

## **FINAL DRAFT Minutes of the Council of the International Balint Federation**

**Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup> 2011 at 14.00 at the Faelleshuset Conference Centre,  
Copenhagen, Denmark**

### **Australia**

Kate Strasser

### **Austria**

Hans-Peter Edlhaimb

### **Belgium**

Michel Delbrouck

Jean Flechet

Christian Linclan

Luc Declaire

### **Bulgaria**

Vivian Pramaratoff

### **Denmark**

Gunnar Axelgaard

Tove Mathiesen

Jorgen Stroebech

### **Finland**

Kristiina Toivola

### **France**

Marie-Anne Puel

### **Germany**

Gunther Bergmann

Heide Otten

Sigmar Scheerer

Vivian Pramaratoff

### **Israel**

Benyamin Maoz

Andre Matalon

### **Netherlands**

Marieke van Schie

### **Portugal**

Jorge Brandao

Antonia Lavinha

### **Sweden**

Henry Jablonski

### **UK**

Andrew Elder

Paul Sackin

John Salinsky

David Watt

### **USA**

Jeff Sternlieb

Don Nease

Ann Sinclair

1. **Welcome:** The President, Henry Jablonski, welcomed all delegates.
2. **Tributes:** The meeting heard tributes from Kristina Toivola to the late Eeva Makkonen from Finland and from Joergen Stroebech to the late Lars Thorgaard from Denmark. The meeting stood in silence for a minute to remember both colleagues.
3. **Apologies:** These were received from Russia, Poland and Serbia. Apologies were also received from IBF Secretary Heather Suckling who is recovering from surgery. Council members wished Heather a very speedy recovery.
4. **Minutes of the meeting of the Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2010 in Oxford (previously circulated):** These were approved and there were no matters arising.
5. **Report form the Board:** Henry reported that the Board had had a very busy six months but that most of the work they had done would be considered later in the

agenda. However he mentioned a very useful exchange with John Launer UK and Lucia Sommers USA about workplace based groups. John's experience and values were usefully exchanged with the Board and one outcome was the invitation to IBF to write one or two chapters in John's forthcoming book on Uncertainty in General Practice. Dorte Kjeldmand and Henry would be the lead authors for this. They also discussed future cooperation with workshops at WONCA conferences.

6. **Treasurer's Report:** Michel presented the Balance Sheet for 2010 to the meeting and this showed a satisfactory excess of income over expenditure. He also presented the income and expenditure account for 2011, up until 26<sup>th</sup> April. Some concern was expressed that the 2011 figures may not yet be accurate and it might be better in future meetings to present figures up till about a month before the meeting. However Henry pointed out that if the proposals in Item 10 are adopted, the accounting system will be different.
7. **Secretary's Report:** In Heather's absence, Paul Sackin read her brief report. There were currently 22 member states in the IBF. All except Hungary, Croatia and Poland have paid their 2011 fees. Heather will remind these three members. There is a new individual member – Thiago Sarkis from Brazil.
8. **Bulgarian Society:** The Board recommended that Bulgaria's application for IBF membership be accepted and this was agreed by the Council who congratulated and thanked Vivian Pramaratoff for all her work in bringing this application to fruition.
9. **Ukrainian Society:** The Board recommended that Ukraine's application for IBF membership be rejected. The Board felt that it was unclear if there was a 'bona fide' Balint Society or if it was just a section of the Ukrainian Society of Psychotherapists. The Board was also concerned at some aspects of the ethical code and that there was no documented procedure for accrediting Balint leaders. The Board considers that a site visit might be necessary at a later stage, to see the work of the Ukrainian society in action. Vivian Pramaratoff added practical comments. The Board's proposal was agreed by the Council. Heather will inform the Ukrainian Society.

**Action: Heather**

**10. Proposals from the Board for registration in Sweden as an idealistic non-profit society:**

These were discussed at length. The discussion was divided in two parts:

- a) the need of transforming the IBF into a legal body in its own right in contrast to its present status – "une association du fait" belonging to two persons Michel Delbrouck and Jean Flechet.
- b) How the IBF assets and bank contacts shall be handled in the new organization.
  - a) Henry repeated from the previous council meetings that IBF as an international idealistic non-profit organisation and legal body under Swedish law and Swedish tax authority can be run by a Board also without Swedish representation. Thus it does not infringe on the freedom of choice of future Boards of the IBF. The advantages are several: autonomy, a clear status and quite unique fiscal advantages: interest on assets and a greater freedom of securing the value of long term assets without tax consequences when selling them years later.

The planned legal body requires the appointment of two accountancy revisors who will have to be nominated shortly in order to be elected in Philadelphia when the new statutes of the IBF will be submitted for acceptance at the General Assembly. The accountancy period will encompass the previous calendar year.

- b) Anxieties were expressed about the financial arrangements. However Henry emphasised that the funds of the IBF would be very much safer under the proposed arrangements. Every financial decision on the IBF assets must be made by the Board and ratified by the following Council meeting. He showed that the Treasurer through internet would be the only empowered Officer to effectuate the decided transfers.

The proposals as stated in the circulated agenda of the Meeting were eventually agreed unanimously by the Council.

**Action: Henry and Heather**

Don Nease proposed that item 4a from the Minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2010, detailing the decision-making arrangements of the Board and Council, should be added as an appendix to the revised statutes. This was agreed.

**Action: Heather**

**11. Confirmation of new Board Members:** Henry Jablonksi, Don Nease and Michel Delbrouck had stood again. Kristiina Toivola had been nominated to replace Benyamin Maoz and Paul Sackin had been nominated to replace Heather Suckling. There being no other nominations, all these Board members were confirmed by the Council. They would take up office at the General Assembly in Philadelphia. Michel Delbrouck announced that he wished to resign once the new arrangements for managing the IBF finances were in place. This caused some consternation but eventually Michel agreed that he intended to complete his two-year term of office.

**12. 17<sup>th</sup> International Congress, Philadelphia:** Jeff Sternlieb announced that arrangements were progressing well. Papers, posters and the Proceedings were being worked on. William Miller, a distinguished American Family Physician, had agreed to give the keynote address. The programme committee would in due course work on groups and leaders and also perhaps a closing panel discussion. There would be no drug company sponsorship, but the organisers were trying to obtain some grants. There would be opportunities for trips around Philadelphia, as well as the post-conference Washington trip. The organisers were happy to help with travel arrangements e.g. from New York. At this point Benyamin Moaz expressed his disappointment and anger at the way in which his paper had been rejected and he had been offered a poster presentation instead. Henry expressed understanding at the way Benyamin felt, but he pointed out that the IBF Board and international Balinters on the Congress Scientific Committee had had an intense exchange with the American coordinators of the Congress.

In the end -as a principle the organising country is responsible for the final programme of the congress and this ought to be respected and accepted.-

**13. WONCA:** Henry, Anne-Marie, Don and Andrew had attended the October 2010 meeting in Malaga and had run two workshops, each attended by around 20 people. They had included a fishbowl and short presentations on Balint work. These seemed well received. Good contacts were made during the congress with other GPs. Andrew said out that discussions within the IBF team were creative and gave ideas for future activities. John Salinsky pointed out that previous IBF workshops over the years had also been well received and not led to anything else. Jorge Brandao reported that there will be a WONCA Europe meeting in Lisbon in early July 2014. The Portuguese GP Association is keen to have an extensive Balint presence. It was agreed that a task force (including Jorge) would be needed to plan this. It would also be good to have a presence at WONCA Europe in Vienna in 2012 and world

WONCA in Prague in 2013. Henry and John Launer have suggested the possibility of a cooperation, see § 5.

**Action: The Board**

**14. Ascona Awards:** Heide Otten reported that there had been 43 entries this time. The winners were two students from the USA and one UK based Pakistani. They would be invited to Philadelphia (fares paid by IBF) to receive their prizes (paid for by the Ascona Foundation) and their essays would be published in the Proceedings. It was hoped to publish some of the other entries as well, possibly on the IBF website. There was some uncertainty as to the future of the Ascona Foundation. Heide expected to know more by next year.

**15. Suggested film about Balint work:** Benyamin was working on a proposal for a film following a doctor in a consultation, discussing the patient in a Balint group and then demonstrating his new found skills in another consultation. Benyamin would submit this proposal to the Board well before Philadelphia.

**16. Future council meetings:** The next council meeting would be in Philadelphia in September 2011. Vivian offered Sofia as a venue for the first half of 2012 and this was agreed by the Council. The Belgian group offered to host the Council meeting in October 2012 in Brussels but would need to investigate first if they could host the leadership conference with it. If not, another venue would be sought. Hans-Peter Edlhaimb offered the Danube University in Krems in Austria for the leadership conference and Council meeting in October 2014. All these proposals were accepted by the Council.

**Action: Bulgarian, Belgian and Austrian Balint Societies**

Following pleas from Kate Strasser and Jeff Sternlieb about alienating colleagues in the southern hemisphere, it was agreed that 'spring' and 'autumn' would no longer be used to describe the times of IBF meetings.

**Action: Heather**

**17. E-International Balint Journal:** There had been no recent submissions, but David Watt pointed out that it was agreed at our last meeting not to submit anything until the situation was clarified. Marieke is very anxious to establish a password protected section of the IBF website where members could access papers and other confidential information (see item 19). Meanwhile Henry will try and find out how many visitors there have been to the e-Journal and abstracts on the website.

**18. Comprehensive list of Balint books and articles and Translation Board:** Don reported that, with the help of administrative staff at Michigan University, he is building the database but this will need to relocate as he is leaving Michigan. Andrew Elder is looking at ideas for incorporating out of print Balint books and will bring a proposal to the next meeting.

The translation board is awaiting a proposal from Israel.

**Action: Andrew (Elder)**

**19. IBF Website:** Council members were reminded that the deadline for website submissions is **May 15<sup>th</sup>**. It was proposed that a password-protected section of the website could also include an archive of Council Minutes and relevant literature (if copyright permits).

**Action: Henry**

**20. Leadership conferences:** The organisers of this first conference had previously been warmly congratulated on a hugely successful conference. It was agreed that future meetings would occur in alternate years, starting in 2012, probably in September or

October. It was suggested that the same task force should continue to organise the next conference with the addition of a Danish member and a member of the 2012 host nation. In the future there should always be a member from the organisers of the previous conference.

**Action: Leadership Group**

**21. 18<sup>th</sup> International Conference in 2013:** Gunther Bergmann reported that arrangements were being made to host the Conference in Heidelberg in September 2013, dates to be confirmed. Some rooms in the University and hotels had already been reserved. The proposal was agreed by the council.

**Action: German Balint Society**

**22. Any other business:**

Jorge reported that he had an invitation to a Brazilian Balint conference by Prof Rita Branco. Jorge asked for permission to speak on behalf of the IBF which was gratefully accepted by the council. It was also pointed out that considering the Balint activity in Brasil the IBF would be happy to consider a membership application and that the Board had welcomed the individual application of Thiago Sarkis

Benyamin would write to other international medical associations (psychiatry etc) to inquire about the interest of organising Balint workshops at their conferences. He asked the Council, at its next meeting, to allow for time to consider possible approaches to various international professional organizations.

**Action Heather (for meeting agenda)**

Henry ended the meeting thanking everyone for their attention and contributions.

PS, HJ & HS 9-May-11