



*Consultative status with  
UN Economic and Social Council*

## International Union of Tenants

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### Minutes IUT Board meeting, Prag November 5-6, 2004

<b>Present:</b>	Austria	Ms Doris Bures, President Mietervereinigung Österreichs Ms Gabi Fiala, Director Mietervereinigung Österreichs Ms Nadja Horvath, Mietervereinigung Österreichs
	Czech Republic	Mr Milan Taraba, Director SON Ms Anna Pachtová, International Relations SON
	Denmark	Mr Jørgen D. Jensen, Board member Lejernes Landsorganisation Ms Helene Toxværd, Lejernes Landsorganisation
	England	Mr Richard Hewgill, Board member TPAS
	Finland	Ms Anne Viita, Director Vuokralaisten Keskusliitto
	France	Mr Jacquy Tiset, Board member CNL
	Germany	Mr Franz-Georg Rips, Director DMB Ms Barbara Litke, DMB
	The Netherlands	Ms Mária van Veen, Director Woonbond
	Norway	Mr Knut O. Eldhuset, Chairman NLF Mr Jan Rune Nordholm, Secr. Gen. of OKL, Oslo Municipal Tenant Org. Ms Anita Vestnes, Advisor OKL
	Slovenia	Ms Mateja Tamara Fajs, Board Member Ass. of Tenants of the Rep. of Slovenia
	Sweden	Ms Torborg Wörn, Director Swedish Union of Tenants
	Switzerland	Mr Jakob Trümpy, Board member Schweizerischer Mieterinnen- und Mieterverband Mr Magnus Hammar, Secretary General IUT Ms Annika Ekström, Assistant Secretary IUT
<b>Prevented:</b>		Mr Heinz Barta, Board member Mietervereinigung Österreichs Ms Evelyne Brun, Board member CNL Ms Karin Grobet-Thorens, ASLOCA Geneva Ms Manfred Jonas, Vice President DMB, Germany Mr Michael Kane, Executive Director NAHT, USA

#### 1. Opening of the meeting

Sven Carlsson, new Chairman of IUT opened the meeting. Milan welcomed the Board to Prague and presented some practical information.

#### 2. Apologies for absence:

- Michael Kane, NAHT
- Heinz Barta, Mietervereinigung Österreichs
- Karin Grobet-Thorens, ASLOCA
- Evelyne Brun, CNL
- Manfred Jonas, DMB

### **3. Other businesses**

Following items were added to the agenda:

- a. Invitation from Nigeria
- b. ASLOCA, Geneva
- c. New statutes
- d. Minutes from the Congress

**Decision: The agenda was adopted.**

### **4. Minutes from previous board meeting, Oslo May 28-29, 2004**

Sven went through the decisions adopted by the Board at the last board meeting in Berlin.

The Secretariat still has a commission to prepare an IUT dictionary.

At the last board meeting, there was no decision taken about the membership fee but a proposal of 50 Euro/year/member. The fee for board members 1 500 Euro should be unaffected.

**Decision: The Board agreed on a minimum fee of 50 Euro for Members and 1500 Euro for Board Members.**

**The minutes were adopted.**

### **5. a. IUT Congress, evaluation, responses etc.**

No formal evaluation was carried out in Birmingham but the Secretariat had received some verbal feedback and comments from several delegates. Richard informed that many people in TPAS and tenants had enjoyed having the Congress together with TPAS annual meeting. Mária appreciated that IUT had speakers at TPAS workshops and also the own IUT workshops. It is important to give room to different countries. Magnus thanked TPAS for good cooperation. Torborg mentioned that the Swedish Union of Tenants had learnt a lot from TPAS on how to organise such big conferences.

#### **b. Congress 2007**

The Board was asked by the Secretariat to think about their opinion in the possibility of organising the next IUT congress together with any IUT member organisations annual conference/congress. For the French organisation that was not doable, as their next national congress will be held in 2006 and next in 2009. Franz-Georg had also difficulties to connect IUT congress with German annual meeting but it would be possible if the Congress could be held separately.

**Decision: These issues will be further discussed in the Board well in time for the 2007 Congress.**

### **6. IUT vice Presidency 2004-2007**

Heinz Barta had informed the Secretariat that due to current job situation he had no possibilities to continue being IUT Vice President. Therefore this position now is vacant. Franz-Georg informed that the opinion of the German organisation is that IUT does not need a Vice President. Milan agreed with Franz-Georg. Sven thought it would be a good idea to appoint a VP who could substitute for the President and pointed out the need of an active vice president. Furthermore, IUT receives more and more invitations and therefore it could be wise to appoint a VP. Magnus agreed with Sven and thought it might give more power to send a vice president than "just" a board member. Franz-Georg considered every member of the board as vice presidents when representing IUT outside. Mária considered it important to discuss which meetings IUT should attend.

Knut proposed that one or two from the Board could be authorised to participate in meetings. Mária supported the proposal of Knut but the task must be clear and the board should decide which meetings to attend. Nadja thought the meetings should be spread among the board members to keep motivating the people. Magnus explained that if the notice of a meeting is too short it is difficult for the board members to attend, if we have a VP this would facilitate. Jörgen disagreed to appoint a VP just for practical reason but there could be occasions outside the organisation when the title is needed.



Sven finally proposed a voting for or against appointing a VP. The majority of the board voted *against* appointing a VP.

**Decision: The Board agreed to *not* appoint an IUT Vice President.**

#### **7. a. Membership fees paid by 2004-10-31**

Magnus informed about the membership fees paid by October. All member organisations had paid except for NAHT. Michael Kane had informed Magnus that they would pay in November for year 2003 and 2004. NATH is in acute lack of money and therefore it is uncertain whether they will be able to pay the fee for 2005.

Jacquy asked Magnus to amend the 2001 membership fee for France.

**Decision: Magnus will settle the financial details with Michael Kane.**

#### **b. Result 2004-09-30 and proposed budget for 2005**

An updated version of the budget was handed out and the Board went through the result by September 2004 and the proposed budget for 2005.

item 06 - The budget for Board and Secretariat had been raised as Sven is planning to travel some more than previous president.

item 21 - The actual costs for the Congress in Birmingham landed on 35 000 Euros. However, the income is not shown in the budget. A more comprehensive report will be delivered at the next Board Meeting.

item 81 - Magnus has applied for funding from OPIC - the Olof Palme International Centre - for two conferences ( Skopje, Macedonia and Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro) and for the initial arrangements in setting up a Housing Information Centre in Belgrade.

Torborg underlined that in previous budgets the costs for the Secretariat and the office had been shown. The costs for the Secretariat are paid by the Swedish Union of Tenants. Magnus also emphasised that the Mieterbund sponsors every second Board Meeting.

**Decision: The Board adopted the proposed budget.**

#### **8. Definition of Social Housing**

Richard Hewgill, England, had prepared a draft definition of Social Housing.

Nadja Horvath, Austria, questioned the reason for preparing an IUT definition when CECODHAS had already defined one. Richard explained that CECODHAS' definition is not yet accepted as definite statement in Europe and another European group is also working on a definition. Furthermore, the CECODHAS definition is strictly defining the building, a home to house people who needs social housing. The IUT definition should be aiming at people.

The group agreed that it is hard to have consensus on a definition that goes for all countries as social housing has different meanings in different countries. The Board thought it would be more suitable to go for a broader definition. It was also proposed that it is of great importance that the definition should be from IUT's point of view - and not from a national perspective. Sven concluded the discussion and proposed to work further with the definition on next board meeting..

**Decision: The Board members were asked to send in ideas of IUT definition within three months. The definition should be from an IUT and not a national point of view.**

#### **9. IUT policy paper**

Richard Hewgill had prepared a policy document for the meeting.

The discussion and then the agreement to have a policy paper had its origin in the discussions following IUT representation at conference, seminars etc. When speaking on behalf of the IUT every representative must be familiar with our mission and objects, otherwise it is easy for anyone just to talk from a national perspective.

Richard highlighted top line on page 3 in the proposal: "The right to quality affordable and accessible housing is a universal right." To put together a broad statement is one level. Next level would be the policy and third level the strategy. Mária thought it was important to discuss what the strategies are and the priorities for next years to achieve our goals. There were also proposals to include the EU constitutions, to find out the for example landlord's policies on



European level and then prepare a policy to oppose their strategies. It was also proposed to include the definition of Social housing.

**Decision: A new Policy paper will be circulated and then discussed on the next board meeting in Amsterdam 2005.**

#### **10. IUT Regional Office for CEE**

Ms Mateja Fajs thanked all board members for the opportunity to run the CEE Regional office in Ljubljana for three years. Ms Fajs presented the draft programme and objectives for CEE Regional office and the role of IUT. First meeting will take place in Ljubljana, December 3-5. IUT President Sven Carlsson will attend the meeting.

Mateja Fajs informed the Board that IUT's nomination to the Council of Europe and the Group of Specialists on Housing Policies for Social Cohesion has been approved. Ms Fajs has also been chosen to Chair this group. First meeting is scheduled to November 9-19 in Strasbourg. Mateja also explained that the government in Slovenia do not listen to the tenants' problems – a common situation for most tenants in transition countries. Therefore one way for the IUT and its members is to work through institutions like the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights, ECHR. This new possibility for the IUT can somewhat "scare" the respective governments, as most CEE governments carefully listen to these institutions. The Board wished the Slovenian organisation good luck with their promising agenda.

**Decision: Ms Fajs will report back to the IUT Board soon after her first meeting in Strasbourg**

#### **11. Report: Letter to UK Foreign Ministry (Reg. Macedonia)**

Magnus informed about the letter sent to the UK Foreign Ministry regarding refusal of an Entry Clearance for Ms Maja Dilberova, Macedonia. No reply had been received.

#### **12. Report: International Tenants' Day 2004**

Magnus handed out a report.

#### **13. Conferences and other events of interest**

Magnus presented a list of meetings and other events of interest during 2004-2005. The Board had been asked to include their own major events as well. Mária proposed that it should be discussed in the board which meetings IUT should attend.

**Decision: Sven asked the members to e-mail additional meetings to Magnus for publishing on the website and in Global Tenant.**

**It was decided that Magnus and Sven have the mandate to determine who will participate in a meeting if more than one person are interested to attend the same event.**

#### **14. Reports from members, Country reports**

Czech Republic, England, Finland, France, Germany, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland had submitted country reports.

**The board members were asked to e-mail their reports to the Secretariat.**

#### **15. Other businesses**

##### **a. Invitation from Nigeria.**

- The Secretariat had received invitation from the National Union of Tenants of Nigeria. Richard Hewgill and Magnus will travel to Port Harcourt, Nigeria, on December 3-6. Travel expenses etc. will be covered by the Nigerian organisation.

- Few days before the Board Meeting the Secretariat had received an application for board membership from the National Union of Tenants of Nigeria. Today the organisation has a category B membership. Sven proposed the Board should have a report from Magnus and Richard visit to Nigeria and on the basis on this report take a decision.

**Decision: The Board decided to handle the application from the National Union of Tenants of Nigeria on next Board meeting in Amsterdam June 3-5, 2005.**

#### **b. ASLOCA, Geneva**

Inquire from the French speaking Swiss tenant organisation, ASLOCA, concerning a special set up, a contract, with an international institution. The purpose was to "insure" tenants against disputes with landlords. It appeared that none of the board members organisations had such contracts.

**Decision: Magnus will send reply to ASLOCA, Geneva.**

#### **c. The new IUT-statutes**

The new statutes adopted by the Congress in Birmingham were distributed.

#### **d. Minutes from the Congress**

Mária proposed that on page 5, under the heading "Discussions about the Statement Affordable Housing", the amendments should be included in the paragraph.

**Decision: Annika and Magnus will include the amendments in the minutes\***

#### **16. Next two board meetings, spring and autumn 2005**

- The next board meeting will be hosted by Woonbond in Amsterdam on **June 3-5**.
- The Board was kindly invited by Franz-Georg Rips and the DMB to hold its board meeting on **18-20 November 2005** in Berlin.

#### **17. Closure of the board meeting**

Sven Carlsson thanked SON for arranging the board meeting and particularly the three very fruitful discussions with the Minister for Regional Development of CR Mr Jiri Paroubek, the Vice President of the Senate of the Parliament Mr Ladislav Svoboda and the Deputy Mayor of Prague Mr Jan Bürgermeister.

He also thanked all board members for interesting discussions during the meeting.

**The meeting was closed.**

Stockholm, November 17, 2005

Annika Ekström

Magnus Hammar

\*The minutes from the Congress now run hereby:

"The Congress discussed the proposed Congress Statement "Affordable housing" and agreed on following amendments:

One more sentence was added: "Every 7<sup>th</sup> household in Berlin is not able to pay their rent with their own income."

The sentence "Dear governments, have you forgotten what you all have signed?" was changed to "Following declarations have been signed by the respective governments".

The sentence "...are you on your way...? Time flies!" was deleted.

The last sentence "We urge all governments to adopt the recommendations in the Tenants' Charter" was changed to "We, representatives of tenants, urge all governments to fulfil their obligations and to adopt the recommendations in the Tenants' Charter".

The Congress agreed that the Statement should be turned into a demand from the Congress for action.

**The Congress adopted the Statement "Affordable housing".**