

**Report of the Secretary General, Michel Vaïs
IACT General Assembly, Online - 15 May 2021**

It has been two and a half years since our last General Assembly (GA) on November 15 2018 in St. Petersburg. Normally, our GAs are held every two years. If we could have invited you all to Bratislava in May 2020, as planned, the interval would have been only one and a half years. So we find ourselves within a reasonable timeframe, despite the pandemic that has hit us all since the beginning of 2020, forcing us to invite you all to this online event in 2021. I must say, however, that this is not the first time that such a delay has occurred between a General Assembly and the next. The 2001 Congress in Montreal took place three years after the one in Gdansk, and the one in Turin in 2006 was held three years after the one in Bucharest. In short, the Executive Committee normally depends on invitations from festivals in order to be able to organise our congresses.

This time, however, our congress is limited to the General Assembly, for practical reasons. It is necessary to renew the management positions and the ExCom, which had to work very hard to overcome the challenges of the pandemic. For the IACT has not been idle for the past year, organising conferences, workshops, a Thalia Award ceremony and publishing our web magazine as usual, in addition to meeting eight times since St. Petersburg : twice physically (in Montpellier and in Chicago) and six times online, which is the double number of our usual reunions. In addition, the IACT Cabinet (which includes the President, the Secretary General, the Treasurer and their respective Adjuncts) has had to meet multiple times between ExCom meetings. Our website, managed by Octavian Saiu (Adjunct Secretary General), whom I would like to thank, is constantly adapting to reflect all these activities.

In terms of membership, the number of national and regional sections has increased slightly since our last General Assembly: in addition to individual and associate members, we have gone from 37 sections in good standing in 2018 to around 40 at the time of writing in mid-April 2021. That said, including our regional sections, we are present in one way or another in more than 80 countries. There is still interest in the IACT around the world, and I regularly receive requests for information and membership. In several countries there have also been changes in the leadership of the respective sections, which are always promptly reflected by the membership list on our website.

If you are curious to read the minutes of our ExCom meetings on our website, you will find all our reports on workshops, conferences, finances, and my reports on the general functioning of the Association. So I will just summarise here what has happened in the last two and a half years. As you can imagine, theatre critics do not always agree with each other. For example, I have received messages from people who want to become individual members of the IACT, but who live in a country where there is already a national section, such as in Hungary or Northern Macedonia. Of course, this is impossible.

As for my own international activities, in addition to our meetings in Montpellier and Chicago, I went to Beijing in September 2019 at the invitation of our Chinese section for a very informative conference on criticism, coupled with a competition that attracted several participants from China and abroad. It was there that I saw an oval adaptation of the round IACT logo, and I proposed to the ExCom that we modernise our image in this way, to rejuvenate it a bit... but this suggestion was not taken up by my colleagues.

We have appointed an adjunct to our Turkish delegate, Ragip Ertugrul, who deals with social networks. Natalia Tvalchrelidze, who is bilingual (English/French), carries out this task with great efficiency.

At the end of September 2020, I received a complaint from a copyright management company about our unauthorised web use of a photo depicting the director Kirill Serebrennikov behind bars. After negotiations, we had to pay a penalty of about 175 euros.

On a more personal note, while I have slowed down as a theatre-goer, I have continued to write, translate and edit many texts, especially for *Critical Stages/Scènes critiques* and for my colleagues, so that the IACT continues to function in its two official languages, as it has since the beginning.

If you have any comments or questions, I would be happy to hear from you during our online meeting on May 15.