



- Consultative status with
UN Economic and Social
Council

- Participatory Status with
the Council of Europe

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International Union of Tenants

Association Internationale des Locataires

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IUT Secretariat:

President; Sven Bergenstråhle, Sweden, Vice President; Richard Hewgill, England,
Vice president; Jan Laurier, the Netherlands, Secretary General; Magnus Hammar, As-
sistant Secretary; Ylva Westander

Minutes

IUT Board Meeting, Brussels, Belgium October 2, 2011

Present

Austria

Czech Rep.

Denmark

England

Finland

France

Germany

Netherlands

Norway

Sweden

Switzerland

Nadja Shah, MVÖ

Milan Taraba, SON

Anna Pachtová, SON

Jørgen D. Jensen, LLO

Richard Hewgill, TPAS, IUT Vice President

Anne Viita, Vuokralaiset ry

Eddie Jacquemart, CNL

Heidrun Clausen, DMB

Lukas Siebenkotten, DMB

Ronald Paping, Woonbond

René van Genugten, Woonbond

Therese Ustvedt, LBF

Lars Aasen, LBF

Anders Konradsson, SUT

François Zutter, ASLOCA

IUT Brussels

Barbara Steenbergen, Head of IUT liaison office to the EU

Daniela Janeva, trainee

IUT Secretariat

Sven Bergenstråhle, President

Magnus Hammar, Secretary General

Ylva Westander, Assistant Secretary

1. Opening of the meeting

Sven Bergensträhle opened the meeting and welcomed the board members.

Pia Wenningmann of the Representation of Rhineland-Palatinate in Brussels welcomed the board and gave a presentation of the Rhineland-Palatinate region.

2. Other businesses / Information

Greetings from Sven Carlsson were forwarded to the IUT Board.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda was adopted as written.

4. Minutes from previous Board meeting, Vienna April 8-9, 2011

The board decided that all board members should nominate staff members who could serve as national experts on seven different topics.¹ Only the SUT has presented nominations.

René van Genugten announced that he will be leaving his position on the Nederlandse Woonbond for a job with AEDES, and therefore also leave his assignment in the EU Advisory group, which means other board members will have to play a more active part in the IUT EU work.

Sven and the board thanked René for the work he has carried out in the IUT and urged other board members to nominate national experts.

5. Information about Tenant's Day 2011

Barbara Steenberg presented the programme for the International Tenants Day.

6. IUT Budget 2012, Stockholm and Brussels

Magnus Hammar and Barbara presented the budget for the Stockholm and Brussels offices.

Barbara pointed out that she had increased the budget for temporary extra staff.

Three corrections were made in the proposal sent out:

The total result in the general budget is to be € 1.900, not € - 60.

CNL has made a € 1.500 contribution to the Brussels office.

The membership fees should, according to a former board decision, be increased by 2.5 percent every year 2010-2013. Magnus forgot to increase the 2011 fees by 2.5, but will add this to the fees for 2012.

The corrections were noted and the budget was adopted.

7. IUT work plan, next 12 months

Magnus and Barbara presented the IUT work plan.

The *Tenancy law and housing policy in Multi-level Europe* research project, which will be carried out in cooperation between seven different European universities and financed by the 7th frame-

¹ Energy efficiency, housing and state aid, SGI and the EU single market, civil society stakeholders' dialogue, housing as a fundamental right, ERDF, social inclusion and urban cohesion, VAT harmonisation.

work program, was brought up. The board discussed its standpoint and its possibilities to take part in the project.

The work plan was noted.

The secretariat – Barbara and Sven – will find out more about the research project on tenancy law and give a proposal on how to act to the board.

8. Membership application; Österreichischer Mieter-, Siedler- und Wohnungseigentümerbundes (ÖMB)

Magnus and Nadja Shah presented a membership application from the Österreichischer Mieter-, Siedler- und Wohnungseigentümerbundes (ÖMB). The board discussed whether an organisation representing landlords should be accepted as a member. Ronald Paping pointed out the importance of the recommendation of the board member representing the same country as the applicant. The board decided to follow Nadja's advice.

The board decided to accept the Österreichischer Mieter-, Siedler- und Wohnungseigentümerbundes (ÖMB) as a category B member.

9. Paid membership fees

Magnus presented the list of paid membership fees. The board pointed out that Russia was not included in the list.

Magnus will look up why Russia is not included in the list and report back to the board.

The report was noted.

10. EU Directive on VAT on NGO:s and possible implications for IUT members

Magnus presented the background of the EU Directive on VAT (Value added tax). The board discussed the possible implications of the directive for the IUT member organisations.

The board decided that there was no need for a joint IUT action.

11. IUT and European Property Federation, European Union of Developers and House Builders and Cecodhas.

Barbara and René presented (a) a summary of the meetings with the European Property Federation (EPF), the European Union of Developers and House Builders (UEPC) and Cecodhas and (b) a joint draft declaration of principles on EU state aid policy from the EPF and UEPC.

René recommended that the IUT board should agree with the declaration of principles if Cecodhas does so, which will be clear after the meeting on October 12. René emphasised the need for the stakeholders to reach an agreement in order to avoid possible future conflicts.

The board discussed the wording of the policy paper in general and the concepts of *level playing field* and *freedom of competition* in particular. The board agreed that it was preferred for these concepts not to be included in the paper.

The discussion with EPF, UEPC and Cecodhas will continue and René will need to be replaced.

All suggestions on how the policy paper should be formulated should be sent to Barbara and René by October 10.

Barbara will ask Jan Laurier if he can replace René in the discussions with the EPF, UEPC and Cecodhas. If not, Richard Hewgill is willing to take part.

12. IUT Congress 2013

The 2013 (not 2014, as stated in the agenda) IUT Congress will be held in Kraków, Poland, with the patronage of the Mayor of Kraków.

13. Report from Brussels EU office

Daniela Janeva presented a policy paper on affordable rental housing for the young. The board discussed the urgings stated in the report and in the accompanying press release.

Changes were made in the IUT urgings. The report was then noted and approved.

14. Round table

- a. **TPAS** is opposing the landlords' latest initiative to give a priority to people who have been working for more than two years in a row.
- b. **ASLOCA** is fighting an initiative from the owners who argue that people should deduct an amount from their income to buy a flat.
- c. **SUT** is in the middle of the rent negotiations with the private and public landlords, and landlords are pushing for rent increases of 5-10 % in central parts of Swedish cities.
- d. **Lbf** has a weak economy and has been given state aid. The Norwegian government has acknowledged the need for a strong tenants' movement. Lbf is also looking into the possibility to open an office in Trondheim.
- e. **LLO**: Cheaper housing in the private rental sector is vanishing, which is a problem for the young. Private landlords renovate their flats, and can then ask for higher rents. Denmark has a new prime minister who will be taking more initiatives to create new jobs, and there are talks about a possible housing minister.
- f. **SON**: The Czech government is budgeting 1 billion Czech crowns (€ 40,4 million) for new construction of rental housing flats (35-80 m²) for the next 15 years.
- g. **CNL**: The national budget for social housing is decreasing and the energy prices are rising. The present government wants to limit subsidies to the private housing sector, but this money would not go to the social sector. Also, owners will have to pay more tax when they sell properties they do not inhabit, up to 30 % of the profits.
On October 15, CNL organises "Journée des Droits des Habitants" in Lille.
The CNL congress will be held in May 2013.
- h. **Woonbond**: The Dutch government cuts down on subsidies for low income tenant households, and is prioritising ownership over rental housing. The Woonbond is now organising half of all the Dutch tenants.
- i. **Vuokralaiset ry**: The Finnish government is investigating whether the tax situation should be changed in order to create equal conditions for home owners and tenants.
Furthermore, today flats that have been funded by government ('social housing') and allocated to households with an upper income limit must stay as rentals for a minimum of 40 years, with a rent calculated by the utility value. Now, landlords, including housing associations, is looking into the possibility to change this time limit to 20 years with a new law.
- j. **MVÖ**: The right wing party FPÖ has proposed that only people speaking German should be accepted as tenants in social housing.

- k. **DMB:** The rents in the larger cities are rising. In cities like Munich, Hamburg and Stuttgart, key workers, such as policemen and nurses, are having difficulties staying in the city since the housing costs are so high. The DMB now has 1.2 million member households. There are attacks on the present German tenant/housing laws from the right wing parties, such as the Christian democrats, aiming at making the laws weaker. But until now they do not dare to put forward unpopular proposals.


15. Next board meeting

The next board meeting will be held in Paris on March 23-24, 2012.

16. Closure of board meeting

Sven Bergenstråhle closed the board meeting.

Stockholm, October 2011


/Sven Bergenstråhle/
/President


/Ylva Westander/
Assistant secretary


/Magnus Hammar/
Secretary General