

Minutes of the 38th AITA/IATA asbl General Assembly, 23 July 2022 by Zoom

1. Official opening and welcome to the 38th General Assembly – AITA/IATA

President Aled Rhys-Jones declared the 38th AITA/IATA General Assembly (GA) open. He welcomed delegates to the Zoom and noted how time had flown since the Monaco GA.

2. Appointment of the Presiding Chair of the 38th General Assembly – Council proposed Dirk De Corte and, as there were no objections, he was appointed.

a. The Presiding Chair opened the proceedings by thanking delegates and outlined the arrangements for the Zoom. Delegates agreed that the meeting could be recorded, and he asked all delegates to mute their microphone.

3. Roll call of Members represented – Dirk De Corte confirmed that **18** National Centre Members and **15** Associate Members had returned their Nomination Form. Two National Centres and one Associate Member had asked for a proxy and one individual would represent both their National Centre and their Association Membership. There were seven observers one each from Hungary, Flanders (SGT), Bangladesh and the Russian Federation and three from Spain.

a. The Presiding Chair confirmed that the GA was legally constituted and that delegates had correctly received GA documents. Delegates from the following **20** Members (National Centres) were entitled to vote:

Bangladesh – 6 votes; Denmark – 6 votes; Estonia – 6 votes; Finland – 6 votes; Flanders (SGT) – 6 votes; France – 6 votes; Germany (BAG & BDAT) – 6 votes; Great Britain (SGT) – 6 votes; Hungary – 6 votes; Iceland – 6 votes (by proxy to Finland); Israel – 6 votes; Italy – 6 votes; Japan – 6 votes (by proxy to Monaco); Latvia – 6 votes; Lithuania – 6 votes; Monaco – 6 votes; North Macedonia – 6 votes; Slovenia – 6 votes, Spain – 6 votes; Sweden – 6 votes. A total of 18 NC present representing 20 NC which gives **120** votes.

The following **13** Associate Members had registered to vote and actively participated in the voting process:

Austria (Salzburger Amateurteaterverband) – 1 vote; Central African Republic (FCAT - Fédération Centrafricaine de Théâtre) – 1 vote; Denmark – (Villy Dall) – 1 vote; Flanders (SGT) (de WAANzin) – 1 vote; Flanders (SGT) (Jozef Simonskring VZW, Staltheater) – 1 vote; France (Theatre de la Roële) – 1 vote; Great Britain (The Questors Theatre) – 1 vote; Great Britain (Unknown Theatre Company) – 1 vote; Ireland (Mary Pears) – 1 vote; Portugal (Teatro De Balugas) – 1 vote; Slovenia (Pionirski dom) – 1 vote (by proxy to Slovenia NC); Spain ('Federació de Teatre Amateur de la Comunitat Valenciana) – 1 vote; USA (Frank Peot) – 1 vote. A total of **13** votes.

b. Dirk De Corte outlined the method of voting by Zoom. First the National Centres would vote, then the two NC carrying a proxy would vote and then, the Associates would vote. He explained that the Zoom main room, in which all those attending were placed, would be the voting room. Those **not** voting would be put into a breakout room so that only those in the main room could vote. A successful test poll was held.

c. The members of Council were introduced to delegates, apart from Frank Katoola who was encountering Wi-Fi issues, and it was noted that observers were also attending.

4. Agree the agenda of the General Assembly (GA)

The agenda of the GA was agreed by a show of hands

5. Acceptance of new Members (National Centre and Associate) - Dirk De Corte explained that under the Constitution, all Members (National Centres and Associates) proposed by Council to become a Member of AITA/IATA needed to be approved by the GA. The four new Members were listed in the Forum Book on page 22. Dirk asked delegates to vote on each organisation individually. The outcome of the voting is detailed below.

a. To accept Federació De Grups Amateurs De Catalunya as a National Centre Member (SGT) of AITA/IATA asbl.

Using the online poll, Federació De Grups Amateurs De Catalunya was unanimously approved as a National Centre Member

b. To accept Teatroff Drama as an Associate Member of AITA/AITA asbl.

Using the online poll, Teatroff Drama was unanimously approved as an Associate Member

c. To accept Boram Lee as an Associate Member of AITA/AITA asbl.

Using the online poll, Boram Lee was unanimously approved as an Associate Member

d. To accept Towarzystwo Teatralne im. Jędrzeja Cierniaka as an Associate Member of AITA/AITA asbl

Using the online poll, Towarzystwo Teatralne im. Jędrzeja Cierniaka was unanimously approved as an Associate Member

e. Following the acceptance of Teatroff Drama, Australia as an Associate Member (1 vote) and because they were present online, Dirk De Corte confirmed that the total number of votes available was **134** (20 NC with 6 votes each = 120 plus 14 Associate Members with 1 vote each = 14).

6. Approval of the Minutes of the 37th General Assembly (GA), Monaco – Dirk De Corte noted that the minutes of the 37th GA were in the online Forum Book. There were no questions and delegates were asked to approve the minutes by a show of hands.

The Minutes of the 37th General Assembly (GA) were agreed by a show of hands.

7. AITA/IATA asbl Reviews 2021 – 2022

a. *Council Review by President Aled Rhys-Jones* – Dirk De Corte noted that the Council report was on page 19 of the Forum Book and invited President Aled Rhys-Jones to speak. President Aled Rhys-Jones noted that this 70th Anniversary of AITA/IATA was a historic occasion because it was the first time that Associates could vote in a GA, and he welcomed all Associates and National Centres to the GA.

b. Last year in Monaco, we all hoped that by now COVID would be over, and then came Omicron and Council's plans for a face-to-face meeting to team build and discuss strategy and planning kept moving into the future. We were finally able to meet in person in Nancy, France as guests of Councillor Patrick Schoenstein and Théâtre de la Roële whose hospitality was generous and outstanding. Council welcome offers to host a Council meeting and if an AITA Member wishes to host a one-and-a-half-day Council meeting please get in touch with the Secretariat.

c. My stated aim in Monaco was to set up three working groups: CYTheatre, focussing on Children and Youth; Digital Capabilities; and Finance. These groups have met regularly online, and their work is detailed in the Council report, but I would like to highlight a couple of matters. The CYTheatre group are working on an online conference to be held 5 November and they will be assisted by Edith Coen, a Master's Degree student from the University of Antwerp who is on a three-month placement with AITA/IATA, and we thank Dirk De Corte for facilitating this. She will also undertake some baseline research on the future of Children and Youth festivals post-COVID; their environmental impact; and how to run responsible events. She will contact many of you about this research and she will present her findings during the conference. The event is called *Curtain Up! The Kids are Back!* and will be partly funded by Goethe Institute, Germany.

d. We celebrated World Theatre Day on 27 March by launching our new website, development of which is ongoing. The Digital Capabilities group are exploring the possibility of creating a Members Platform on the site. The Finance group have been looking at new ways to raise money for AITA/AITA and discussions in Nancy generated many new ideas.

e. The new COVID variants continue to cause problems and some countries have difficult visa requirements in place. But amateur theatre is starting to deal with these new hurdles and festivals are starting to happen. I attended the Lingua Festival in Portugal in June organised by our Associate Member Teatro de Balugas. This new festival explored the role of

minority languages through amateur theatre with international participation. These languages were: Sassarese from Sardinia; Extremaduran from Spain; and Mirandese from Portugal. I was very impressed by the festival's quality and organisation and the next one will be in two years. I also plan to attend the FITAG Festival in Girona and the Martin Festival in Slovakia.

f. Forward planning continues for the 2023 AITA/IATA Festival and GA in Debrecen on 19 – 25 June. I visited Debrecen earlier this year and you will hear more a little later today.

g. I am pleased to report that the new Council is working well and the dynamic in the team is positive and collaborative and, while there is much to do, we are moving forward. The ethos of AITA/IATA is to be inclusive, and unity is our watchword and our message of understanding and education through amateur theatre is as important now as it was 70 years ago when, in 1952 a group of passionate theatre dreamers brought AITA/IATA into existence. Happy 70th birthday to AITA/AITA.

h. There were no questions and delegates were asked to vote on the Council's review by a show of hands.

Council's review was agreed to by a show of hands.

8. Financial Review 2021 – 2022, Treasurer Anna-Karin Waldemarson – Anna-Karin first thanked Villy Dall, former Treasurer and Poul, the Bookkeeper in DATS, the Danish Theatre Association, for maintaining the finance and the bookkeeping. She referred delegates to the financial reports on page 24 – 30 of the Forum Book. She noted that it had taken a long time, first to have the updated Constitution accepted by the Belgian Moniteur and then to transfer the Belfius Bank account from Villy Dall to her, this work was still not completed.

a. She turned to the three elements of the finance in the Forum Book. First, Income and expenditure 2021- 2022. She noted that income from membership fees was € 12,975 (National Centres) and € 5,025 (Associate Members) giving a total Membership income of € 18,000. Turning to the Expenses, which are mainly the cost of the sub-contracting the secretariat and hosting and some travel expenses and grants giving a total of € 15,240. The profit last year was € 3,449, more than the previous year because we had to cancel some planned events owing to COVID – namely education, World Theatre Day and Children & Youth.

b. Turning to the statement of balance you can see the total assets of € 86,433 with allocated funds and provision of € 51,738. Moving on to the cash statements, you will see that the cash position at the end of year is € 86,433 with a total cash movement of € 3,635. You can see that the allocated funds on C&Y were not spent nor were the funds allocated

for the World Theatre Day meaning that the amount of money at the start of the book year is the same as at the end which is € 57,673.

c. Anna-Karin asked for comments or questions. There were none and Dirk De Corte asked delegates to approve the financial report presented by Council using the online poll.

Using the online poll, the Financial Review 2022 - 2022 was unanimously approved.

9. Discharge to Councillors – Dirk De Corte explained the meaning behind this vote was to confirm that delegates trusted the work of the Councillors and that the financial work of AITA/IATA was being carried out correctly in accordance both with the AITA/IATA Constitution and financial accounting principles. Dirk asked delegates to confirm that they gave their discharge to Councillors using the online poll.

Using the online poll, delegates unanimously approved the Discharge to Councillors.

10. Budget for 2022 – 2023 – Anna-Karin Waldemarson noted that the budget was on page 31 of the Forum Book and that Councillors had worked hard to create a balanced budget. AITA/IATA had budgeted to raise income and reduce expenditure. The Fees will continue at the same level; delegates had already heard about the grant from the Goethe Institute for the Children and Youth Conference; and the fund-raising team are looking at ways to raise more income. Total expected income is €23,807. On expenses, the secretariat costs to continue at the same level but there may be a small increase in some external subscription fees, but the cost of meetings has been reduced as some will be held by Zoom. The total anticipated expenses are, therefore, €23,807. This is the budget proposed by Council. She asked if there were any questions.

a. There were no questions and Dirk invited delegates to vote.

Using the online poll, the Budget for 2022 – 23 was unanimously approved

11. Other proposals submitted for consideration by the General Assembly (GA) – Dirk De Corte confirmed that no proposals had been submitted for consideration by the GA by the deadline.

12. Announcement of the host venue for 39th GA in 2023 – Dirk De Corte asked János Regös, Hungarian National Centre, to speak about the 39th GA to be held in Debrecen, Hungary. János Regös noted that the next AITA/AITA Festival and GA would be in Debrecen, Hungary, taking place within the framework of the Theatre Olympics which take place between late May and the end of June. He confirmed that the Hungarian parliament had recently accepted next year's budget, with only a small reduction in the funding allocated to the festival's theatre partners in the Hungarian National Theatre. Their budget

included the funding for the Debrecen Festival and there was sufficient to hold the festival as planned.

a. They planned to invite about ten groups, plus one spare, to be hosted for the entire festival. They would host the GA representatives – about 100 people – and Council. Official approval had been given in Debrecen, including by the university, to host the GA and the guests of the GA. Debrecen had recently opened a new, large and well-equipped theatre venue to hold the performances, the colloques and other events. He noted that Debrecen was a very nice city in the East of Hungary in the protestant tradition with a large church.

b. A Joint Committee from AITA/IATA and the local organisers would organise the festival and the GA. From the Hungarian side, members in addition to himself would be: Zsigmond Lakó, resident and local to Debrecen, a professor in the University and leader of the University amateur theatre. He is also a member of our presidency in the NC and an important person in the project. Also, on the Joint committee is Péter Gemza, Director of Csokonai Theatre in Debrecen; and István Puskás the Cultural Deputy Mayor of Debrecen who is also a professor of theatre. The festival would be held 19 - 25 June 2023 and he asked delegates to spread the news of the event. Zsigmond Lakó confirmed that Janos had covered all the key matters and he hoped to meet everyone in person in Debrecen next year.

c. Villy Dall asked if next year's GA would be a hybrid event - both online and in person - which he felt enabled people from around the world to take part in the democracy of the organisation. Zsigmond Lakó thought that this should be technically possible, but President Aled Rhys-Jones hoped that as many as possible would attend in person.

13. Written questions from Members – Dirk De Corte confirmed that a question had been received from the Associate member from the Central Africa Republic (CAR). President Aled Rhys-Jones noted that it had been received just after the deadline and the question asked was to become a National Centre Member. Aled explained that there was a necessary process to follow which included research into the organisation which was not possible in the short time available between receipt of the request and today's GA. He confirmed that Council would address the request at their next Council meeting and, if deemed suitable to become a National Centre, they would be proposed by Council at next year's GA. Dirk De Corte explained this in French to the CAR Associate Nazir Eliakim Raizou, present at the GA.

14. Questions or remarks from delegates – Mary Pears said hello to everyone and apologised for her earlier technical issues. Béatrice Cellario from Monaco congratulated Dirk de Corte for his work. Dirk thanked everyone for their attention.

15. Closing of the 38th General Assembly (GA) of AITA/IATA asbl – President Aled Rhys-Jones thanked Dirk De Corte for his stylish handling of the online GA and thanked the

Secretariat Anne Gilmour for her hard work and patience and thanked Council for their hard work and looked forward to seeing everyone next year in Debrecen.

The meeting closed at 14:50 UK Time.

DRAFT