

# INTERNATIONAL BALINT FEDERATION

Officers of the Council (since 28<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.balintinternational.com)

## Minutes of the Council meeting of the International Balint Federation

held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2008 at 09.30-12.30

Congreshotel Oud-Poelgeest, Leiden

### Those present:

**Austria:**  
Hans-Peter Edlhaimb

Vivian Pramataroff  
Sigmund Scheerer

Eva Veress

**Belgium:**  
Michel Delbrouck;  
Luc Declaire

**Israel:**  
Nili Ben-Zvi  
Mark Budow  
Benyamin Maoz

**Sweden:**  
Henry Jablonski

**Switzerland:**  
Philipp Portwich

**Denmark:**  
Gunnar Axelgaard  
Helena Nielsen

**Italy:**  
Guido Prato Previde  
Anna Della Casa

**UK:**  
Andrew Dicker  
Andrew Elder  
Lenka Speight  
John Salinsky  
Heather Suckling

**Finland:**  
Kristina Toivola

**Netherlands:**  
Lex van de Grift  
Rudolf Meyer  
Marieke van Schie

**USA:**  
Don Nease  
Ann Sinclair

**France:**  
Michel Nicolle  
Louis Velluet, France  
Francoise Auger  
Marie Anne Puel

**Portugal:**  
Jorge Brandao

**AIPB:**  
Francois Berton  
Annie Bouillon  
Marie-Noelle Laveissiere

**Germany:**  
Heide Otten  
Ernst Petzold

**Romania:**  
Tunde Baka  
Albert Veress

### 1. Apologies:

Jean Flechet (Belgium); Vladimir Vinokur (Russia); Bohdan Wasilewski (Poland); Janos Major (Hungary); David Watt (UK) Olaf templin (Germany); the Balint Society of Australia.

### 2. Minutes of the meeting of the Council on 8th March 2008 in Israel:

The corrected version had been circulated previously, they were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

### 3. Matters arising that do not appear elsewhere on the agenda.

There were none.

### 4. Report from the Board:

Henry said that the Board worked as a team and he would like the members to contribute to the report, reporting on particular contributions.

**Henry** has been working with Philipp Portwich of the Swiss Balint Society to ensure that the WONCA meeting in September 2009 in Basel includes Balint work. He had been disappointed that his attempts to establish co-operation with EURACT for WONCA Basel through the Swedish representative of EURACT had been rejected at the EURACT council meeting in May, but was encouraged by the enthusiasm of the Vasco de Gama movement who wish to work with the IBF on presentations in Basel. He is going to take part in the presentations at the Annual General meeting of the French Balint Society to be held in Paris next week-end.

**Benyamin** had attended the annual Muradif Kulenovic School of Balint in Dubrovnik in June and been impressed by the quality of the work and the hospitality from the Croatian Balint Society. He said it was a small society that needs our support and he recommends all members of the IBF to attend. It is held in the first week of June each year.

**Don** told of his second visit to Australia. He and Heide had both served as co-leaders and faculty for a meeting of GP Educators in Tasmania at the end of April. Don returned to Australia in August where he served as faculty at a Balint Society of Australia Leaders' Intensive in Sydney along with Ann Sinclair, Frank Dornfest and Albert Lichenstein – all from the US. Later that month he helped with another GP Educators' workshop in Wollongong where two thirds of GP Educators participated in Balint work. He spoke about the group of IBF members who are working on an Internet Database that will soon be available to everyone interested in Balint work.

**Michel** spoke of his visit to Romania to run a workshop for Balint leaders, he was delighted to meet competent and efficient leaders and is looking forward to his next visit there in March. He also had a sneak preview of the Congress facilities, he says the Congress will be wonderful. He mentioned that the French and Belgian Balint societies are working more closely together and the co-operation is mutually beneficial.

#### **5. Treasurer's report (including payment of fees and officers' expenses):**

Michel presented the accounts and explained that he has moved some of the IBF funds to a different bank to ensure their security.

##### **a. Fees:**

Michel presented the following proposal from the Board which has endeavoured to ensure that the criteria for the payment of fees is fair and clear.

The new rates for 2009 are as follows:

- **Fee for National Societies:** **700 Euros**
- **Fee for newly formed\* or small societies\*\*** **350 Euros**
- **Reduced fee for former communist countries now in EU;** **350 Euros**
- **Reduced fee for former communist countries *not* in EU;** **175 Euros**
- **Individual membership fee (if no Balint Society in their country):** **70 Euros**

*\* A new society is defined as one less than 3 years old.*

*\*\*A small society is one with fewer than 40 members*

*(These criteria were agreed by the Board in April 2008)*

It is proposed that **fees will be due on 1st March each year.**

*A final demand will be sent on 1st April and if the fees have not been received within 4 weeks of the final demand, the Society's name will be removed from the website.*

This proposal was put to the meeting and passed unanimously.

##### **b. Protocol for Officers' Expenses.**

The Board has agreed the following:

1. Only claims for *travel* can be claimed from the IBF. The IBF is not able to pay for accommodation or loss of earnings.

2. A fixed budget for officers' expenses is set aside for *each* Council meeting and must not be exceeded. (The budget may need to be larger if a meeting is held in the USA rather than Brussels for example.)
3. If it is possible, all officers should claim their travel expenses from other sources (their employers or local societies) and the IBF should only be asked to contribute if the funds (or shortfall) are not available from these sources.
4. Only the *actual cost* of the travel can be claimed and must be accompanied by valid receipts.
5. Claims should not usually exceed 350 Euros per Council meeting, but the Treasurer has discretion to pay more if the actual cost exceeds this amount and there are sufficient funds available in that meeting's budget.

*These measures will ensure fairness and that no officer profits from their expenses. Officers must keep and show receipts of their travel expenses.*

The meeting thanked Michel for all his work in safeguarding the IBF funds.

## **6. Secretary's report (including Register of Members)**

### **a. Members:**

There are now 22 national Balint Societies who are members of the IBF, the names of which will be on the IBF website.

### **b. Reports from National Societies:**

All the reports from the national Societies that were received by 30th September 2008 have been circulated. These help us to keep in touch with each other and disseminate ideas, so please do ensure that your society writes these twice a year, before the Council meetings.

### **c. Communication with the membership:**

There is considerable difficulty in maintaining the List of officers of national Societies as some people do not respond and others send me information after their own elections at various times of the year. The system of a renewal form does not work as they are rarely completed fully. In future the list will be circulated with the minutes of Council meetings with a request to send corrections as soon as possible afterwards, so that the updated list can be put on the IBF website.

***If you receive communications from the IBF and you are no longer in office, please pass on information to your successors.***

There are at present **104** people in the email group of IBF contacts group, (the list of officers) and it is their responsibility to disseminate information to all their own society's members.

### **d. Criteria for Membership:**

Heather reminded the meeting that in order to remain members of the IBF, societies must fulfil the criteria. i.e.:

- **Pay the fees!**
- Send the **Leadership criteria** in English
- Confirm their societies **ethical code** –in English

She still has not received all these documents in English and suspects that since they were first requested, there have been changes, even to those she has received.

She will be asking everyone to send these again during the next year, so please respond positively.

### **e. Elections:**

The present council took office in Lisbon in September 2007 and the new Council will take over after the next international in September 2009. In order to ensure that all members can vote, voting will be by email and the votes counted at the Spring Council meeting. (This worked well last time) This will be discussed further today under item 16 of the agenda.

In spite of all her complaints, Heather said that communication is much better and most people reply promptly to her requests- so many thanks to everyone. However, there is always room for improvement!

## **7. Wonca 2009 (Basel) and the promotion of Balint work:**

WONCA 2009 meets in Basel 16th-19th September 2009 and Philipp Portwich, the Vice President of the Swiss Balint Society is on the organising committee. The International Balint Federation and the Vasco de Gama movement are making a joint proposal for a workshop. The title of the symposium is appropriate to Balint work *“Fascination with complexity; dealing with individuals in a field of uncertainty.”* The IBF group consists of Philipp, Henry, Heide, Don, Marie-Anne and Helena. They plan a presentation on the Doctor-Patient relationship, a demonstration (fishbowl) and Balint groups. Leaders will be required, so please inform the group if you intend to go to the Basel meeting. If possible please find your own funding, but grants of up to 350 Euros from the IBF may be made available for up to 5 Balint leaders who have no other subsidy.

**Action: All who are going to attend WONCA in Basel**

#### **8. EURACT (including progress of Vasco da Gama}**

The Board is disappointed that EURACT seems resistant to Balint work, but “steady drops wear away the stone”. However, the enthusiasm of the Vasco de Gama movement is very encouraging.

#### **9. International Congress 2009 (Brasov, Romania):**

Albert Veress gave an excellent PowerPoint presentation about the 2009 International Balint Congress in Brasov, Romania. The venue is a beautiful mountain resort and a warm welcome guaranteed. Plans are well developed and all the information will be available on the Congress website [www.balintcongress2009.com](http://www.balintcongress2009.com) from 31st October 2008.

The Congress fee will be 310 Euros for participants and 195 Euros for accompanying persons for those who *book before 30.6.09*. Late bookings will be charged at 395 Euros and 195 Euros respectively.

The Call for Papers has already been sent out, the full text must be received by 31st December 2008. Papers should be sent to [drh@jablonski.se](mailto:drh@jablonski.se) and [alveress@clicknet.ro](mailto:alveress@clicknet.ro)

**Action: All**

#### **10. Ascona awards:**

Ernst reminded us to encourage medical students to submit essays for the Ascona prize before 31st December 2008. Full details are included on the IBF website and in a flyer attached to these minutes.

**Action: All**

#### **11. Right Livelihood Award:**

Sadly our application for this award has not been successful, but we are very grateful to our nominator, Professor Dietrich von Engelhardt, to Heide, whose idea it was and to all those who contributed to preparing the application.

#### **12. e-international Balint Journal:**

Marie-Anne wondered if the e-journal was worth the considerable effort involved in maintaining it. Marieke said it was invaluable to the Dutch Balint Society and she felt that it was not necessary to translate all the abstracts. She explained that the Dutch Society had a link to the e-journal. Don suggested that all societies should set up a link. This would not only encourage more use in the IBF but would mean that Balint would have a higher profile on Google.

The question of copyright was discussed and it was decided that each Society should investigate the regulations that applied to relevant publications.

Please send contributions for the e-journal to Marie-Anne at [mapuel@wanadoo.fr](mailto:mapuel@wanadoo.fr)

**Action: All**

#### **13. Progress of the Comprehensive list of Balint books and Articles:**

Don has convened a working group to develop a database of Balint books and articles which will be available on the Internet. The group includes Marion Lustig, Leonie Sullivan, Stanley Rabin and John Salinsky.

**Action: Don**

#### **14. Website for the International Balint Federation:**

Henry asked for contributions to be received **by 31st October**. He reminded the meeting that the website will only be updated twice a year- after the Spring and Autumn meetings, so if you miss the deadline your additions/amendments will have to wait 6 months.

Please send the information to Henry by email [drh@jablonski.se](mailto:drh@jablonski.se) **as soon as possible**.

The IBF website [www.balintinternational.com](http://www.balintinternational.com) is an invaluable source of information about Balint activities.

#### **15. Council meeting; Spring 2009 (Chicago):**

Don has invited the IBF to hold the Spring Council meeting in Chicago on **Sunday 19th April 2009**. It will take place during a “Week-end of Balint group work and International Fellowship” which is jointly sponsored by the American Balint Society and the Department of Family Medicine, University of Illinois at Chicago. Early registration must be **before 1st February 2009**. The venue for the meeting is the Seneca Hotel, 200 East Chestnut Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611, where rooms have been reserved for the meeting at a reduced rate. These rooms will only be available to those who book early. Further details will be sent out shortly.

Don explained that the hotel is situated in an excellent location, a few minutes walk from Lake Michigan, the art galleries and shopping!

#### **16. Arrangements for the Nomination and Election of Officers (to be elected in Spring 2009 and to take up office in September 2009)**

Information about the Election Procedure together with Nomination papers will be sent out with these minutes.

All the present Officers wish to stand for re-election, but this is a competitive process so please feel free to nominate others for the posts.

**Nominations must be received before Sunday 8th March 2009.**

#### **17. Any Other Business:**

i. Vivian Pramataroff spoke about her work in Bulgaria. She was able to find the doctor who translated “The doctor, his patient and the illness” into Bulgarian. She has identified 12 people who wish to be trained as Balint Leaders and she is running courses for them in Bulgaria at her own expense.

Henry congratulated her on behalf of the IBF and suggested that the Board should consider supporting such projects financially. This will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

**Action: Heather**

ii. Kristina Toivola thanked her hosts for a warm welcome and said she had enjoyed the week-end, but she pointed out ways that the organisation could be improved. Firstly as the only person from Finland and an English-speaker she had been dismayed to find herself in a group where most of the other participants already worked together and where everyone else spoke French, a language that she does not speak. She felt that care should be taken to ensure that those who were in the same groups at home should be separated, and that the language of the groups should be as advertised. She had also been distressed because her name had inadvertently been omitted from the list of those attending the Running Dinner and had not been given a ticket. This had been rectified, but at the time she had felt isolated and excluded.

Thoses responsible apologised and thanked her for bringing these matters to their attention.

iii. Mark Budow asked for clarification about what is expected from those who host Council meetings. Should international delegates be asked to pay the full conference fee? Should they pay for

social activities? What about meals? The Israelis had managed to find funds to subsidise the international participants but it was difficult.

It was agreed that this would be discussed by the Board.

**Action: Heather**

iv. Lex van de Grift apologised because some people had been overcharged by the hotel. He explained the problem was difficult to resolve because it was Sunday, but he assured all participants that if they had overpaid, the excess would be refunded.

v. Helena Nielsen informed the meeting that there is to be a Nordic Balint Symposium in Copenhagen in May 2009.

The President concluded by thanking our Dutch hosts for a splendid week-end and the meeting closed at 12.40 p.m.

***Documents distributed with these minutes:***

1. Ascona Prize
2. Bank details and Fees for 2009
3. Election procedure
4. Nomination form
5. List of Officers of the National Societies