

INTERNATIONAL BALINT FEDERATION

Officers of the Council (since 28th August 2005)

President: Henry Jablonski (Sweden)
Vice-presidents: Benyamin Maoz (Israel)
Donald Nease (United States of America)
General Secretary: Heather Suckling (United Kingdom)
Treasurer: Michel Delbrouck (Belgium)

www.balintinternational.com

Meeting of the General Assembly of the International Balint Federation

Held on Tuesday 8th September 2009 at 14.30

Hotel Monterai, Brasov

Those present:

Australia:

Ruth Dunn
Andrew Leggatt
Laurie Lovell-Simons

Austria:

Hans-Peter Edhaimb
Wilfried Leeb

Belgium:

Luc Declaire
Michel Delbrouck
Jean Flechet

Denmark:

Gunnar Axelgaard

Finland:

Irmeli Laurila
Kristina Toivola
Juha-Matti Toivola
Martina Torppa

France:

Francoise Auger
Marie-Noelle Laveissiere
Michel Nicolle
Marie-Anne Puel
Louis Velluet

A.I.P.B.:

Jean-Pierre Bachmann
Francois Berton
Annie Bouillon

Germany:

Reinhold Bretz
Thomas Kanzow
Heide Otten
Ernst Petzold

Sigmar Scheerer

Olaf Templin

Hungary:

Maria Szirtes

Israel:

Benyamin Maoz
Andre Matalon
Stanley Rabin
Yuval Shorer

Italy:

Tizania Pistol
Guido Prato Previde

Netherlands:

Marieke van Schie

Portugal:

Jorge Brandao

Romania:

Virginia Antonescu
Laura Mariana Bara
Csaba Bodor
Carmen-Lola Bota
Eniko-Eva Butyka
Stelian Cinte
Evelyn Farkas
Ileana Gorog
Monica Ilisei
Csilla Moldovan
Oana Staicu
Mariana Urzica
Albert Veress
Eva Veress

Serbia:

Dragica Nikolic

Sweden:

Anders Haggmark
Anita Haggmark
Henry Jablonski
Kjell Reichenberg

Switzerland:

Philipp Portwich

UK:

Andrew Elder
John Salinsky
Lenka Speight
Heather Suckling
David Watt

USA:

Karen Glaser
Thomas Klee
Keiichiro Narumoto (also
representing Japan)
Don Nease
Ann Sinclair
Jeffrey Sternlieb
Greg Troll

Canada:

Miriam Salamon
(Canada does not yet have a
society)

1. Welcome:

Henry welcomed everyone to the General Assembly meeting.

2. Apologies:

These were received from John Barton, Kornelia Bobay, Mario Carli, Andrew Dicker, Helena Nielsen, Tatiana Popovic, Vladimir Vinokur (Russia), Natase Vranjes and Sotiris Zalidis.

3. Minutes of Council meeting 19th April 2009 in Chicago (previously circulated):

It was agreed that these were a correct record.

4. Matters arising that do not appear elsewhere on the agenda:

There were none.

5. Report from the Board:

- **Henry** said that it had been an intense half year co-operating with **the Organising Committee of the Romanian Balint Society to organise this congress**. As Co-ordinator of the Scientific Committee he had worked closely with the other members, Michel Delbrouck, Don Nease, Ovidiu Popa-Velea, Paul Sackin, John Salinsky, Almos Trif and Albert Veress to ensure the high standard of presentations and papers. He particularly thanked the members who had advised individuals on the content of the papers, edited them and corrected the English.

He reported that unfortunately, the **Muradif Kulenovic School of Balint in Dubrovnik** that usually takes place annually in June, had been cancelled at the last minute. Henry expressed sincere hope that these stimulating meetings in Dubrovnik will be resumed. However, being in the region, he took the opportunity to visit **Belgrade** where he was made very welcome by the **Serbian Balint Society**. He participated in a rewarding Balint Study Day with 40-50 participants. The Serbian Society had invited the Secretary of Public Health for the Belgrade area, herself a doctor, who was introduced to Balint for the first time, and participate in the fishbowl group. After 15 minutes of confusion she understood the idea of this kind of group discussion and the benefit of it. Henry was impressed by the sophistication of the doctors and the high level of Balint work. He brings greetings from the Serbian Society and is delighted to welcome two members, Dragica Nikolic and Mara Vucurevic to this congress.

- **Don** explained that as he would be speaking to several agenda items, he did not have a separate report.
- **Benjamin** said the Board had worked well as a team and that each night he found many emails from members of the Board, emphasising the close teamwork. He thanked Heather for her hard work in facilitating this.

Benjamin asked all members of the IBF **to promote Balint ideas and Balint work in the national and international professional organisations** to which they belong. He said WONCA is very important but not enough and he would like to promote Balint in other organisations, for example **the World Organisation of Mental Health**.

6. Treasurer's report:

- **Michel** firstly spoke about his **visit to Brasov in March 2008** when he had led a **workshop on Leadership Training** and also been able to have preview of the Congress facilities.

He then spoke to **the Accounts of the IBF**. He was grateful that, at last, all the member societies had paid their fees. The total income for the year was **11,000 Euros** and the finances are in a healthy state. He reminded us that there are still outstanding expenses to be paid (for example the travel expenses of the Ascona prize-winners, the website and the expenses incurred by a Balint presence at WONCA). He also explained that the Board has asked him to use some funds to **seek legal advice to ensure that the IBF retains its status of a non-profit making organisation so that it is not liable for tax**. (The situation varies from country to country, even within the EU.)

The Accounts will be circulated with these minutes.

On behalf of the meeting **Henry thanked Michel** for all his work and in particular for the way in which he had organised the IBF funds in the light of the global recession. Thanks to his excellent management there had been no loss of capital.

7. Secretary's report:

a. Membership:

Heather said that there are now 20 national Balint societies recorded as members of the IBF on the website and one individual member from Norway. Unfortunately the Polish and Hungarian Balint Societies lost their membership because, in spite of numerous reminders they failed to pay the full amount of the required fee before the (extended) deadline. However, she said that the fees have now been received (since the deadline) and so their membership has been restored and they will appear on the website when it is updated at the end of October.

Heather said that there had been enormous difficulty in collecting the fees from some members. This is frustrating, time-consuming and unfair to those who pay on time. The Board has decided to take a tough line so that in future those who have not paid *within 2 months of the due date* will be removed from the list of members and their representatives will be removed from the mailing lists.

N.B. The 2010 fees are due before 1st March 2010

Action: All Treasurers (& other Officers)

Any society which is removed may re-apply by submitting a new application and fulfilling the criteria of membership (including payment of the required fee.)

She reminded the meeting of the agreed criteria.

b. Criteria of membership:

- ❖ **Payment of the required fee**
- ❖ **Have an Ethical Code**
- ❖ **Have a system for the Accreditation of Leaders;**

Heather has requested updated information about Leadership Accreditation from each society, please send it to her, *in English, before 31st December 2009.*

c. Reports from National Societies:

As the Council agreed in Chicago, each society will now be required to submit an annual report (not twice yearly as previously). It is up to society to decide when to write the report, but the latest one will be requested by the Secretary in the Spring each year and then distributed before the Council meeting.

These help us to keep in touch with each other and disseminate ideas.

d. Communication with the membership:

Heather continues to try and maintain an up-to-date list of contacts, but this is not easy, there are more than 100 on the list.

She asked the meeting to check the details of the email addresses of your society's officers on the list that was circulated and to amend them where necessary.

She emphasised that :

- *if you receive communications from the IBF and you are no longer in office, please pass on the information to your successors*
- *When you receive an email it is your responsibility to disseminate the information to your members.*

e. The new IBF Board:

The new Board will take over after this meeting. This year the whole board has stood for re-election and is unopposed, so there has been no need for a vote.

The present Board will continue in office for a further 2 years.

8. Appointment of Officers:

The Secretary followed the Election Procedure and requested nominations. The only nominations received were for the present board so no election was necessary this year. However, according to the Statutes, Board members (apart from the Treasurer and Secretary) *must* stand down after 2 terms (4 years).

Elections will be necessary in 2011.

The Treasurer has agreed to stay on if we wish and is permitted to do so by the Statutes, but other nominations for the post of treasurer can be made.

Heather has decided to stand down as Secretary in 2011.

Therefore, in 2011, it will be necessary to elect the President, two Vice- Presidents and a General Secretary.

The elections will take place in the Spring of 2011 (by email) and the Secretary will send out the information

early that year. (A copy of the Election Procedure will be circulated with these minutes.)

9. Wonca 2009 (Basel):

The International Balint Federation will be represented in Basel by Henry Jablonski, Marie-Anne Puel and Dorte Kjeldmand. The IBF's proposal was accepted and was originally allocated 60 minutes for a presentation and another 60 minutes for a demonstration. However, the WONCA organisers then reduced the time so there will be only 60 minutes in total. The IBF is very grateful to Philipp Portwich who promoted the Balint workshop and prepared the way.

Balint work is especially relevant to the theme of the congress: "Uncertainty and Complexity in General Practice".

The Board feels that this is an excellent way to promote Balint work and appeals to everyone who has connections with international organisations to raise awareness of Balint work with them.

Henry had proposed co-operation with the Vasco da Gama movement for the WONCA workshop. There had been some resistance, but he hoped that they would be able to make contact with their representative in Basel.

Dragica Nikolic suggested that the EGPRN might be a good contact. This is a research network that comes under the auspices of EURACT. It is due to meet again in October. It was agreed that if she has contacts there it would be very helpful.

The next large WONCA meeting in 2011 will be held in Mexico and the IBF hopes to have a significant presence there. This could be helped by the fact that Don Nease knows the President of WONCA.

Action:

All

10. Proposal for International Leadership Conferences:

Following the proposal in Chicago, the Board is asking for a small group to organise leadership conferences. It suggests that they research what individual societies are doing at present and then organise a conference to exchange ideas and suggest methods of leadership training.

This group consists of: **Andre Matalon, Heide Otten, Andrew Elder and Michel Delbrouck.**

It was felt that a small group would be more effective at this stage, but if anyone else would like to be involved, please contact the group members.

The IBF has allocated an initial budget of 2000 Euros.

The Leadership Group is to report at the next Council meeting in Gurlitz.

Action:

Andre, Heide, Andrew and Michel

11. EURACT (including progress of Vasco da Gama):

Heide reported that she had had no contact with EURACT.

Marie-Anne said that those attending the WONCA meeting in Basel should be able to contact the EURACT and EGPRN representatives there.

Action:

Marie-Anne, Henry and Dorte

12. Nordic Conference:

Gunnar reported that there had been a symposium about Balint at the Copenhagen meeting. There was an audience of about 30, including the President of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

Unfortunately there was no official Balint group, but in the afternoon a group did take place and included John Nessa from Norway (an IBF member) who is trying to set up a Norwegian Balint Society.

The meeting thanked the Danish Society for organising the Balint activities at the Congress.

13. Ascona awards:

Ernst was delighted that this year's three prizewinners were present at this congress. 16 papers had been submitted from 6 countries.

It is planned to publish a book of the prizewinning essays over the years together with the best of those which had not received a prize.

A suggestion was made that all the students who submitted an essay should receive a certificate. This led to considerable discussion and some felt that this would devalue the prize and so it was agreed that non-prizewinning essays of a high standard could be awarded a certificate of merit – or something similar. The

meeting suggested that the Ascona Board should consider this suggestion.

Action: Ascona Board

Andre and Ernst are drawing up a list of all the previous winners.

Lenka suggested that it would be interesting to follow up the winners and see how their careers had developed. It was suggested that she might like to initiate such a project.

Action: Lenka

The next Ascona prize will be awarded in 2011 at the 17th International Balint congress.

The deadline for submissions is 31st December 2010

The secretary will send out a flier shortly and asks everyone who has contact with students to circulate the information.

Action: All

14. e-international Balint Journal:

Marie-Anne reported that in order to facilitate its use the e-journal will be divided into seven parts:

- i. Abstracts
- ii. Full articles by Balintians
- iii. References to useful articles
- iv. News from the Translation Advisory board
- v. Proceedings of International Balint Congresses
- vi. Reports of the National Societies
- vii. List of international congresses of interest to Balintians.

Marie-Anne was pleased to report that she has editorial assistance from Marieke van Schie.

They may need a budget and will apply to the IBF Board if this is so.

Action: Marie-Anne and Marieke

15. Progress of the Comprehensive list of Balint books and Articles:

The group charged with this task consists of Don Nease, Leonie Sullivan (who has already compiled her own list), John Salinsky and Stanley Rabin.

They have set up an on-line database and are beginning the work of loading reference data into it. Each reference will have a brief annotation provided by one of the group. Articles from some journals (including the British one) will be published in full.

Don emphasised that they also welcome the inclusion of articles in languages other than English.

Henry reminded the meeting of the journals of the French, Belgian, German and Romanian societies.

The secretary will inform all those on her contact list when the database goes live.

Action: Don and Heather

16. Translation Advisory Board:

Don reminded the meeting that it is the Translation Advisory Board, it *advises* the IBF Board about funding for translation. He explained that requests for funding could only be considered if they were received in writing (email) and included a budget and the amount of money required.

Several people had asked for funding but without a formal request being made.

Applications for funding should be sent to Don Nease dnease@umich.edu

17. Website for the International Balint Federation:

The IBF website is updated twice a year, after each Council meeting. Please send Henry information that you wish to be included, in particular details about national conferences.

The next update will be in October.

The deadline for submissions is 10th October 2009. Submissions

Action: All

18. Council meetings:

The German Balint Society has invited the IBF Council to hold its next meeting in Germany.

It will take place in **Gorlitz on 29th May 2010**. Gorlitz is on the German-Polish border with part of the city in each country, so the meeting is to be held in association with the Polish Balint Society.

The meeting will be held during a regional conference “**Quality and Relationship in Medicine**” which will be held from **27th-30th May 2010**.

The language will be English with written handouts in Polish and participants from the Czech Republic are also expected. The nearest airports are Berlin and Dresden, Górlitz is approximately one and a half hours by train from Berlin.

Everyone is welcome.

The secretary will circulate more information and an application as soon as it is available.

Action: Heide and Heather

The Chair asked for proposals for the following 2 Council meetings, namely Autumn 2010 and Spring 2011. There were two suggestions for each.

- **Autumn 2010** **Salzburg, Austria or Oxford, UK**

- **Spring 2011** **Denmark (somewhere in central Denmark) or Portugal**

The relevant societies were asked to submit information to the Board giving details of proposed dates, activities, transport and costs.

Action: Austrian, UK, Danish and Portuguese Balint Societies

19. 17th International Balint Congress 2011 in United States:

Ann Sinclair, President of the American Balint Society confirmed the proposal made by the ABS in Chicago and said they were delighted to host the next International Balint Congress in the United States. They have chosen Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where there is much Balint activity. It is an attractive and historic city within easy reach of New York and Washington DC. The Organising Committee consists of Ann Sinclair, Jeff Sternlieb – the President-elect, Karen Glaser, Tom Klee, Katy Margo and Don Nease. The meeting heard this news enthusiastically and look forward to hearing more detail in Górlitz.

From Transylvania to Pennsylvania!

Action: American Balint Society

20. Timing of Reports from National Societies:

Heather had already mentioned this in the Secretary's Report. The latest available Annual Report from each society will be circulated before the Spring meetings of the Council.

Other items:

- i. **Research proposal:** Guido (Italy) was impressed by the paper by Steffen Hafner and colleagues "*Some remarks on the theory and practice of Balint group work in Germany*". He was interested in the effects of the professional background and role of leaders on the group work and proposed an international research project to collect this information from other countries.

Don explained that Ethics Committee approval would be required for such a project and Philipp Portwich (Switzerland) pointed out that each country has a Balint culture of its own, making comparisons difficult.

It was suggested that Guido could contact the German and French societies.

- ii. **Leadership Intensive:** Greg Troll (US) reminded the meeting about the Leadership Intensive 11th-14th March 2010 in Santa Rosa, California.

Contact Ritch Addison addisor@sutterhealth.org

- iii. **Harvard Program for Refugee Trauma:** Andrew Elder reported that the British Balint Society had been invited to participate in the Harvard Programme for Refugee Trauma which is interested in using the Balint approach to support primary care and mental health workers in post-conflict countries. David Watt and Andrew Elder had attended a Masterclass' in Orvieto in March 2008 to begin work on this and will be attending a subsequent one in 2010. They hope to report further on this work at the next International Meeting.

- iv. **Tunde Baka (Romania)** formally thanked Michel Delbrouck both for his work with Leadership Training in Romania, and for his invaluable support and constructive criticism of the plans for the International Congress.

- v. **The President** pointed out that although the IBF does not have a Scientific committee, the Board would be pleased to discuss ideas with anyone wishing to embark on research.

Henry concluded the meeting by thanking the Romanian Balint Society for organising an excellent congress and for their warm hospitality.

The meeting closed at 16.20

HCS 30-Sep-09