DRAFT MINUTES

32th Meeting of the IUC Association Assembly

and

37th Meeting of the IUC Association Board

Held through internet from 10 to 24 December 2024.

PARTICIPATED: Wieger Bakker, Gunn Elisabeth Birkelund, Nada Bruer Ljubišić, Frank Chervenak, Vida Demarin, Milena Dragičević Šešić, Berta Dragičević, Andrea Feldman, Peter Fischer-Appelt, Sigmund Grønmo, Lee Kendall Metcalf, Lise Kjølsrod, Hrvoje Kraljević, Asim Kurjak, Simona Kuti, Frank Laubert, Geoffrey Nice, Hans Egil Offerdal, Krunoslav Pisk, Hans Joachim Seitz, Zvonimir Šikić, Ivan Šimonović, Ivo Šlaus, Aleksandar Štulhofer, Istvan Teplan, Dušica Vujaklija and Mitja Žagar

A quorum is established by participation of 27 out of 35 members.

All documents were circulated to all members on 10 December and the meeting was open next two weeks in which period members corresponded through e-mails.

1. Ms. Bruer presented the report on recent developments.

In 2024 there were 59 IUC academic programmes with 2070 participants, 169 of them online. 5 programmes have been cancelled. General participation is stable at around 2000 participants for some time now and it is not expected that it would significantly change.

The contract with the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth was signed in April on 115.000 Euro, which is an increase of 15% which would enable the IUC to fund the same number of participants as last year due to increase in accommodation prices. There were 163 grantees from the Croatian Ministry Scholarship, 4 grants were issued from SE European Scholarship fund (Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia) and 11 grants from Marija and Mirjan Damaška fund (Ghana, Kosovo, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine).

Negotiations with University of Zagreb were intensified by the end of the 2023 and very difficult in the first part of 2024. Instead of the previously arranged payment of the IUC’s share of utility and maintenance costs, the new agreement expects payment of fees for every participant and each room. This methodology is complicated due to different categories of participants (students, doctoral students, lecturers or professionals/ percentage of participants staying in the Dormitory, number of years the programme is being held, size of the programme,…). This contract was discussed and accepted at the May EC meeting, so Prof. Pisk has signed it on 22 May. As a part of the contract University accepted to cover the full salary of the three employees in case these funds would be secured by the Ministry, instead of the previously covered two and a half salaries. The Ministry approved this increase and University of Zagreb announced the public tender for the job in the IUC Secretariat. Ms. Nikolina Vekić applied and was hired as a full-time employee of the University of Zagreb for the IUC, after working for the IUC on temporary contracts for 6 years. The IUC again has three full time employees in the Secretariat, after more than 20 years.

Due to the new payment regulation to the University of Zagreb, the IUC Secretariat has been evaluating expenditures and income from each programme. 45% of programmes generate minuses (fees collected from the programmes do not manage to cover fees to University of Zagreb, welcome reception and city tour), while 55 % generate a small surplus. The only significant surplus is generated from programmes that are accommodated in the Dormitory. After payment of these expenses, the IUC remained with 25% of collected fees and it is concluded that additional sources need to be found to fund the yearly operation of the IUC office. Certain funds are gathered from membership fees and Ministry agreement, but it is not sufficient. The analysis has shown that certain longstanding courses do not pay any individual fees, but cover only General course fee, claiming that all participants are lecturers. Due to these facts, the Executive Committee at the last meeting in fall has concluded that changes need to be introduced in the way fees are collected. To make the same rules for courses and conferences it has been concluded that there would be two types of fees: General fee (for courses and conferences alike) would be 600 Euros and those would be the responsibility of course directors. All participants (students and lecturers alike) would need to cover individual fee of 55 Euro. Organisers are exempt from paying the individual fee, but there can be maximum 5 organisers per programme. In case a programme is lasting 3 days or less the General fee is 300 Euros. In case a programme cannot close the financial construction, it may appeal to the Director General to ask for certain discounts.

Other developments included Mr. Grievink submitting comment to the EU Commission regarding Interim evaluation of Erasmus+ until 2027, Prof. Seitz printing the IUC academic programme brochures for 2024 and 2025, visits of different ambassadors to the IUC, 3 days events of Days in India in Dubrovnik, organised for the local population. Also, as the Fulbright Specialist programme was approved, Prof. John Cox from North Dakota State University came to the IUC and spent May carrying out his project of contacting scholars from the SE European region to identify their familiarity with the IUC and interest for specific academic topics.

Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Indiana University and University College Copenhagen terminated their membership while a request for membership has been received by the Södertörn University, through its Departments of Media and Communication Studies which is active in one IUC programme.

Ms. Bruer attended Kathy Wilkes memorial conference in Torino in April, as well as a programme on the occasion of the 50 years of University of Montenegro in Podgorica in September. She also took part at the EAIE conference in Toulouse in mid September. Mr. Tomislav Kvesić visited the office of the Utrecht Summer School in the period from August 12 to 16, organised by Prof. Wieger Bakker and supported by Mrs. Bettina Nelemans, Director of the Utrecht Summer School. Based on these trips, the office is now introducing some changes in the practical operation, i.e. abolishing paper applications, introducing advertising on online platforms (summer schools in Europe) and introducing more functions for the IUC web page.

From September to November Ms. Jessica van Dam-Wisse volunteered in the IUC office to work on a project of enhancing the profile and recognition of the IUC. During three months Ms. van Dam-Wisse has formalised mission statement for the IUC, structured and carried out questionnaire to IUC course directors and conducted in-depth interviews with course directors, both on site and online. Feedback of these activities are that IUC organisers appreciate informal atmosphere, enough time for discussions, network building and the mix of highly esteemed scholars, early careers, and students. Everyone mentions increasingly high costs and difficulties getting funding. Suggestions for improvement were to provide affordable accommodation / dormitories, improve offer of the supporting restaurant, provide information on possible funding, make online publications attractive for participants, help disseminate calls for papers in Eastern Europe, organize alumni meetings and thus influence global networking. Ms. van Dam-Wisse also initiated a crowdfunding campaign for South East Scholarship fund with the goal to gather 15000 Euro for 20 students. She has also updated the IUC LinkedIn page, applied for Google AD Grants and identified numerous foundations that might be willing to fund the IUC programmes. This information would be shared with IUC course directors.

On 29 October, within the IUC Visibility project, the IUC organised a round table on higher education in SE Europe in Bruxelles, for representatives of different educational and governmental organisations from the region and W Europe that have offices in Bruxelles. IUC was represented by Prof. Šimonović, Prof. Bakker, Mr. Grievink and Ms. Bruer. It included online participation. The round table focused on the role of higher education in the fields of justice, human rights, civil society and the European Higher Education Area in South-East Europe, while looking ahead to the expected expansion of the EU in the region. It consisted of two elements: presentations of IUC activities and mission and follow-up discussions. There would be follow-up activities after this meeting.

DG Prof. Šimonović, DDG Prof. Bakker and ES Bruer have held the online meeting with app. 50 course directors on 27 November and 12 December. The purpose of these meetings was to thank them for their work, inform them about latest developments and changes in fees, present possible funding schemes, advertising options for their programmes, but above all, find out about their needs from the IUC and gather ideas about what they consider important as a role of the IUC.

After a meeting that took place on 9 December, it has been approved by the Dubrovnik Mayor, Mr. Mato Franković that City of Dubrovnik would enable IUC participants free entrance in more areas that are governed by the City of Dubrovnik like island Lokrum, City walls, on top of the current entrance in Dubrovnik museums. The methodology and formal confirmation still needs to be arranged with the city. This initiative was undertaken to offer a bit more to course directors to compensate the overall increase in prices in Dubrovnik.

Without any comments the report was unanimously accepted.

1. Financial report for 2024 was presented. This is the preliminary financial report since the final one can only be made at the very end of the year and the final version will be put together by Mr. Offerdal after the spring audit. Income in fees would be close to expectations while contribution from the Ministry should also arrive by the end of the year. Expenditures were according to plans, except travel expenses, web development, earmarked project and visibility which were slightly lower. It is expected that the deficit would be app. 10000 Euros instead of planned deficit of 40000 Euros. Nevertheless, majority of the projects have been carried out as planned. The financial report of Mr. Offerdal for 2023, as well as the final Budget for 2024 are part of this financial report.

Members of the Association reviewed and unanimously approved the financial report for 2024.

1. The preliminary budget for 2025 as accepted at the October EC Meeting has been presented. Members of the Association reviewed the preliminary budget and it was unanimously approved.
2. Academic programmes for the 2025 have been presented. 57 programmes are announced while it is expected that few more programmes may apply for fall 2025. These programmes were reviewed and unanimously approved by Association members.

Since there were no additional suggestions for the agenda, the meeting has been closed on 24 December 2024.

Nada Bruer Ljubišić Krunoslav Pisk

Executive Secretary President