

INTERNATIONAL BALINT FEDERATION

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Minutes of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Federation held on Sunday 5
October 2003 in the Kaiserin-Friedrich-Stiftung, Berlin, Germany

Present:

Dr Heide Otten (president)	GERMANY	heideotten@gmx.de
Dr Kornélia Bobay (vice-president)	HUNGARY	mavkhbp@mail.mata.vu.hu
Dr Marie-Anne Puel (vice-president)	FRANCE	mapuel@wanadoo.fr
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Dr Michel Delbrouck (treasurer)	BELGIUM	michel.delbrouck@ifts.be
Dr Heather Suckling (general secretary elect)	UK	heathers@doctors.org.uk
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Dr Donald Nease	USA	dnease@umich.edu
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Others on the mailing list:

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Dr Olga Kuznetsova	Russia	olgakuzn@maps.spb.ru

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr Vladimir Vinokour (Russia), Dr Erica Jones and Dr Paul Sackin (UK)

Non-members who expressed an interest in the IBF but who were unable to attend were Dr Hristo Kozuharov and Dr Valcho Yordanov (Bulgaria), Dr Guido Prato Previde (Italy), Dr Ljiljana Milivojevic (Yugoslavia), Dr Martin Ivanovski (Macedonia) and Professor Olga Kuznetsova from Russia.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 3 May 2003 in Miercurea-Ciuc, Romania, were circulated and approved.

3. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The president (Dr Heide Otten, Germany) thanked everyone for their participation in the Congress and for their papers. The question now was: where will the next one be?

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer (**Dr Michel Delbrouck, Belgium**) presented his balance sheet which showed that in the year to end September 2003, the Federation had a total income of € 4394 and an expenditure of €1120 giving a profit of €3274. He reminded us that we had decided to spend some of the surplus on paying for the Ascona prize winning students to come to the Congress to receive their prizes. The fees remain for the present at €700 full subscription for a national Balint Society and €70 for individual membership and for Balint Societies in Eastern Europe.

Action: Any societies that have not yet paid!!

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT The general secretary (**Dr John Salinsky, UK**) said that he wished to report that he had very much enjoyed his 10 years in the post. He had served under four presidents and helped to organise seven International Congresses. Now he was very happy to hand over to Dr Heather Suckling who he was sure was going to be an excellent successor. The meeting thanked John for all his work and hoped that he would continue to be active on the Council of the Federation.

6. INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

The officers of the Federation elected at the last meeting were:

President: Dr Heide Otten (Germany)

Vice-presidents: Dr Kornelia Bobay (Hungary) and Dr Marie-Anne Puel (France)

Treasurer: Dr Michel Delbrouck (Belgium)

General Secretary: Dr Heather Suckling (UK)

7. 14th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS, OCTOBER 2005

Dr Anita Häggmark (Sweden) said that the Swedish Society had definitely decided to host the Congress in 2005. The venue had not yet finalised but it would be either in the city of Stockholm or in a Conference venue just outside. The city was exciting to be in but it would also be good for us to be able to live and work together in the same building which would be possible in a conference centre. After some discussion about the best time of year and the need to avoid clashing with religious holidays there was a consensus in favour of late August 2005. There will be more information and further opportunities for discussion at the next meeting of the Council.

Action: **Anita Haggmark**

8. ASCONA PRIZES

Prof Ernst Petzold (Germany) told us that the closing date for the 2004 Ascona essay competition would be 31 March and the prizes would be awarded in Ascona some time in June 2004. Ernst reminded us that the Monte Verità in Ascona (Southern Switzerland) was a *Zauberberg* or 'Magic Mountain' and an inspiring place to visit. We should all encourage our students to write essays and enter them for the competition. The rules were the same as before and essays should be sent to Dr med. Alex Amman, Grtafenriedstrasse 1, CH 3074, Muri, Switzerland. Email: alex.amman@insel.ch

Action: **All**

9. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Dr Sanja Blažeković-Milaković (Croatia) invited us to come and hold our meeting during the Balint summer School at Dubrovnik which will be held from 7th-12th June 2004. After some discussion about who could or could not be available at weekends or mid-week, we settled on Saturday 12th June 2004 as the date for the meeting. Further information will be available nearer the time. Sanja will send Heather the electronic version of the flyer so that it can be circulated.

Action: **Sanja Blazekovic--Milakovic**

10. WONCA MEETING IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA, USA, 12 OCTOBER 2004

The Secretary said that we had been planning to hold a council meeting at the WONCA Conference as it will be attended by thousands of family doctors and primary health care workers from all over the world. It will be a very good opportunity to let them all know what Balint has to offer. **Dr Alan Johnson (USA)** told us that the American Balint Society was hoping to have a workshop at the Conference which would include a fishbowl, a forum on group leadership and a discussion on leader credentialing. The International Federation Council meeting could be held on the same day. However it might be necessary for delegates to enrol for at least one day of the main Wonca conference which could be expensive. Further details will be available from Dr Mary Hall (mary.hall@carolinashealthcare.org). Dr Alan Johnson agreed to contact Mary to find out whether those attending only the Balint day would need to pay the fee. If so he will ask her if she can negotiate a special rate. He will email Heather with the information so that she can circulate it.

Action: Alan Johnson and Heather Suckling

11. OTHER BUSINESS

At this point **Dr Heather Suckling (UK)** took over from John Salinsky as General Secretary. She welcomed the conference delegates who had not previously been to a Council meeting or general assembly or had not been able to come recently. They were:

Dr Marion Lustig (Australia) Dr Karel Koblic (Czech Republic) Dr Juris Batner (Latvia) and Dr Rubens Hirsler Bergel (Brazil) and Drs Mariecke van Schie and Jorste Dorhorst (Netherlands).

There follow reports of activities from the member countries:

Dr Jorge Brandão (Portugal) said that his translation of John Salinsky and Paul Sackoin's book *What are you feeling, doctor?* would soon be published and would be made available to family doctors all over Portugal.

Dr Mariecke van Schie (Netherlands) told us that Balint was still alive and well in Holland with about many active groups. However, it is difficult to form a Balint Society as they are unable to provide educational points for attendance at groups and meetings.

Dr Donald Nease (USA) mentioned the Balint-L email Listserve of which he is the secretary. American Balint Society members find this is a very effective way to communicate over long distances and he recommended it to people in other countries as well. (There are already some non-Americans on the List).

Dr Karel Koblic (Czech Republic) said that there was no Balint Society in his country so far but they were able to operate under the umbrella of the Czech Society for Psychotherapy.

There was some further discussion about **financial matters**. Should small Societies continue to pay a reduced fee and how small did they have to be to qualify? Heather

Suckling suggested that each person could pay an individual subscription (€70) until there were 10 members, after which it would be less expensive to pay the full fee for a Society (€700). This would encourage the formation of more new Societies. Don Nease asked about how the Federation's surplus was to be used and Michel told us that in addition to paying for prize-winning students to come to Congresses (see Treasurer's report) we had decided to use some money to pay for an International Balint Website and an International Journal. **Dr Henry Jablonski (Sweden)** said that we should value the International Federation and its work. He had the impression that the Board (Council) was run on a shoestring and although members might have questions about how the money was spent this was not a reason not to pay. It was agreed that "Use of IBF funds" would be tabled as an agenda item at the next meeting.

Action: **Heather**

The president invited everyone to write something in the guest page of the International Balint website and to make links to it from their national websites. Ernst Petzold showed us copies of four journals from France, Germany, Romania and the UK and urged us to read them and write for them. (There are also journals produced in Belgium and Italy).

Dr Andre Matalon (Israel) suggested that membership of the IBF should include a subscription to one of the journals (depending on the language of the members). This will also be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Action: **Heather**

The meeting was then concluded and those present adjourned for a delicious buffet lunch provided by the German Balint Society.

John Salinsky
General Secretary

Heather Suckling
Secretary Elect