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# International Union of Tenants

## Association Internationale des Locataires

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**IUT Secretariat:**

President; Sven Carlsson, Sweden, Vice President; Richard Hewgill, England

Secretary General; Magnus Hammar, Assistant Secretary; Annika Ekström

## Minutes

### IUT Board meeting, Brussels

### October 5, 2008

<b>Present</b>	Austria	Georg Niedermühlbichler, Director MVÖ
	Czech Republic	Ms Anna Pachtová, SON
	Denmark	Mr Jørgen Jensen, LLO
		Ms Helene Toxværd, LLO
	England	Mr Richard Hewgill, TPAS England
	Finland	Ms Anne Viita, Director Vuokralaisten Keskusliitto
	France	Mr Jacquy Tiset, CNL
		Mr Eddie Jacquemart, CNL
	Germany	Dr Franz-Georg Rips, President DMB
		Ms Heidrun Clausen, DMB
		Mr Lukas Siebenkotten, Director of the DMB
	The Netherlands	Mr Ronald Paping, Director Nederlandse Woonbond
		Mr René van Genugten, Policy Adviser Nederlandse Woonbond (observer)
	Norway	Mr Lars Aasen, Director Norwegian Tenants' Association
		Mr Tore Hansen, President Norwegian Tenants' Association
	Sweden	Ms Ewa Frisk, Swedish Union of Tenants, SUT
		Ms Anna Eklöf, Swedish Union of Tenants (Item 18, App 8)
		Ms Marianne Nielsen, Swedish Union of Tenants (observer)
		Ms Monica Bogren, Swedish Union of Tenants (observer)
	Switzerland	Mr François Zutter, ASLOCA, Geneva
	IUT office	Ms Barbara Steenbergen
	Brussels	
	IUT Secretariat	Mr Sven Carlsson, President IUT
		Mr Magnus Hammar, Secretary General IUT
		Mr Richard Hewgill, Vice President
		Ms Annika Ekström, Assistant Secretary IUT
<b>Prevented</b>		Mr Jakob Trümpy, Schweizerischer Mieterinnen- und Mieterverband, Zürich

## **1. Opening of the meeting**

Sven Carlsson, President IUT, welcomed the board members and declared the meeting open. Sven particularly welcomed Mr Lukas Siebenkotten, new Director of DMB. Sven also welcomed observers: Mr René van Genugten, the Netherlands and Marianne Nielsen and Monica Bogren, both from the SUT regional office in Göteborg, Sweden.

## **2. Other businesses**

- a) IUT Website (Magnus)
- b) IUT Statement (Magnus)
- c) Energy paper the Netherlands (Barbara)

## **3. Information about Tenants' Day**

Barbara Steenbergen gave some practical information on the programme for Sunday and for the Tenants' Day seminar in the EU Parliament on Monday October 6.

## **4. Adoption of the agenda**

**Decision: The Board adopted the agenda.**

## **5. Minutes from previous Board Meeting, Copenhagen April 4-5, 2008**

Sven went through the minutes from previous board meeting in Copenhagen April 4-5, 2008. Sven reminded the Board about the working methods decided upon in Vienna, January 11, 2008. It is important that the board member who accepts being a part of a group is active in this group, and does what ever possible to take part in telephone-conferences etc. Otherwise, members should notify the chair of the group.

Moreover, when Barbara sends out questions to the Board she needs prompt reactions from the board members.

**Decision: The Minutes were approved.**

## **6. IUT Membership fees**

Magnus reported that all board members had paid the membership fees.

**Decision: The Board adopted the report.**

## **7. New proposal for membership fees**

Ewa Frisk report that the Working Group, which was appointed at the last board meeting, had agreed on a proposal for new and updated IUT membership fees. The group has involved Heidrun Clausen (DMB), Ronald Paping (Woonbond) and Ewa Frisk (SUT) and Jørgen D. Jensen (LLO Denmark). The Working Group proposed, for Board Members a 5% one time increase for 2009, followed by a 2,5% annual increase from 2010-2013. In 2013, the result will be discussed and evaluated. For Members the proposal would mean an increase by 10 Euro from 2009 to 60 Euro a year.

François Zutter informed that ASLOCA Switzerland might need to do financial cuts in the future. Therefore, it is not sure that the organisation would be able to pay today's membership fee after year 2009.

Magnus informed the Board about a mistake. Already in 2003, in Berlin, the Board agreed on the membership fees presented in Appendix II to this meeting. However, by mistake the figures had not been updated for the invoices that where sent out for year 2004 and onwards. For 2009, the Secretariat will secure that the figures will be corrected.

Richard Hewgill informed the Board that TPAS England lost merely 230,000 pound last year, in grants, and TPAS England has a strained economy. It should help if TPAS would be put on the minimum fee of 1,500 Euro. Sven assured that the Secretariat would discuss this matter further with TPAS.

Anna Pachtová informed the Board that the Czechs might be able to make additional contribution for the Congress in 2010.

**Decision: The Board adopted the proposal on new IUT fees. For Board members by a 5% onetime increase for 2009 followed by a 2,5% annual increase from 2010-2013.**

**Members' fee will increase by 10 Euro from 2009, from 50 Euro to 60 Euro, until further decided.**

## **8. IUT work plan for 2009**

Magnus Hammar presented the draft IUT work plan for 2009. Barbara Steenbergen is responsible for carrying out the main tasks for IUT's EU-related activities, and the IUT-EU work plan is described under item 12 c.

Board members discussed the proposed work plan and concluded by deciding on two main topics to be highlighted in 2009:

1. Affordable housing, with a special attention to the needs of the elderly,
2. Energy efficiency in housing, and renewable energy.

By request of the Swedish Board, a Rental Housing booklet/report will be developed by Magnus Hammar and Anna Eklöf, SUT. The report should be a detailed description on housing policies, housing situation, rents, allowances etc. in a number of European countries; proposed countries are Sweden, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, England, Denmark and Germany. Recent years of privatisation of social/public housing in Europe will also be described.

Lars Aasen, Lbf Norway, offered to contribute with information on the Norwegian housing system to the rental housing booklet.

**Decision: The Board adopted the IUT Work Plan 2009**

## **9 a) IUT financial result**

Magnus presented the financial result by September 15, 2008.

Reg. item 17 (IUT CEE activities) Magnus informed that 8,000 Euro had been sent to Slovenia on October 3rd. IUT Secretariat has received a draft budget from Mateja Fajs, and the CEE Regional office in Slovenia, for a CEE conference on sitting tenants. No date has yet been decided on.

The Board should be represented by one or two people.

For 2009, the IUT will send out a new invitation to CEE IUT-members, to apply for the 8,000 Euro in the fund for CEE projects. Applications will be discussed by the Board in Göteborg, April 24-25.

Anna Pachtová reported that SON, Czech Republic, has sent a pilot case on sitting tenants to Mateja. Barbara Steenbergen pointed out the Slovenian tenants organisation is also financed by FEANTSA, (the European Organisation for the Homeless) and not only by IUT.

**Decision: The Board adopted the financial result by September 15, 2008.**

**In Göteborg April 2009, the Board will decide on applications for 2009, from CEE members.**

## **9 b) IUT budget for 2009**

Magnus reported that the income for 2009 is budgeted to 77,740 Euro and total costs of 77, 800 Euro. The budget for 2009 does not differ much from the 2008 budget.

Ronald Paping from the Woonbond questioned the Item on additional contributions for the IUT Brussels office. Additional contributions are, according to Paping, not clearly shown in the presented budget. Paping wished to have additional contributions from Board Members more clearly presented. Paping wished to have additional contributions clearly earmarked for the office in Brussels.

Paping also remarked that he wished to have the Board presented the present balance of IUT finances.

Magnus mentioned that new costs, for the IUT office in Brussels, are not counterbalanced by any substantial increased incomes. Due to this situation, IUT will most probably not be able to save up as much money for future congresses as we have managed before. Previous years IUT have been able to save up money every year for the congress.

It was proposed that the Board decide on conception of the IUT CEE regional office at next board meeting in Gothenburg.

**Decision: The IUT budget for 2009 was adopted. The Secretariat will work out proposal for new structure regarding the budget for 2010. The Board agreed that a conception regarding the CEE Regional office should be decided on at next board meeting.**

## **10. Separating IUT from Swedish Union of Tenants**

Barbara informed about the idea from the Commission that lobbyists should become more transparent. In May 2008, the Parliament adopted a proposal of a compulsory register of lobbyists to be running by June 2009. Only registered lobbyists are allowed to give public statements to the EU. Barbara pointed out that it is very important for IUT to be registered in Brussels.

Franz-Georg Rips, DMB, said that there are many questions, for example tax questions, to be solved for the German tenant organisation, as Barbara is an employee of the DMB. Rips proposed that the DMB together with the IUT Secretariat should try to clear out the questions and bring it up to the Board in Gothenburg.

It was suggested that the IUT President would take decision on behalf of the Board if this issue needs to be solved before next board meeting.

**Decision: The Board adopted the report.**

**The IUT Secretariat will together with the DMB further investigate the implications/ consequences for IUT as an independent non-profit organisation. If decision has to be taken before the next Board Meeting, such a decision is delegated to the President.**

## **11. Include Aids/HIV in Tenants' Charter**

**Decision: The IUT Board adopted the proposal to insert a new sub-paragraph under item 9 in the Tenants' Charter, the Right to Housing – as sub-paragraph b.**

New text: Inability to pay rent due to illnesses, e.g. Aids/HIV, should never be a legitimate cause for forced eviction. Society should provide these categories of residents with medical care and adequate housing, free or at affordable costs.

**The Board's recommendation will be finally decided upon and adopted by the congress in 2010.**

## **12. IUT Brussels liaison office**

### ***a) IUT Brussels office – report***

Barbara presented report from April to October 2008. Barbara especially highlighted the cooperation with BEUC.

Barbara continued by reporting on IUT-membership in committees on European or International level, IUT conference statements, statements in member organisations and IUT EU advisory group meeting.

Jacquy Tiset, CNL, thought it was remarkable that CECODHAS had not invited IUT to the CECODHAS meeting in Paris, on November 5. Jacquy proposed that IUT should make a remark on this to CECODHAS.

**Decision: The report of the EU Liaison office was adopted.**  
**The IUT Secretariat should, when suitable, bring up the issue of CECODHAS – IUT cooperation.**

### ***b) Financial Report***

Barbara reported on the financial result February to October 2008.

**Decision: The Board adopted the Financial result February - October 2008.**

### ***c) Proposed work program for 2009***

Barbara presented the work programme for 2009 – attached. A list of tenants' touchstones will be compiled. Barbara suggested that the Tenants Day would become a traditional conference in Brussels.

Jacquy informed that CNL has its National Congress in Lille on May 21 - May 24. CNL will invite Sven and Barbara.

**Decision: The Board adopted the work program for 2009.**

### ***d) Proposed budget 2009***

Barbara informed the Board that there was a misunderstanding regarding the budget. The Swedish Union of Tenants, SUT has agreed on paying the running cost, i.e. office rent, internet, phone, fax. Therefore, these costs will not burden IUT's budget.

Barbara will clear out the budget together with the Secretariat.

**Decision: The budget was referred to the board meeting in Gothenburg April 2009, when Barbara will present new budget.**

## **13. IUT Congress 2010**

Anna Pachtová informed the Board that SON is prepared to host the Congress in 2010. There are two alternatives. Either to keep the Congress 30 km outside Prague or in the centre. Outside is of course less costly. Anna and Milan will come back with a date.

**Decision: The Congress 2010 will be held in Czech Republic. The Secretariat and the Czech organisation will clear out the details.**

## **14. IUT and CEE**

### **a-b) Information about the petition on Sitting Tenants and Slovenia-FEANTSA and IUT Petition on IUT web + possible actions**

Barbara reported that there are more than 300 signatures on the IUT website. If we would like to launch the Petition to the EU, we would also need addresses and personal data on the Petition. Therefore, the Petition is more symbolic at this phase.

Barbara proposed, as plan A, to circulate the Petition and ask for signatures during Tenants' Day seminar in the EU Parliament on Monday October 6.

As Plan B Barbara proposed cooperation with the European Left/Nordic Green left (GUE/NGL) MEP group to make a written declaration.

**Decision:** The board adopted the proposals to circulate the Petition during the seminar in the Parliament on October 6 and to send the Petition with the signatures published on the website to media and relevant organisations and institutions.

## **15. IUT and energy issues**

### ***a) Need for an IUT energy policy?***

Ewa Frisk, SUT, meant that it is very important to have a joint IUT energy policy. 40% of the energy is used in the housing sector. Ewa Frisk suggested setting up a Working Group investigating issues that could be included in a joint policy.

The Board agreed that energy issues are very important and that there should be time for a deeper discussion at next board meeting.

**Decision:** A energy Working Group was formed including representatives from Netherlands, Germany and Sweden. Barbara Steenberger was appointed convener/chair of the Energy WG.

### ***b) Report: IUT and UN-ECE, Committee on Housing and Land Management task force on energy efficiency***

Magnus informed the Board that IUT would be part of this group.

### ***c) Report: IUT at the EU Urban-Housing Intergroup conference***

Magnus reported from the EU Urban-Housing Intergroup conference, on September 18, 2008, in the EU Parliament. Magnus gave an intervention on the importance of tenant participation when energy saving measures, and house renovation / investments, are discussed. Confidence and a win-win situation must be established between tenants and owners/landlords, for the creation of sustainable solutions.

## **16. IUT/SUT conference on affordable housing**

Magnus called for good examples of affordable housing as an input to the upcoming conference in Stockholm, spring 2009. We need best practices and good examples for the conference. If any ideas, please e-mail them to Magnus.

## **17. Report from conference about the future of Danish public housing**

Helene reported from the conference about the future of Danish public housing, held in Copenhagen on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **18. Report: Services of General interest and the Monti Package**

Anna Eklöf reported on the EU Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI) and the Monti package.

It is a jungle of interpretations and different institutes saying different things. This report is a step from the Commission to make the facts clearer. This is also the occasion to influence the report.

## **19. Other businesses**

*a) IUT website* – Magnus meant that the members login should be available for all category B Members (50 Euro payers) and that the minutes from board meeting should be published on the web as well.

However, documents/appendices to the agendas should not be available for all members. The solution could be one special login for Board Members and one for Members.

**Decision: Magnus will check out the possibilities of a special login for Board members. If this is not possible documents for the board meeting will be sent to the Board by e-mail.**

*c) IUT Statement for the International Tenants' Day* – Magnus had prepared an IUT Statement with the title "Promoting affordable housing is a key factor" to be sent out on Tenants' Day, October 6.

**Decision: The Board adopted the IUT Statement.**

*d) Energy paper* - Barbara informed the Board about the Energy paper that the Nederlandse Woonbond compiled together with the Dutch landlords. René van Genugten, said that it has been difficult to negotiate with the social landlords about energy efficiency. However, there is now an agreement that Woonbond is satisfied with. The Dutch Housing Minister will sign the Agreement next Friday.

Present government has adopted very ambitious energy saving goals, with reference to the Kyoto Protocol; Co2 emission should be reduced by 30% in the year of 2020. Due to this wide ambition, discussions have started with the housing corporation and they have agreed on important principals. The housing associations agreed on an investment of energy saving with 250 million Euros/each year. Half of that amount will be without profit i.e. without raising the rents. Barbara will translate the signed agreement into English and publish it on the website.

## **20. Tour de table; short reports from board members**

All board members reported on the situation in each country.

## **21. Next Board meeting, Göteborg April 24-25, 2009**

Sven welcomed the Board to Gothenburg in April 2009.

There was a request from Ewa Frisk, that at this meeting in Göteborg, the respective organisations should clarify who is the formal Board Member from each country.

The Board meeting in the autumn of 2009 will be held in Brussels in connection with the International Tenants Day on October 4.

## **22. Closure of the meeting**

IUT Assistant Secretary Ms Annika Ekström will, by the end of the year, leave the Swedish Union of Tenants and the IUT, for a new career at the Swedish Patent and Registration Office. Annika Ekström has been with the SUT and IUT since 2000.

IUT President Sven Carsslön and the IUT Board thanked Annika for her services to the IUT during the almost 9 years and wished her good luck with her new tasks.

**The meeting was then closed.**

Stockholm, October 22, 2008

Annika Ekström  
Assistant Secretary

Sven Carlsson  
President

Magnus Hammar  
Secretary General