



*Consultative status with  
UN Economic and Social Council*

# International Union of Tenants

Box 7514

S-103 92 STOCKHOLM Norrlandsgatan 7, 4th floor  
Sweden

Tel: ++46 8 791 02 25

Fax: +46-8-20 43 44

E-mail: [info@iut.nu](mailto:info@iut.nu)

**IUT-Secretariat:** President Mr Sven Carlsson  
Secretary General Mr Magnus Hammar

Visitors address:

Bank account:

Swedebank, Stockholm  
8327 9 142 129 436

**Website:** [www.iut.nu](http://www.iut.nu)

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## Minutes IUT Board Meeting, Berlin 18-19 November, 2005

<b>Present</b>	Austria	Mr Heinz Barta, Mietervereinigung Österreichs
	Denmark	Mr Jørgen Jensen, LLO
	England	Mr Richard Hewgill, Board member TPAS
	Finland	Ms Anne Viita, Director Vuokralaisten Keskusliitto
	France	Mr Jacquy Tiset, Board member CNL
		Ms Evelyne Brun, Board member CNL
	Germany	Mr Manfred Jonas, Vice President DMB
		Mr Franz-Georg Rips, Director DMB
		Ms Barbara Litke, DMB
	The Netherlands	Ms Mária van Veen, Director Woonbond
	Sweden	Ms Torborg Wärn, Director Swedish Union of Tenants
	Switzerland	Mr Jakob Trümpy, Board member Schweizerischer Mieterinnen- und Mieterverband, Zürich.
		Mr François Zutter, ASLOCA, Geneva
		Mr Sven Carlsson, President IUT
		Mr Magnus Hammar, Secretary General IUT
		Ms Annika Ekström, Assistant Secretary IUT
<b>Prevented</b>		Mr Milan Taraba, Director SON
		Ms Anna Pachtová, International Relations SON
		Ms Helene Toxværd, LLO Denmark
		Norwegian Tenants Association, NLF

### 1. Opening of the meeting

Mr Sven Carlsson, President IUT, opened the board meeting and thanked Ms Mária van Veen, Director Woonbond for hosting the most recent meeting in Amsterdam, June 3-5.

### 2. Apologies for absence

- Norway
- Czech Republic
- Helene Toxværd, Denmark

### **3. Other businesses**

a) - History of IUT.

b. - SUSH, Croatia

**Decision: The agenda was adopted.**

### **4 Minutes from previous board meeting, Amsterdam June 3-5, 2005**

Sven and Magnus went through the decisions adopted by the Board at the last board meeting in Amsterdam. Regarding item 16 g “Appeal Alliance of Inhabitants” Jacquy did not agree that he had suggested writing a statement about IUT’s position on the issue about evictions as written in the minutes.

**Decision: The minutes were adopted**

### **5 a-b Financial result 2005.10.15 and budget proposal 2006**

A new item has been included in the “In common” column in the IUT budget for 2006 “Bank costs, currency, and transaction”. It has appeared that the IUT lose quite a lot of money (almost 3 000 Euro year 2005) for bank costs and currency transactions when converting currency into Euro. The financial department at SUT is now looking into the possibility of establishing a Euro account.

**Decision: The IUT budget was adopted.**

### **6 IUT members 2005**

By October 27, 2005 IUT had 12 Board members, 15 Members and 23 Associated members.

### **7 Congress September 2007**

Franz-Georg Rips proposed that the IUT Congress would be held in Berlin on 21-23 September 2007. It was not possible to combine the congress with DMB’s annual meeting as previously discussed. The delegates would arrive on 20 September and the congress open on 21 September. Franz-Georg prepare for opening speech by the mayor of Berlin, etc.

**Decision: The Board adopted preliminary to hold the IUT Congress on 21-23 September 2007 in Berlin.**

### **8 a IUT Policy, new draft**

A new draft had been prepared by the Secretariat including new text from Franz-Georg and Barbara. The Board discussed the sentence “IUT considers that the household’s costs devoted to rent, maintenance and running costs, including electricity, heating and hot water, should not exceed 25% of the net household income”. The Board already agreed on the figure 25% at the last board meeting in Amsterdam.

Jacquy thought it would be more interesting to discuss “household consumption” rather than “household income”. He also questioned the figure 25%, as he considered the percentage to be too high for a poor family. Richard, on the contrary, explained that in England the figure 25% is considered very low. Magnus meant that it would help the CEE countries if 25% were stated in the policy.

Richard will propose a new sentence with the sense that when you have paid the rent you should have enough income to live on.

The meaning of the word supranational proposed by Franz-Georg and Barbara in the draft was discussed. Franz-Georg explained that by the word supranational they had meant the level higher than national level. The board agreed that the word supranational should be changed to international.

**Decision: The Board agreed to change the word supranational to international.  
Richard will propose a new “25% sentence” at the next board meeting in Paris.**

## **8 b Discussion on the internal use of IUT policy, Tenants Charter etc.**

The IUT has by now several documents such as the new Policy, Tenants' Charter and Tenants' Day statements that serve as guidelines, recommendations and aims. The Board discussed how these documents are used among the IUT members.

It turned out that the Tenants Charter is considered more of an internal document for IUT and the Global Tenant more for external use. The board member organisations have links to the IUT website on their websites.

## **9 New applications for membership**

### **a Organisation of Civic Rights (OCR), South Africa, category B**

Magnus has been in contact with OCR. This organisation does not only work with housing but also with civil rights. Magnus informed about OCR's book "Tenant and Landlord in South Africa, a practical guide for tenants and landlords of Residential Dwellings".

**Decision:** The Board accepted the organisation as category B members.

### **b Savez Udruga Stanara Hrvatske - SUSH**

The application from SUSH was received the day before the Board meeting. The application has been sent to Udruga Stanara Hrvatske, asking for their opinion about accepting SUSH as category B members. This procedure is stated in the IUT statutes.

**Decision:** Provided that the Croatian Union of Tenants accepts SUSH - Savez Udruga Stanara Hrvatske as members the organisation will be accepted as Category B members. If however the Croatian Union of Tenants, (Mr Marijan Babic), objects to SUSH's application, the Board will further discuss this application.

## **10 EU news**

### **a. Structural funds, State aid**

Magnus reported that in July the EU parliament adopted a formal resolution on the proposal for a Council regulation laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (EFS) and the Cohesion Fund. In the Resolution the Parliament proposes: "expenses which relate to renovation of social housing with a view to saving energy and protecting the environment should be included within eligible expenditure". This proposal has been lobbied by the East European countries for renovating their housing stock which is in very bad condition. The Board discussed what consequences this proposal would mean for the EU members and if it would be possible for IUT to find a common opinion.

Barbara meant that the money from new structural funds will be positive for the eastern part of Europe and the western part would not receive funding for housing projects or environmental projects. She also meant that EU needs guidelines regarding to whom you give the money and what is done with the money. Franz-Georg said that Germany has received a lot of money for the eastern part of Berlin. The reality is that the Eastern part of Europe needs the money too and it should be justice to all states.

Richard said that if the housing problems in East Europe not were solved people would move to other countries. The housing is so poor and the houses so badly constructed that they cannot stay. Barbara did not believe that it is EU's responsibility to interfere with national policy. Jacquy informed that the commission, due to the revolts in France, decided to give money to cities in France to renew poor areas.

Franz-Georg did not think that IUT would need a common opinion about the structural funds as this issue belongs to national level. Jacquy did not agree, he thought IUT must have a common opinion if it has impact on the tenants. Torborg meant that if IUT could influence we should. She also thought that IUT should support the East European countries but how must be discussed further in the board.

Richard meant that IUT should fight for rental housing in CEE. Barbara pointed out that the Commission in two months would decide about the structural funds for 2006-2013. So there is not much time.

**Decision: The IUT EU group received the mission from the Board to discuss structural funds thoroughly and report to the Board at next meeting in Paris.**

#### **b. Brussels and IUT representation**

IUT has established an IUT office together with the Belgium Tenants Association in Brussels, SDL-Syndicat des Locataires. The main purpose for having an address in Brussels was to enable IUT to apply for NGO status with the EU Parliament and have access to the building. The IUT has now been given the opportunity to apply for four long-term visitor's passes.

It was also proposed to have the IUT EU-group meeting at SDL's office in Brussels.

**Decision: Two of the long term visitors' passes will be given to the Swedish Union of Tenants. The Secretariat will decide on the other two passes.**

#### **c. Interparliamentary Group on Housing**

Magnus reported from the Interparliamentary Group meeting on Housing that took place in Strasbourg on September 29, 2005. It would be convenient to have a regularly person attending these meetings as they are important. Helene was prevented from attending this time.

**Decision: The question about representation in the Interparliamentary group on Housing will be further discussed by IUT's EU-group. If the meetings with the Interparliamentary group can not be attended by someone from the IUT EU group, the question of attendance will be dealt with by the IUT Secretariat.**

#### **d. European Charter for Housing**

A working document on the European Charter for Housing was presented to the Board. Amendments and proposals that benefit IUT's goals could be sent in to the group working with the Charter.

Jacquy thought the Charter contained new ideas that IUT could support. This is an occasion for IUT to say what we can agree on. Jacquy also suggested that IUT could ask for an official meeting with responsibilities of the group. Magnus thought that would be suitable if we have any amendments but not only if we support the proposal. The EU-group should discuss this further.

**Decision: The IUT EU-group will continue to discuss the European Charter for Housing.**

#### **11 IUT Housing dictionary**

The Secretariat had distributed the English/Swedish dictionary to the Board.

**Decision: It was decided that each country should prepare translations in their own languages. If someone on the Board has difficulties in translating some words, these words could be discussed on the Board.**

**Richard will look through the dictionary to see if anything is missing or incorrect.**

#### **12 UN World Urban Forum, June 19-23 2006**

Magnus proposed that IUT should participate in the UN World Urban Forum, June 19-23 2006 in Vancouver together with the organisation Cooperation without borders. Deadline for application was at the end of November. Magnus had no fixed budget to present at this occasion but information about the costs could be sent out to the Board in January/February.

**Decision: The Board agreed to send in preliminary application to the UN World Urban Forum.**

**Magnus will send out information to the Board about the costs related to the Forum.**

### **13 Report: IUT/OPIC project in Belgrade**

Magnus reported on the project to establish a Housing Centre in Belgrade. The Centre has been running since May 2005. The aim of the project is to set up a centre for collecting, disseminating and processing information on housing in Serbia. The main task will be to collect information and figures – together with surveyors. This information should then be used to recommend and suggest amendments to the housing law, to take initiatives for the judgements of the legality of the legal rules in front of the Constitution Court of Justice, to monitor, appeal and suggest the best ways to secure the agreed tenure. Magnus and Annika visited the Habitat Centre in October for the purpose of monitoring, following up and signing new contract for 2006.

### **14 IUT Regional Office for CEE, Slovenia – report**

The Board discussed the report received from the IUT Regional Office for CEE in Slovenia. Magnus informed that the regional office has started on activities without informing the secretariat. Initially, when the Slovenian office received the task to run the IUT Regional Office the proposal was to have an office able to stand on its own feet, with its own office and staff and with a broad knowledge of the housing situation in East European countries. Also the thought was that the office would carry some of the work from the Secretariat in Stockholm. The agreement was not to fund running costs; the office should apply for money for specific projects. There have been some communication problems between the Secretariat and the Regional office.

Jørgen thought that it was important to solve the communication problems, to compromise, as there are misunderstandings and then write a clear agreement for next year.

Mária thought that the report was ambitious but agreement and budget should be prepared for the next year. The office should prepare projects and activities.

Magnus pointed out that the projects and activities should benefit all countries in the CEE. Richard meant as the Board consider that the ROCEE is doing a good work the IUT board should encourage them.

When the Slovenian organisation was given the task it was clearly stated that the office should apply for money and provide the Secretariat with budget proposal for the project. Magnus informed that one of the objects of the ROCEE was to arrange a yearly conference, but no conference has been arranged during the year.

Barbara suggested that the Slovenians would come to Paris and report about the work they perform together with the CEE countries. Franz-Georg proposed Magnus to write an agreement with the ROCEE. The Secretariat would decide which activities should be paid for 2005.

It is important to have clear instructions and agreements on how, and for what projects, the ROCEE can apply for money from the Secretariat.

The Board discussed the three questions given in the report from the ROCEE.

**Decision: The board agreed that IUT ROCEE could pursue the already initiated work that was presented to the Board.**

**Regarding activities: The Board would like the ROCEE to give priority to an annual CEE conference for all CEE countries.**

**The Board did not agree to finance the completion of the research mentioned in the report, at this stage. The Board will however consider such project if there is a concrete project proposal.**

**The Secretariat continues the dialog with the Slovenian organisation and the Secretariat should write an agreement with the regional office for 2006, based on budget and activity proposals from Ljubljana – not exceeding 5000 Euros.**

## **15 Tenants' Day 2005, IUT Statement + reports**

Magnus handed out a report describing activities carried out during the Tenants' day in Sweden, Norway, Argentina, Australia and USA.

## **16 a Tenants' Day 2006**

The Board discussed themes for the Tenants' Day 2006. Jacquy proposed that the theme should be about evictions. The Board discussed what position IUT should have regarding evictions. Is IUT against all evictions? Is anti-social behaviour reason for eviction? The main position must be that even if people are evicted there should be a solution/protection for them.

**Decision: The theme for Tenants' Day 2006 should be about evictions.**

**At the next meeting each board member should report on solutions and protection for tenants each country has when it comes to evictions.**

**The board members should also to the Secretariat send in data regarding evictions.**

## **16 b European Neighbours' day**

Mr Atanase Perifan and Ms Christel Rathle from the European Neighbours' Day - organisation informed the Board about the European Neighbours' Day which is held in May every year all over Europe. 30 May in 2006.

## **17 Reports from members, country reports**

Written reports were received from England, France, Finland, Germany and Sweden.

The Netherlands – Mária informed about the budget discussions in the housing department. A declaration has been signed and sent to the government about how to keep affordable rents. Senders were for example trade unions, elder organisations, client org, people working with social law and business. A demonstration is planned for April 8, 2006. Magnus will write about this in Global Tenants. Mariá will send him a few lines and photos from the last demonstration arranged in March this year.

Jørgen, Denmark: An agreement has been made by the Parliament to remove funding from public housing sector for building new houses. This means that the tenants must pay for building new houses. Local elections have been held in Denmark and the social democrats gained new strength, which means the rent control system will remain. The local authority defines if there should be rent control or marked rent. In the small communities, there is no rent control. The largest town in Denmark having control is a town with 40 000 inhabitants.

Heinz, Austria: A few elections have been held and the conservative lost them all. It looks like there will be some big changes next year. The program of Conservative is to demolish the social framework.

François, Switzerland: The Government is preparing a change in the law about fixed rents. The rents are increasing. Francois will give the Board more details in Paris.

## **18 Other businesses**

a) - History of IUT. This year IUT celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, or next year its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A conference was held in Zürich already in 1926 and the first statutes were adopted. First meeting, after World War II took place in Vienna in 1955. To celebrate the anniversary the Secretariat had prepared shirts with printing, "IUT 1955-2005 Tenants United for Fair Housing".

Magnus will dedicate the next, in December, Global Tenant to the "History of IUT"

**Decision:** The Board should within 14 days send Magnus some lines about when the organisations were founded etc for the article in Global Tenant.

### **19 a Next board meeting in Paris, May 25-28, 2006**

Jacquy presented a draft programme for the Board meeting in Paris, which will be held in connection with the CNL's national congress and its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. From May 22-24 meetings with different social housing representatives could be arranged. **For a draft program see appendix .**

### **19 b Board meetings in autumn 2006**

ASLOCA is interested in organising the 2007 spring Board meeting in Geneva. Mr François Zutter will give the Secretariat final answer within a month.  
(Mr Zutter has since then confirmed May 2007)  
The IUT board meeting in autumn 2006 will take place on 20-22 October in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

### **20 Report from Danish Tenants' Association**

As Helena was prevented from attending the Board meeting her report will be presented in Paris.

### **21 Closure of meeting**

Sven expressed his thanks to the DMB for organisation and hosting this meeting and finally thanked the board for interesting discussions during the days.

Stockholm December 16, 2005

Annika Ekström

Magnus Hammar

Sven Carlsson