

**Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the
International Association of Theatre Critics,
held in St Petersburg, Russia, 27 and 28th October 2007.**

Saturday, 27th October

1. Attendance

Those present : Ian Herbert (President), Michel Vaïs (Secretary General), Yun-Cheol Kim (Vice-President – South Korea), Margareta Sörenson (Vice-President, Director of seminars – Sweden), Kalina Stefanova (Director of colloquia) Don Rubin (Canada), Juan-Antonio Hormigón (Spain), Larry DeVine (USA), Jean-Pierre Han (France), Tomasz Milkowski (Poland), Maria Helena Serôdio (Portugal), Nikolai Pesochinsky (Russia), Ivan Medenica (Adjunct Secretary General).

Apologies for absence: Irène Sadowska-Guillon (Treasurer). Ludmila Patlanjoglu (Romania) was also unable to attend.

One **observer** was also present: Krasimira Filipova, Department for theatre, variety and circus, Ministry of Culture, Bulgaria.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda (with one change – Ms Filipova was invited to give her speech at the beginning of the meeting) was adopted unanimously.

3. Minutes of the meeting in Thessaloniki on 26th April 2007

They were adopted unanimously, with no corrections.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

None.

5. Report of Krasimira Filipova

Ian expressed gratitude to Bulgarian Minister of Culture and to Ms Filipova for the great collaboration IATC had with them during the preparation of our next Congress (Sofia, April 2008). The proposed timetable for the Congress was distributed to all members of ExCom (it was modified in St. Petersburg, during the meeting Ian, Kalina, Michel and Yun-Cheol had with Ms Filipova). Kalina gave some additional information on our guest: she is our colleague, dramaturg, theatre expert and critic.

Ms Filipova transmitted best regards from Bulgarian Minister of Culture, underlining that all credit for the organisation of IATC's Congress in Sofia belongs to him. The biggest part of the logistic for the Congress is already prepared (the Grand Hotel with 5 stars – all rooms are single – transport from Thessaloniki to Sofia for 50 participants and all information and technical help for those who will have to go back to Thessaloniki after the Congress). The programme of the Congress is still preliminary, the showcase of Bulgarian theatre will be organized, and some distinguished key speakers who are not critics, but artists will be invited. One day will be dedicated to Bulgarian theatre. Both

Bulgarian associations of theatre critics are invited to take part in the Congress. We were asked to send application forms and abstracts as soon as possible.

Ian informed us that Alessandro Martinez will invite all our members to come to Premio Europa in Thessaloniki just before Sofia.

6. Reports:

6.1. President

Ian has been working on the preparation of the Congress in Sofia. He has been also working with Premio Europa on the presence of IATC on the next edition of this manifestation. On the inauguration of the Chinese national section in Beijing (many thanks to Yun-Cheol for this initiative), he represented IATC. He also stressed some important activities of IATC in which he took part: first IATC's symposium in Latin America (Chile, organized by our individual member Carola Oyarzún); edited proceedings of the Symposium in Novi Sad, Serbia, 2006 (Ian was the co-chairman). He attended, as a president of IATC, Prague Quadrennial, theatre festivals in Wroclaw, Pilsen, etc.

6.2. Secretary General

Michel stressed new improvements of IATC website: now the presence of photos is possible in the News section. He attended the Congress of IETM in Montreal, where he represented our association and expressed our willingness to collaborate with this international theatre network. He was also in Chile and now he is working on a book on Robert Lepage, who got the Premio Europa for the year 2007. Michel is also working on a book on the theatre in Quebec.

6.3. Treasurer

In the name of Irene, Jean-Pierre presented the financial situation: it is stable, we have €15.000 on the account (see Annex 1) Just after we declared in Thessaloniki that some national sections would no longer be members of IATC because they didn't pay subscription, Estonia and Ireland regulated this problem: they are automatically reaccepted. After a longer discussion, Irene's proposition to exclude Lithuania for the same reason (the subscription wasn't paid) was accepted (proposed officially by Larry, seconded by Juan-Antonio and accepted unanimously).

The organizers of the Young Critics' Seminar in Argentina were not able to pay Margareta's journey. She got 2/3 for her plane ticket from some foundations in Sweden and she asked IATC to cover the rest. It was accepted unanimously.

It was stressed that our financial reserves were not supposed to support, except in some special cases, the travel expenses of ExCom members. Ian reminded ExCom members that in agreeing to election they undertook to attend ExCom meetings at their own or their organisation's expense. Financial support for working officers (eg Secretary, Treasurer) had been given occasionally, and would no doubt be necessary in future, but too much use of the Association's funds for such expenses would drain them very quickly.

Among other individual members who didn't pay their subscription are Halima Tahan (Argentina) and Carola Oyarzún (Chile). Considering the fact that they both organized important events for IACT, Ian suggested that they should be excused their subscription for 2007-2008 (proposed officially by Maria-Helena, seconded by Tomasz and accepted unanimously). The Russian national section was also excused their subscription for the

next period (2008-2009) in view of their successful organization of the ExCom meeting in St. Petersburg.

6.4. Other Committee members

Maria-Helena read the report on a colloquium for senior critics in Almada, Portugal (See Annex 2).

Yun-Cheol reminded us that, as a result of the Congress in Seoul, an Asian regional association of IATC was established and that they agreed to have biennial conferences. The first one is planned for December 2007 (from 13th to 17th) in Beijing with the topic: "Stage productions of western classics in Asia". Beside 20 invited critics from Asia, they invited ExCom members to participate at the conference, because they would like to have "western approach" to this topic. The organizers have accepted Yun-Cheol suggestion to help with covering the travel expenses for the critics who are coming out of Asia.

Sunday, 28th October

7. Sofia Congress

7.1 Proposal for a change in the Articles of Association and Special General Assembly

The Chinese national section, recently founded, has applied for a membership in IATC. Since Hong Kong and Taiwan sections already exist, all three should share only one vote at IATC General Assembly. In order to avoid such a situation, Michel suggested the Statutes to be changed in the way that *regional cultural specificities* are recognized (for example: Canada and Quebec, or England, Scotland and Wales). Michel also gave examples of similar problems that were resolved in the past and made a remark that a Special General Assembly needs to be organized in order to make changes in the Statutes. A long discussion followed, where, among other, some participants pointed out that the policy of China is not to take part in international associations or manifestations where Taiwan is present (Prague quadrennial 2007, Olympic Committee...). Yun-Cheol explained the objection that China invited the delegates from Taiwan to the Conference in Beijing in December by the fact that there they will be referred to as "section of the Chinese province of Taiwan".

At the end, Ian opposed the idea of making changes in the Statutes – the opinion was that this kind of exception later on could turn against the interests of IATC – and preferred a "gentlemen's agreement" to be made: In Beijing there should be a dialogue with the representatives of all three Chinese sections, to try to find a solution suitable for our profession, and not to enter the political arena. This attitude was accepted unanimously. Ian suggested some changes of the Agenda to be made and to pass immediately to two points that require discussions: Thalia prize and questions of future President, Secretary General, Treasurer and ExCom members.

8. Thalia Prize

Ian reminded us of the existing criteria for the Thalia prize: 1) laureate is a person who has by his work (written preferably) made a major contribution to theatre criticism; 2) it is not a lifetime award; 3) it is voted on by the elected members of ExCom only (not the

officers) who have the right to add to existing nominations. Having in view that the last Thalia prize was given to Mr Eric Bentley, an Englishman from the United States, he suggested the candidates from the United States and generally, English spoken candidates not to be taken into consideration. A long discussion followed and the candidates' list previously formed by the written suggestions was extended. Significant cultural differences arose. The following candidates singled out at the end: Georges Banu, Eugenio Barba, Augusto Boal, Hans-Thies Lehmann, Patrice Pavis, Jean-Pierre Sarrazac, Richard Schechner and Anatoli Smelianski. The winner, after a series of secret votes, was Jean-Pierre Sarrazac. (A short biography is annexed to these minutes). Don suggested that if M Sarrazac is not able to come to Sofia (according to the rules, laureate is supposed to be given a prize personally), ExCom will choose a new winner by voting via e-mail. The suggestion was accepted unanimously. It was agreed that the new ExCom would examine the present Thalia rules at their first meeting and recommend any changes they thought fit.

9. Perspectives for the positions of Officers and the Executive Committee after 2007

Ian reminded that the General Assembly elects the President and Secretary General and also ten Members to the Executive Committee. Since Congress preparations have started, as well as preparation for the election of a new President, Ian wanted to have some idea of the potential candidates and their plans – bearing in mind that anyone could be nominated at the General Assembly and not only those present at this meeting.

Michel reported that he decided that he would not be candidate for the function of Secretary General in Sofia, after 14 years he has spent at this position, as well as position of Treasurer and Vice-President. He intended to stand for the presidency, and hoped that Ivan, who was doing a good job as his assistant, would stand for the secretaryship. Ivan said that he would be willing to stand.

Yun-Cheol also put forward his candidature for the Presidency. He thought he would be supported by some ExCom members, and the national section of South Korea, as well his University. He also pointed out that he has been a Vice-president for nine years, that he has considerable experience in organizing events such as the Seoul Congress and is passionate about the Association.

Margareta may have to leave her place in ExCom to someone else coming from Scandinavia but would be willing to continue in a position of director of the Young Critics' Seminars (putting a stress that at present she also has an excellent assistant, Paulo-Eduardo). Her aim is to make a stronger position of women and the young in IATC.

All national sections belonging to ExCom intend to be candidates for a new term (in most cases the same persons will be the representative of the national section). It has been reported that Irene would like to keep her position of Treasurer.

10. Programme (including reports where needed)

10.1 Congress 2010

There is no concrete information concerning the suggestion the Congress 2010 be held in Chicago. The financial resources are yet to be found. Larry said that the complete information would be known in Sofia.

Juan-Antonio informed that there is an offer from the region of Galicia for a meeting to be organized in Santiago de Compostela in 2009 (which would especially concentrate on Latin American theatre). Since the next Congress is planned to be held in 2010, he could try to postpone the offer for the following year. Juan-Antonio suggested, supported by Ian, that the offer for 2009 should be accepted and there should be organized in Galicia the Symposium having the defined topic (the same way as the Symposiums organized by Don in Toronto and Ivan in Novi Sad are functioning) with a lot of participants, among which members of IATC. Deadline for making a decision is March 2008.

Tomasz suggested the Congress 2012 might be held in Warsaw (there will be a football competition the same year, therefore money should not be a problem; as with the Congress in Torino after the Winter Olympic games).

10.2 Executive Committee Meetings

Ian reminded that the dates for the following two have been already settled: 12th April 2008 in Thessaloniki and few days later in Sofia (the first Meeting of the new ExCom).

Don suggested Toronto from 6th to 13th October, which is 6 months later; besides he Excom, they are planning to invite some 20 more members of IATC.

Tomasz suggested Warshaw in 2009, the year when the old theatre festival will be renewed. Ian underlined that those are only suggestions and that new ExCom will discuss them.

10.3 New Critics' Seminars

Margareta underlined that the Young Critics' Seminars are always organized at the personal demand and she thanked Halima, Manuel and Ivan for organizing the Seminars in the year 2007. Usually the same countries are present. For the first time there was a Seminar in Spanish. Each Seminar makes its own blog and that is a good initiative (see Annex 3). The improvement of the website should be kept on and she would like one "corner" for the young critics. The suggestions for the next year: Jonquière (Quebec)-September, Wiesbaden-June, Krajova-May (confirmed). She would like always to have two moderators, one experienced and one young.

10.4 Cultural Bridges/Established Critics' Meetings

Kalina informed that Sibiu is not actual any more, but she thanked Ludmila for the initiative. She thanked also Paulo-Eduardo and Maria-Helena for the project in Almada. She reminded also of the above mentioned colloquium in Santiago in Chile that was partly organized in cooperation with IACT. Projects are the following ones: Krajova, May 2008; Toronto, October 2008 (Festival Stratford), South Africa would like also to organize a Conference, there are two options. The most important item for her is the work on a Symposium in Sofia (deadline 15th November).

Ian mentioned the initiative of Czech national section to organize a conference for established critics in Pilsen, September 2008.

10.5 Other proposals

None.

11. Projects

11.1 Journals Exchange

Yun-Cheol remarked that there are only 6-7 journals presented on the website and that a solution should be found to motivate more journals to cooperate with IATC. There are some remarks coming from some journals that they already have links in English.

Nikolai is of the opinion that the item in question should be a subject of the Congress, since more participants will be present.

11.2 Code of Ethics

Ivan informed that the existing Codes of ethics of the national sections had been already collected and forwarded to Matti Linnavuori from the working group, but no reply has been received. Ian suggested to Ivan to make a compilation of the existing codes, to be distributed at the Congress, and that the Assembly should discuss them, if there is no concrete suggestion coming from the working group. The suggestion was accepted unanimously.

11.3 Book Project

Maria-Helena gave the report (See Annex 4).

Don hopes that Sanja and he could present their mutual project in Sofia and that he will be able to animate some important publishers in Canada and England.

12. Relations with other organizations

Ian reported being in contact with ITI and that their next Congress will be organized in Spain, Zaragoza; and that the Ruler of Sharjah gave them a million euros. He has been also in contact with other organizations, but there is nothing special to report about it.

Kalina informed that the network of the European festival (Wroclaw, Nitra...) starts seminars for training the critics of a new theatre. The project begins in Munich in November, she will be present and suggests IATC to be included.

13. Communications: Website

Ivan reported that, according to the proposals from the last ExCom, he asked web designer of Sterijino pozorje from Novi Sad, Mr Rasa Doderovic to make his offer of the new technical concept of the IATC website. The main characteristics of his offer have been already made: the most important item of the new concept is removed 'flash' system that made functioning of the website quite slow, and on the other hand the new one still keeps possibility several people to update the website. It was decided unanimously Mr Rasa Doderovic to make by the end of the year a more elaborated technical and visual concept of the site that could be checked by the members of ExCom. The old version of the website will be active until the installation of the new one. Mr Doderovic asked a fee in the amount of € 1000. The suggestion was accepted unanimously.

Maria-Helena made a remark that his offer is a good one, since in Portugal they have been asked for a similar project an amount of €3000. She also thanked to Michel for his successful work on a website of IATC.

14. Membership and Recruitment

Ireland was excluded from ExCom in Thessaloniki for not paying a subscription. They paid it immediately after and were automatically put back into. Chinese national section has 21 members: its membership was unanimously accepted. National section of India has 12 members: unanimously accepted. National Albanian section sent a list of its 10 members: unanimously accepted. Irene has been asked to resolve misunderstandings with

dues of Holland. Individual member: Brent Meersman from South Africa, unanimously accepted.

15. Any other business

Maria-Helena was interested if national sections propose speakers for the Symposium in Sofia and if they are obliged to be delegates. Kalina replied that the speakers' choice depends on their proposed abstracts. Larry had an objection concerning the election for the Thalia prize, underlining that the American section submitted written proposals 6 months ago, and that none of them figures on the list. Ian excused himself for "cutting" Americans and reminded that beside the official nomination, the suggestions of the ExCom members are taken into consideration and repeated that the new ExCom should reconsider the proposition of the prize.

Jean-Pierre proposed to send Sarrazac's biography.

16. Date and place of next meeting

Thessaloniki, 12th April 2008.

St Petersburg, Russia, 27th and 28th October 2007.

Michel Vaïs, Secretary General
Ivan Medenica, Adjunct Secretary General