expenses were because some members asked for the explanation. The whole amount of these expenses is 1431.36 euros. The big majority are the travel expenses (it was stressed that Kalina’s travel expenses had been lower than the amount mentioned in the report). Michel explained his own case – Premio Europa will pay for his trip to Wroclaw, so he will give back the money he originally got from IATC treasury to cover these expenses.

**5.4 Other ExCom members**

The written reports have been already sent. Margareta stressed the problem with the participation of Chinese young critics on our seminars – they are not encouraged to take part in this activity by their senior colleagues and/or the national section, thus we should find a solution to motivate them. Paulo stressed that some applications had been sent anyhow. Jean-Pierre joined the greetings for Kalina’s work on the book from the Sofia Congress but asked why it had been published only in English and not in French. Kalina replied that the reason was only a financial one and added that there was no Bulgarian version either. Kalina had some questions concerning the distribution of the book in the frame of our future meetings – symposiums in Novi Sad and Amsterdam.

## **6. Programme**

### **6.1. Congress**

We were informed by Yun-Cheol Kim that the congress in Chicago in 2010 was definitely cancelled. The representative of the American section, Randy Gener, explained the reasons: the biggest problem is a financial one. They had to collaborate on this project with different foundations and corporations and they had all diminished their budget by 50%. Apart from this, the main person in the organisation of the Chicago Congress, Jonathan Abarbanel, has some family problems as well. Randy thought it was better to cancel it immediately than to wait until October to do the same thing. Yun-Cheol stressed that this information was a disappointing one but agreed that it was better to know it sooner than later. Americans are still interested in organising an IATC Congress in the future: Don said we should inform them that 2012 had been already booked (by Poland). Yun-Cheol informed us about some possible solutions – the most realistic one being to join the next edition of Premio Europa. We still don't know where the next edition will take place: Istanbul is the most realistic option (during the theatre festival, 15<sup>th</sup> of May – 4<sup>th</sup> of June), although Michel stressed that there were some other possibilities as well (Torino). Alessandro Martinez will inform us of the final decision by July. China is also a very serious candidate for organising the IATC Congress either in 2010 or 2012 but they don't want to enter in competition with other possible hosts: they want to be asked to organize it.

### **6.2. Executive Committee Meetings**

There is one invitation from Yerevan, Armenia, for the period 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> of September 2009 (the international festival of one-man performances based on Shakespeare). There is another invitation for the ExCom in January 2010 (5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>) in Ahmadabad, in the Gujarat province, India. Don explained that there was a very concrete proposal for the topic of the conference which was planned for the same event/context – Indian theatre and theatre criticism. Jean-Pierre had some reserves considering the fact that this date is very close to the projected date of our Congress (in Spring). Mark stressed that it would be great to have an ExCom meeting in India, because it would give us an opportunity to learn more about the Indian theatre. Don added that this ExCom would be important for our Indian section as well because it would be a good occasion for our Indian colleagues to meet and start a closer collaboration (it's difficult to maintain a regular activity in such a big country). Don stressed the importance of the IATC's spread in Asia and the fact that the ExCom would happen in the frame of the biggest reunion of Indian theatre researchers. Yun-Cheol explained that the organisation of this meeting would be a result of cooperation between Indian national section of IATC and the organisation of Indian theatre researchers. The proposal was unanimously accepted.

### **6.3. New Critics' Seminars**

Paulo has already sent his report to everybody. There was one seminar in Sfântu Gheorghe (Romania), the second one was running at that very moment in Wroclaw, and the third one will be in Amsterdam. For the first two seminars, there were more places than applications. For Amsterdam there are more free places, and the deadline was postponed. There was one offer from Morocco but it came too late for a serious organisation to be made, with the visa issues and other things (in March for May). For the year 2010 there are two propositions: Istanbul (in April), Warsaw (in May). Tomasz confirms that for the time being, the offer from Wroclaw is stable. Paulo stressed one problem: there are national sections which have been sending members regularly to the IATC's seminars for young critics and others which have never done that. Yun-Cheol asked all of us to help finding new hosts for the seminars. Paulo was thinking of sending an e-mail to all national sections asking them to encourage the organisation of seminars. On Mark's question whether there is a chance to organise a seminar in Japan, Akiko answered that there was a financial problem. Margareta proposed collaboration with UNIMA, which is organising a big event in Beijing 2012 (to organise a seminar in collaboration with them).

### **6.4. Cultural Bridges/Experienced Critics' Meetings**

Kalina underlined that in the near future there would be two major events – symposiums for experienced critics in Novi Sad (Serbia) in May and Amsterdam in June 2009. Ivan stressed that the organisation of both Symposiums was under control, that everything was going fine, that the number of participants and quality of contributions were more than satisfying. There was an invitation from Plzen, Czech Republic (10<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> of September) for twelve participants. They will send personal invitations; they are interested in having three officers and ten respectable members (it's an important event, Havel himself will take part in it). The topic of the colloquium

is connected with the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall. Yun-Cheol informed us that there was a direct flight between Prague and Yerevan, so it would be possible to go from Plzen directly to an ExCom meeting in Armenia. Kalina told us that we didn't have other propositions for experienced critics meetings in 2010 due to the financial crisis in the world; one option could be some kind of collaboration with the Indian colleagues in the frame of the ExCom meeting in Gujarat. Michel announced there is also an invitation from Tbilisi for six members of the ExCom for October 2009, 4-6 nights, the topic of the conference hasn't been yet defined (if nobody from the ExCom is interested, Irina Gogoberidze would gladly invite other members or even young critics). There is also an invitation from Craiova, with a symposium dedicated to *Hamlet*, 23-26 April 2010; the director, Emil Boroghina, would like to have participants from the ExCom. Don underlined that this was a good festival with great organisation (the programme is already made for next year, Bob Wilson's performance will be shown among others). Akiko introduced the project of the Forum of Asian theatre and announced that in the framework of this project an IATC conference had been planned for November 2010. All members of the ExCom are invited (5 nights, 6 days); the topic concerns the contemporary theatre in Asia and the position of theatre criticism. Michel suggested that, if all members of the ExCom were invited, this gathering could be used for the meeting of the ExCom as well; Akiko confirmed it would be possible.

## **7. Relations with other organizations**

Everything concerning this topic has already been presented in Yun-Cheol's report. Margareta suggested the collaboration with the international PEN center.

## **8. Membership and Recruitment**

We accepted, with great pleasure, the Slovenian national section of the IATC, directed by Alja Predan. We also accepted a new associate member: Lissa Tyler Renaud, from USA. The US section has been advised. Don wondered if an associate member should not rather join his/her national association. Michel answered that some people can't join their association because they are not journalists, but they are members of other theatre organisations. (Read our statutes.) Other persons have announced they would send their dues soon to join as individual members: Temple Hauptfleisch and Gabriël Botma (South Africa), Jorge Prada Prada (Columbia), Tunde Bakare (Nigeria), Richard Chua (Singapore), Robert Jarman (Australia), but none of them have sent their dues to date. Yun-Cheol asked Irene why the Albanians have never been present on our conferences; Irene replied that they were regular in paying fees, so they were members as all others, with their duties and rights. All about "the case of Cuba" is in Irene's report. The Cuban section is not active any more, their president became the Cuban cultural attaché in Mexico and stopped paying the fee; all Cuban colleagues who are interested in our activities are invited to join the regional Caribbean section. Don explained that the colleague from Nigeria who would like to become an individual member is still a student, so he should wait for a while. Ivan informed us that he has been talking with some German colleagues and that finally some interest in the reactivation of the German section has been shown. Michel added that he would be going to Germany this spring and that he could also push the whole thing; Yun-Cheol is also very interested in this story and said he would provide us a list of German critics – possible members of the new or reactivated German section.

## **9. Thalia Prize**

Margareta underlined that the name and the objective of the Prize should be fixed. She had a dilemma with the name Thalia: it refers to the theatre art but this is not an award for artistic work and/or achievement. Randy didn't have any problem with the name – aren't critics theatre people as well? Randy suggested that we could have two names, a longer and a shorter one; big awards usually have a kind of a nick name like Oscar. Margareta insisted on underlining in the propositions that the award doesn't have the financial side – the laureate gets only the insignia. She stressed the importance of the procedure: there is only one candidate per national section, the choice has to be made from the official nominations, if there are none – there is no winner and no award. Paulo came back to the question of the name – he was not very pleased with the actual name, but thought that it should be preserved; this is the "IATC's prize", so it includes both important notions – *international* and *criticism*. He suggested that the announcement of the nominations, with all elements of the procedure, should be sent to all our national sections. Don expressed his gratitude for the work Margareta and Jean-Pierre had done; he insisted on the importance of the procedure, something that was lacking in the previous period. He agreed with Paulo that Thalia was an appropriate name – it includes both international and criticism. Paulo insisted on the justification for the nominations – it's not

enough to send a name, the nomination has to have an explanation (up to 300 words). If the laureate can't come to the awarding ceremony, he/she has to send a speech or a lecture. Kalina came back to the topic of the procedure – considering the fact that a lot of sections are not very active, why are we not allowing ourselves (ExCom members) to add new nominations? Don stressed that the chosen procedure is the best one, because we had the opposite problem in the previous period: the nominations of the national sections were not taken into consideration. He suggested that it should be underlined that national sections are not supposed to nominate only their members. Paulo insisted on getting new nominations each time and that the old nominations (from the previous circle of voting) shouldn't be taken into consideration; Randy had a different opinion on this topic. Katy's remark that we need a time to translate the work of the nominees to foreign languages because, from her point of view, the aim of this Prize is to promote new names on the international level, raised a lot of reactions: Ivan said that if somebody's work hadn't been translated into a single foreign language it couldn't have a global impact (which is the basic concept of the Prize) and Mark explained to Katy that the fact that this Prize is for somebody who had already made an international influence, didn't mean this person would necessarily be from US or Europe (the example of Boal). Yun-Cheol put an end to this discussion – Don was asked to make the editing of the English text, the invitation for the nomination should be on our web site pretty soon, the deadline for sending nominations is the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2009. Ivan's proposition was accepted – instead of only one, there could be two nominations per each national section.

#### **10. Code of ethics**

Don had in mind the negative reaction of the English colleagues to the name *code of ethics* (it sounds as an obligation, command), that's why he suggested another expression – *code of practice* or *code of ethical practice*. The formulation *code of practice* was finally accepted (after a longer discussion); Jean-Pierre suggested that it could be clearly explained why this document is not a “code of ethics”, but a “code of practice”. Ivan stressed that his addition considering the conflict of interest had already been included in Don's last draft and that the two of them had found an appropriate formulation. Margareta commented that there was no line on the relationship between critics and audience, critics and medias: it should be added that critics are a part of the audience. Mark agreed with Margareta: besides the responsibility that critics have toward the artists, there should be some note on the critic's responsibility toward the audience. Don proposed a concrete solution: it could be said in the second sentence “as privileged spectators, working theatre critics share with the audiences and the performers the same time, space and experience”. Yun-Cheol asked Don to make a new draft based on this discussion and to send it to all of us.

#### **11. Critical stages**

Yun-Cheol told us that the editorial board of *Critical stages* would have a meeting in Wroclaw and that he would inform us of any further development of this project on our next ExCom meeting.

#### **12. Books**

Don informed us of a further development of the book project: the book dedicated to the pedagogy of theatre criticism.

#### **13. Guidelines of travel sponsorship**

Margareta repeated the main points from her written proposition: it's not something to be included in our Statutes, but more like an internal rule of our practice. Yun-Cheol checked these questions with Ian Herbert and got the information that, in general, around 2000 euros per year had been spent for travel costs (it's approximately a quarter of our budget). He suggests that it would be acceptable for us to spend around 2000 euros for travel expenses, but asked what would happen if we enlarge our activities and need more money. What would happen, for example, if we stay without extra money for *Critical stages* and need to take money from the budget? He stressed that we should increase our income. Randy asked what were our other sources of income besides the fees of the individual members and national sections. Yun-Cheol answer was short and concrete – none. Mark agreed with Yun-Cheol that the money should be used in a more “creative” way – not only for travel expenses. He suggested that if the whole amount of 2000 euros was not spent during a year, it should be transferred for the next one and for the same purpose: to have a kind of special budget of 2000 euros per year just for travel costs. This suggestion was accepted.

#### **14. Date and place of next meeting**

There is a problem with the invitation from Yerevan: the director of the festival who invited us to have the ExCom meeting asks for a kind of recognition for his work on an international level. Yun-Cheol checked his CV and realised that he had an international relevance: Yun-Cheol added that we could use this occasion to inaugurate an Armenian national section of IATC. Don asked what we were supposed to award – his festival or himself. Ivan said that, from his point of view, this was a kind of blackmail. Mark supported Ivan. Jean-Pierre stressed that this was a very delicate situation that could open the door for similar “precedents”. Randy argued that we were too emotional: it might be better to refuse this particular invitation considering the whole context, but in the future we should think of being more pragmatic. Paulo stressed that the presence in Yerevan of the whole ExCom of the IATC would be a kind of recognition for the festival and its director. A solution has been found, suggested by Michel: the festival could use the fact that it would host the first meeting of ExCom in Central Asia for making its own publicity, but without any official recognition from our side. It was decided to try again to have the ExCom in Plzen and to deliver our decision in a diplomatic way to Yerevan.

Not decided. \*

\* At the end of Premio Europa, Yun-Cheol succeeded to have a positive answer from Plzen for the next ExCom meeting in September (10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>).

**Michel Vaïs**, General Secretary

**Ivan Medenica**, Adjunct General Secretary