



*Consultative status with
UN Economic and Social
Council*

International Union of Tenants

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Minutes IUT Board Meeting, Prague April 26-27, 2002

1. Role call

Present:

Austria:	Mr Heinz Barta, Mietervereinigung Österreichs
Czech Republic:	Mr Milan Taraba, SON Ms Anna Pachtová, International Affairs, SON
Denmark:	Mr Niels Busk, Lejernes Landsorganisation
England:	Ms Lisa Foulkes, TPAS Mr Richard Hewgill, TPAS
Finland:	Ms Anne Viita, Vuokralaisten Keskusliito
France:	Ms Evelyne Brun, CNL Mr Jacquy Tiset, CNL
Germany:	Ms Barbara Litke, Deutscher Mieterbund eV
The Netherlands:	Ms Mária van Veen, Nederlandse Woonbond
Norway:	Mr Christian Hellevang, Norges Leieboerforbund Mr Lars Aasen, Leieboerforeningen Oslo
Sweden:	Ms Torborg Wärn, Director Swedish Union of Tenants
Switzerland:	Mr Jakob Trümpy, Schweizerischer Mieterinnen und Mieterverband
USA:	Mr Michael Kane, NAHT
IUT Secretariat:	Ms Elisabet Lönngren, IUT President Mr Magnus Hammar, IUT Secretary General Ms Annika Ekström, IUT Assistant Secretary

2. Welcome opening of the meeting

Ms Elisabet Lönngren, President of IUT welcomed the delegates and thanked SON for hosting this board meeting which in fact was a historical meeting as all board members were assembled for the first time.

3. Practical issues regarding stay in Prague

Milan went through the programme. SON had planned for call at the Senate of the Czech Republic on April 26 and study visit to the locality of Barrandov on April 27.

4. Adoption of the Agenda – other businesses

No other businesses were announced.

The Board adopted the proposed agenda.

5 a. Welcome to the new IUT Board member, TPAS England

Elisabet welcomed the new board members from TPAS, England; Mr Richard Hewgill and Ms Lisa Foulkes.

b. Short presentation of TPAS by TPAS representative (Richard and Lisa)

TPAS, the Tenant Participation Advisory Service - is a membership organisation for both landlords and tenants. The organisation was founded in 1988 and has 800 tenants groups and 300 landlords groups. TPAS is a non-profit organisation with 20 full time staff, a national committee of 10 and 5 regional committees. TPAS work with TAROE - Tenants and Residents Organisation of England - an association just for tenants. TPAS has a major information service for tenants whether members or not. They also have a library service, free to any tenants group. The information service is subsidised by the government. TPAS also organises conferences to earn money. A lot of money comes from the landlord's members.

TPAS focuses at the moment on two major issues:

1. Anti social behaviour.
2. Political; the government wishes to raise the level of rents and to transfer local authority social housing to housing associations for what the government call registered social landlords. Part of that agenda is to make the rents equal because today rents with the local authorities are lower than those in housing associations. [In the housing associations and local authorities the government guideline rents are to push the rents to more than twice the level from 85 pounds 180 pounds a week.](#)

TPAS view on transferring municipal stock to housing associations is that this should be a choice of the tenants. Sometimes it may be best for the tenants but it should never be forced upon them. TPAS agrees that tenants should have the right to vote about the transfers.

Presentation of the Schweizerischer Mieterinnen und Mieterverband

Jakob Trümpy, Switzerland attended the IUT board meeting for the first time and gave a presentation about the Schweizerischer Mieterinnen und Mieterverband. The Swiss organisation was founded in the end of the 19th century. Consists of three different federations as they have three different languages in Switzerland. All together the organisation has [150,000 ??? members Annika - Kolla med Jakob...](#) members. The legal system in Switzerland is very liberal and the market is very important. The rent control in Switzerland is weak. The legal system has not changed since 1990. The member fee for an individual is 60 Euro/year which includes free legal advice. The work is emphasised on making a better position for the tenants and to work against rents increases. Today the rent is 26% of the total housing income; this figure is too high.

6. Minutes from the Board meeting in Berlin, Nov 30 – Dec 1, 2002

The Board adopted the minutes.

7. Annual report from 2001

The Annual Report had been distributed in advance. Magnus went through the report.

Development of organisation

The IUT received five new members during the year. At the Board Meeting in Berlin, December 1, the board decided to suspend the Kenyan organisation due to a debt.

IUT Congress Amsterdam

Mária remarked that the congress took place in the beginning of January not February as it says in the Annual Report. **Magnus was asked to send out papers from the congress to Maria.**

IUT and the UN

Magnus recommended the members to attend [the annual meetings with the UN ECE in Geneva in September](#) as it gives good opportunity to speak informally with [governmental](#) delegates.

IUT and the EU

The Housing Ministers meet once a year. In 2001 they met in Liège, Belgium. IUT was represented by Phil Morgan and Parmjit Uppal from TPAS, André Thomsen from the Nederlandse Woonbond, Jose Garcia from the Belgian Tenants Union and by Magnus Hammar from the Secretariat.

IUT and Eastern Europe

Milan informed that the Czech Union of Tenants arranged a regional meeting in October 2001 with the members from Eastern Europe. SON paid all travel costs for the participants from Eastern Europe. During these days a lot of experiences were exchanged between the countries in economic transitions. The next meeting will be held in October 2002 in Croatia.

Global Tenant

Global Tenant is issued 3-4 times a year, but is starting to get too expensive. Especially the postage costs have risen and the Secretariat must find ways to cut down on these costs. Mr Tiset proposed that it should be examined how much postage costs could be cut down if the Global Tenant only was published on line. Magnus explained that the secretariat already has found a way to cut down postage with 1/3. Magnus will also look into how much it would cost to print the magazine in Prague. The magazine today reaches a lot of policy makers when it comes to housing in Europe, lots of subscribers in the Ministries, in the housing agencies. Magnus does not think that they will be reached if the magazine only is published on-line.

IUT Web site

Anna informed that SON has a banner on their website to iut.nu.

Proposal from Norway: When new articles are published on the website the secretariat could send newsletter by e-mail to the board. Magnus promised to do this in the future.

IUT and the Board

Mária pointed out that the Board meeting in Amsterdam was held in January 31 and not 13 as written in the Annual Report.

Christian Hellevang pointed out that Norway has been members for several years, they did not become members in 2001. They have paid the member fee for several year but have not attended board meetings until the one in Berlin 2001.

The board was proposed to adopt following amendments: The Congress was held in February 2001 and not in January. The board meeting in Amsterdam took place on January 31 and not 13. Norway became board member before 2001. After the above amendments the Board adopted the Annual Report.

8 a. Financial report from 2001

Magnus explained that the income 2001 was larger because of it included the contribution from the Dutch organisation for organising the congress in Amsterdam. 15 088 Euro was provided by the municipality in Amsterdam. Total incomes budgeted for 2001 was 59 130 and the result 82 044 is because of included means for making the congress.

Expenditures: Item 13 OPIC-project: Exceeding about 6000 Euro was part of money received from the Olof Palme International Centre that was sent to Prague for young council work.

Milan informed that the Czech Union of Tenants last year paid 10 000 Euro for the Eastern European members. This was just for information and is not a part of the IUT budget.

The Board adopted the Financial Report from 2001.

b. Proposed budget for 2002

The budget will be 64 899 Euro when received all member fees. The IUT Secretariat has

applied for money from OPIC to sponsor the East European meeting in October in Zagreb, and this amount will be shown as an income this year. The same for East Africa regarding the survey trip.

Mária said that the figure from Amsterdam will be 1518 Euro and not 3106 as proposed in the budget for 2002.

Magnus will adjust the budget to 1.518 instead of 3.106.

Other remarks;

Item 15: The web site cost has increased because of updating the website.

Item 10: Mária thought that the European Housing Forum was expensive. Magnus explained that is because IUT hosts the meetings during [October 2001 to October 2002](#). Next year the cost will decrease.

Item 25: Other office costs. This figure is made up and it has been the same sum for 4-5 years. The figure is in reality higher as the Swedish organisation pays for fax, telephone etc.

Item 01, In Common: The question was raised about what was included in this figure. The answer is for example: books for the secretariat and for board members, envelopes, folders, membership fees, part of accommodation costs for Magnus in New York in June (Habitat II+5), giro costs, bank costs, subscriptions and some extra costs in connection with the congress.

Proposal: To reduce item 01. "In common" by 1.518 Euro.

After this correction the Board adopted proposed budget for 2002.

9. Report from IUT East Europe Regional Office

Milan informed the members that a report about the regional office would be published on their website within one week. The corporation between Czech Union of Tenants, [SON](#), and the Slovak Union of Tenants is growing. Also good corporation with Germany (Dresden) as they [frequently](#) visit. Milan is working half time at the regional office. He also informed that the Minister for [Social Affairs](#) and the [President](#) of the social democratic party adopted the final Ronja project. In the budget of [SON](#) there is a budget post for [assisting tenant organisations in eastern Europe](#).

The collective members of SON are also the trade unions. SON deals with all [legal assistance](#) when it comes to [rental](#) housing.

Magnus explained that the reason for establishing the IUT office in Prague was that the situation was similar to the other Eastern European countries; problems with privatisation and restitution.

Milan said that there have been improvements during the last 1 ½ years, but there are many differences between the countries in Eastern- and Central Europe. [The situation in the Czech Republic is more similar to the situation](#) in western Europe, like in Dresden. After the election in June in Czech Republic, SON will prepare a report about the situation in Eastern Europe.

[Appendix: \(Det som jag skickat över till dig.\)](#)

10. About the future of IUT

For more details about the discussions see Appendix XX.

Torborg informed the Board about the current situation in the Swedish Union of [Tenants](#). There has been a considerable reorganisation of the association. [The national office in Stockholm which hosts the IUT](#), is also reorganising.

Torborg went [through](#) Appendix III. Because of the decrease in the number of members and increased costs, the National office must reduce its costs with 2 million Euro. The [Swedish organisation considers the IUT still](#) as important and international work is one of the focal [points of the Swedish organisation](#).

The board members discussed the future of IUT in smaller groups. Questions raised:

-How important is the IUT?

-What would the consequences be if the Secretariat, as we see it today, would not be able to retain its present work force?

Many good suggestions came out of these discussions. The board agreed that this was a good start of the process.

The Board decided to adjourn this item until the next board meeting in November.

11. IUT membership fees

Magnus presented two proposals; to [continue as](#) before or to set up a working group and develop methods for calculating future member ships.

Michael suggested that a small fee should be charged even for category B members.

There was a proposal to send out survey to the non-board members and give few proposals about the fee. IUT might loose members who cannot afford to pay the member fee.

The Board discussed this [proposal](#) and agreed to start the preparation of a proposal from the Board to be presented at the next congress.

About fee for category A members. The Board thought it was difficult to discuss this matter before [there was](#) more information [available](#) about the Swedish contribution.

Torborg clarified that the Swedish organisation in [addition to paying the regular](#) membership fee, also pays the salaries for Magnus and Annika plus costs for the office. Sweden wants to [continue](#) supporting the IUT. The Swedish Board has not [yet](#) taken any [formal](#) decision regarding how much support. However, the Swedish Board is of the opinion that [Magnus, who is in reality employed as the International Ombudsman, should in the future focus more of his resources for the benefit of the Swedish organisation.](#)

The board discussed how much financing it would take to keep the same level of the Secretariat. How to cut the budget? [Can other board members do more than they do today?](#)

If Sweden can not contribute as much as today [the](#) IUT must reduce expenditures. IUT must generate 40-60.000 Euro to maintain the [present](#) level of the Secretariat. The Board agreed that it is essential to keep an effective secretariat.

The question is how money can be raised without substitute from Sweden?

New item – Will 2003 or 2004 be congress year?

According to statutes [the next Congress should take place](#) is 2003. The last congress should have been in 2000 but took place 2001. It is the congress that must take the decision about category B membership fee. Some of the board members were of the opinion to have a congress in 2003. Suggestion: Prepare transformation of IUT. Do we need a congress, or annual meetings. This should be up on the next congress.

The Secretariat prefers to have congress in 2004 because of all the work that it takes to organise this kind of event.

The board decided to continue discussions in Berlin. Magnus will send out proposals before the board meeting in Berlin in November regarding:

- 1. IUT fees**
- 2. Finances of the Swedish Union of Tenants. How much can Sweden contribute?**
- 3. Congress in 2003 or 2004? Should it be an extra ordinary congress in Berlin with the board meeting?**
- 4. IUT targets- priority issues**

The proposals will be sent out to the Board in May and replies must be sent in to the secretariat on August 31.

The secretariat will then send out all answers to the Board.

12. Tenants' Charter, development and expectations

Tenants Charter has been translated into seven languages. The Japanese member has printed a brochure including the Tenants Charter. The complete Tenants Charter has been published in a Polish daily newspaper.

The board members were asked to spread Tenants' Charter in their own organisation, on websites, in magazines etc.

13. IUT marketing in members' countries

Magnus asked the board members to send copies to the Secretariat of articles published in their national newspapers and magazines.

[This is of importance to the funding members of IUT to show that the organisation plays an important role in housing policies and politics in many countries.](#)

If any board member would need illustrations, contact the Secretariat.

Magnus also asked the board members to add the IUT Secretariat on the members' mailing lists for magazines.

It was proposed that a press network should be established. News could be sent to the press network. A list of all press people must be compiled.

Magnus will send articles in English to press officers. When Magnus writes articles for the Swedish website he will translate and send out to the press officers.

14. IUT targets- priority issues

Proposal: Appendix VI should be included in the paper that Magnus is going to send out to the Board in May (see item 11). The effects of selling out rental housing and rental housing in the future were discussed in Amsterdam. These comments/conclusions will also be included in the paper.

Proposal: To adjourn the discussion about IUT targets - priority issues to the Board meeting in Berlin.

The Board adopted this proposal.

15. International Tenants' Day, October 7, 2002

Michael Kane suggested co-ordinated press conferences in targeted cities to advance tenant right and preservation of affordable housing within each country and the world. Requires co-ordination, but each country has contact with local press. A common platform should raise the profile and help at national levels. A press kit should be organised with supplements from all countries, co-ordinated by the Secretariat.

Proposal from Magnus: Magnus has the overall information about housing in Europe like statistics. Journalists find this kind of information interesting. Magnus will prepare this information and send out to the Board; but each organisation must have the local prospective and it is up to every member to create this.

Mária suggested that everyone should send in updated figures for the statistics, rental housing in percentage. Should be sent in even if the figures are informal, just set out the source.

Each board member should think about what they can do to make this day more of an action day. All countries must try to get in something about this day in the press.

[The message should have a both national, regional, and most important local contents.](#)

As soon as Magnus has received information ([Annika - vilken information?](#)) from the board members he will inform the board about what each country are planning to do on the 7/10.

The board agreed on calling this day the Tenants' Day.

The board also agreed to use this day to promote Tenants' Charter

16. Report from Kampala, Uganda

Magnus gave a short presentation from the IUT-Uganda OPIC Project.

Unfortunately the project will not be set up, because of difficulties [in](#) culture and not speaking the "same language".

[Expenditures](#) for the study visit will be paid 80% by OPIC and 20% from IUT.

17. Possible study visit/participation by board members to TPAS Annual Meeting, Birmingham, England August 2-5

Elisabet will go to Birmingham together with persons from the Swedish Union of Tenants.

Magnus encouraged the other board members to join the meeting if possible.

Lisa informed that the meeting would open on August 2 by Mr Faulkner. There will be 64

different workshops, debates, visits to local estates. Key themes: Anti social behaviour, role individual ombudsmen, group structures, rent restructuring. The meeting will be at the Hilton Metropol Hotel. Last year 700 delegates participated. Lisa promised to send out more information.

18. Invitation to NAHT's Annual Conference, Washington DM June 21-24

This is a tenant conference including tenants from 30 different states, probably 450 people will participate this year. Michael will work out presentation of IUT. There are two days of workshops and a three hours session with officials from federal governments. On Monday there will be a rally with about 400 people and in the afternoon lobbying in the senate. Information about the Conference was handed out to the Board.

The Board appointed Lars Aasen to represent the IUT at NAHT's Annual Conference. Costs for travel and hotel will be covered by IUT.

19. Information on a book about Housing in European cities

Torborg informed about the book about Housing in European cities. [General](#) elections will take place in Sweden in September and the Swedish housing policy is now on the agenda, [especially in Stockholm](#).

[In connection with the elections](#) The Swedish Union of Tenants is publishing an anthology about housing policy in Europe. The anthology will cover housing politics in four European capitals; Copenhagen, London, Brussels and Madrid.

20. IUT Vice President – any candidates?

Heinz Barta was proposed as candidate for the IUT Vice President post. Heinz accepted to work as Vice President until the next congress.

The board appointed Mr Heinz Barta to become IUT Vice President.

21. Regarding suspension of membership - reply from UNTOK, Kenya

Norway suggested taking UNTOK back as members in IUT.

The Board adopted the proposal to take UNTOK, Kenya back as members of the IUT.

22. Announcements

a. Regarding the Slovak Tenant Association

The Secretariat had received letter from the Slovak tenants' Association. They are preparing to become member in Berlin. They will apply for [category](#) B membership. SON will assist the Slovak association.

Provided that the documents are in order the application is adopted by the board.

b. Regarding the Association of Sitting Tenants in Restituted Dwellings of Slovenia

Magnus received letter from this association. They want to become [category](#) A member.

Magnus do not know if they are aware of the fee.

Provided that the application is in order the board agreed on the Slovenian association to become member.

c. Regarding the Latvian Tenants' Organisation

Magnus has lost contact with the [present](#) Latvian organisation. [He](#) has sent several letters but has not received any replies. Magnus is now [found](#) another organisation in Latvia, [in the town of Liepaja. This tenant organisation has now sent in their application, but some documents are missing.](#)

Provided that the documents are in order the application is adopted by the Board.

d. Financial Report from IUT Focal Point for Africa

The organisation has [sent in account on the received 1500 \\$US](#) , [which were allocated to them by the IUT.](#)

e. Report from Australia

Elisabet has been to Australia and visited the tenants' union in Melbourne. The situation is similar to England. Elisabet handed out some brochures. The tenants association gives service to tenants. Even not members gets financial support from the government. In Australia they also deregulate housing and sell out even social housing. Some are kept for them who have complicated problems. The organisation has representing associations in each state but there is no regular communication between them. The organisation has employed staff. When you get an apartment you also get a contract and pay a bond (deposition). That money finances the tenants association's work. There is no organisation on national level, just state level and therefore not so much power. The legislation is not very strong.

23. Other businesses

Upcoming board meeting next spring 2003. Two dates were proposed:

- First choice: May 9-10
- Second choice: May 16-17

The meeting is to be held in Vienna by invitation of the Austrian delegate Heinz Barta on behalf of the Mietervereinigung Österreichs

24. Next Board meeting,

The meeting was previously announced for November 8-9, 2002, Due to internal businesses at the Deutscher Mieterbund the date for next board meeting was changed to November 22-23.

As Barbara mentioned earlier (var då?) DMB must reduce its costs and can therefore only pay for one night

Stockholm May 13, 2002-05-13

Annika Ekström
IUT Secretariat

Magnus Hammar
Secretary General IUT

Appendix XX

About the future of IUT

Michale Kane suggested reducing cost of board and congresses, EHF, by sustainable different policies. Could ask all members to pay for all costs in connection with the meetings with the exception for them who cant afford it. The host city could arrange hotel, but members would pay themselves. Same principle for EHF. Each organisation would pay for travel and hotel. Printing costs could be reduced if printed outside Sweden.

Magnus explained that the EHF members already pay themselves. Organisations in the forum take turns one each year. Sweden will get out in October 2002.

The EHF costs in the budget includes interpreters, accommodation, there is an interpreters policy in EHF. Policy for the IUT board meetings is that Germany sponsor every second meeting and pays for two nights.

Barbara Litke said that regretfully Germany also has to lower their costs, therefore they will only be able to pay one hotel night as from the next board meeting.

Jakob Trümpy suggested that every country could be godfather of countries that do not have money. Richer countries pay fee for poorer countries.

Jacquy Tiset thought that there it is no a question about either nor. Must rise income and reduce expenditures. He did not think that the role of IUT only should be European lobbying. IUT needs a global organisation, needs to keep this role. One way to rise income could be that anyone interested in becoming member should pay a fee, maybe a low fee if it's a poor organisation. The fee is a proof that the organisation is serious and this will impose obligations. Maybe could IUT get money from European commission. *Magnus* said that the only organisation that is getting money today is FEANTSA. *Jacquy* continued to say that one should not pay for interpreters in the EHF.

Heinz Barta thought that the Board at this moment only should start discussions about principles and priority issues. Proposed to discuss this further in Berlin, the board members must speak with their organisations first. To concentrate on Europe make sense especially for one purpose. EU started constitution of convention where the constitution should be elaborated. This is the same thing as European Charter of Fundamental rights in this constitution it should not only be economic values, social values should also be a part of this European constitution. Of course there must be some sentences about social houses etc. Heinz suggested that every country from each party should send one member to this convent. Must formulate a proposal a few sentences of IUT and speak to the party members, discuss it with them and ask them to bring this to the European constitution. This could be a way to concentrate on for the next 1-3 years, the convention runs to the autumn 2003. IUT should have link to this movement.

Christian Hellevang thought that IUT should even do more than today. All board members must take more responsibility, the work must be delegated.

Milan agreed with Heinz. Every country must pay to prove that they are serious members of IUT. There are different forms, not only fees, also the work is essential. There are also the possibilities to do charity for poor tenants. There is lot of experience about charity work in Czech Republic.

Magnus explained that he must spend more time with the Swedish organisation. Every new member takes more time from Magnus.

Could it be possible to have Board meetings once a year?