

Report of the Executive Board of the ICLA (International Association of Comparative Literature) University of Utrecht, 4-5 July 2017

Present (for all or part of the meeting): ZHANG Longxi, Hans-Joachim Backe, Noriko Hiraishi, Efrain Kristal, Paulo Lemos Horta, Anne Tomiche, Marc Maufort, Achim Hölter, Lucia Boldrini, Anders Pettersson, Kathleen Komar, Helena Buescu, Sandra Bermann, Cathy Jing ZHANG (représentant Huilin YANG), Kitty J. Millett, Sowon Park, Liedeke Plate, Haun Saussy, Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, Marie-Thérèse Abdelmessih, Wiebke Denecke, William Spurlin, Massimo Fusillo, Ōshima Hitoshi, Márcio Seligmann-Silva, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, HASHIMOTO Yorimitsu, Sangjin PARK.

Monday, July 4th, 13h:

The President of the Association, Zhang Longxi, opens the meeting thanking Hans Bertens for his welcome at the University of Utrecht. To enable members who arrived in Amsterdam in the morning to join us in Utrecht, we are starting the meeting in the afternoon and extending the session until 19h. Hans Bertens also welcomes the participants. He gives a number of practical details and raises the question of financing the Executive Board meeting by requesting that this be added to the agenda of the meeting. He then withdraws because he prefers not to attend the meeting as a former President.

The minutes of the meetings that took place in Vienna in July 2016 in the framework of the Congress are approved unanimously (this includes: the report of the Executive Board which was held just before the Congress, on the 19 and 20 July 2016; the account of the Executive Board held at the end of the Congress and of the elections held on 27 July 2016). The agenda of the present meeting is also approved, with the addition of the point raised by Hans Bertens.

President ZHANG Longxi presents his report, which is his first as President of the ICLA. This year has been rich in experience for him and he thanks the team of colleagues with whom he has worked. He highlights the strengths of his work for this first year. He begins by discussing the relationship between the ICLA and regional associations: regional associations of comparative literature are developing in Gulf Arab countries and Colombia, and colleagues have been in contact with ZHANG Longxi; relations with the Brazilian Association (ABRALIC, Associação Brasileira de Literatura Comparada) have been reinforced as evidenced by the invitation that was made to Zhang Longxi to participate in the ABRALIC's convention in August. After honorary President Steven Sondrup supplied some information on the functioning of the website, a lot of progress has been made thanks to Lucia Boldrini: not only did Lucia Boldrini upload many documents, she also followed the recommendation to find a competent person to take over the management of the site (see later in the report). The team of ICLA officers is now complete: the Vice Presidents took on new responsibilities (Kathleen Komar agreed to chair the Committee for the Balakian prize and Anders Pettersson the Structures Committee); ZHANG Longxi thanks Theo D'haen and Helena

Buescu for agreeing to chair respectively the Research and Project Committee and the Nomination Committee. ZHANG Longxi then recalls the difficulties that occurred after the elections in Vienna relating to the absence of English-speaking Secretary: the appointment of Paulo Lemos Horta for this position, in coordination with Anne Tomiche, has solved the problem. Another problem currently being resolved is that of establishing reliable lists of members. Anders Pettersson is working on this task with the help of Hans-Joachim Backe and Lucia Boldrini. ZHANG Longxi also reports on his work towards organizing the 2019 Congress: The Shenzhen University team is making good progress in preparing for the event and is doing everything possible so that the Conference can take place in Shenzhen (see below the report on the organization of the 2019 Conference). Possible locations for the Conference in 2022 include Australia, Scotland and Ireland. But we have been asked to clarify the key question—what are the requirements to be fulfilled in order to be able to make a proposal for a conference venue? Liedeke Plate proposes to send to all the members of the board the document prepared by ACLA (the American Association of Comparative Literature) for potential Conference organizers. The document can be adapted to the requirements of the ICLA Congress. President ZHANG Longxi looks forward to continuing in 2017-2018 the work started this year. His report is approved unanimously.

The secretaries of the Association, Anne Tomiche and Paulo Horta, then present their report. They worked closely together this year, together with the President, to prepare the minutes of the Vienna meetings, to organize in August 2016 an electronic vote on the changes to the presentation of the Association on its website, to update the list and addresses of the members of the new Executive Board, and to prepare the agenda and reports for this meeting. Their report is approved unanimously.

The treasurers of the Association make their report. Hans-Joachim Backe, Treasurer for Europe and Africa, underlines the good financial health of the regions he is dealing with: financial entries (contributions) balance expenses (mainly the subsidy for Literary Research grant and website costs): The total financial assets of the association for the Europe-Africa zone now amount to 75,900 € / \$ 82,750. Hans-Joachim Backe explains that one of the two savings accounts had to be closed and its funds were transferred to the general account. Hans-Joachim Backe proposes that these funds be placed in a progressive savings account at 1.25% (an account that involves the least risk and allows access to funds). His proposal is approved unanimously.

Noriko Hiraishi, Treasurer for Asia and the Pacific, says it was easy to get the dues back from associations in China, India, Korea and Japan this year. She points out that the procedure for individual membership discouraged many potential members from Taiwan and Australia and she wonders whether a paypal account should be created for Asia. Lucia Boldrini emphasizes that it would then be necessary to have a paypal account for all the treasurers. Hans-Joachim Backe indicates that as far as he is concerned, he already has a paypal account set up for Egypt.

Efrain Kristal, who succeeds Kathleen Komar as Treasurer of the Americas and who, like her, comes from UCLA and relies on the University of California to collect the dues, notes the need to set up a system allowing for both check and credit card collection (which the UCLA system does not currently allow). He also suggests to change the site

to allow a payment of the contribution directly via the site, which to date is impossible. The reports of the three treasurers are approved unanimously. Marc Maufort, editor of *Literary Research / Literary Research*, presents his report and announces that the new edition of the journal has been published and is sent. This is the longest volume that has ever been prepared, which has been made possible by switching to a fully electronic version. Marc Maufort thanks committee members for suggestions of books for review. He explains that he has developed the journal by introducing some feature articles in addition to reviews. Marc Maufort then circulates a list of books available for reports and encourages the members of the Executive Board to volunteer to pen reviews. Marc Maufort announces that the next issue will be his last. He explains his decision by pointing out that he will have achieved his goals: to make the journal more bilingual and have it contain more essays. But the publication of an issue requires a lot of work, difficult to accomplish with insufficient editorial support and without sufficient relief from other duties. In addition, Jenny Webb, who has been an extremely effective editorial assistant, has decided to stop working for the journal because she wants to pursue a Ph.D. Marc Maufort suggests that ideally the mandate of the editor should be 3 years, the duration of his own term. He also suggests that it may be the moment to move to a new stage of development and seek help and support from a publishing house. The ensuing discussion commits to the principle of open access to *Literary Research*. To this day it has not been necessary to be an ICLA member to access the journal. The alternative would be to limit access and provide a code only to the members of the Association.

In terms of financial considerations, the costs have been as follows: Jenny Webb's salary (\$ 6000), with no increase despite the additional workload, the printing of about 60 copies and the financial compensation for Marc Maufort (\$ 5000) and the cost of the cover (\$ 500). The report is approved unanimously and Marc Maufort is warmly applauded for the work done. (An update: Marc Maufort has agreed to serve as editor for another term and we are now in negotiation with Peter Lang to publish *RL/LR* as an open-access journal beginning in 2019).

Achim Hölter, chair of the organizing committee of the Vienna Congress in 2016, then presents his report on the Congress, whose overall results are very positive. In terms of scholarship, the Conference held from 21st to 27th July 2016 at the University of Vienna was a great success: it gathered more than 1500 participants from around the world around the theme "Comparative Literature – Multiple Tongues, Multiple Languages." The financial report is balanced; the small surplus will be used for the publication so that the ICLA will not have any additional costs to incur. At this stage, 5 volumes of conference proceedings are planned and Achim Hölter announces that he has just signed a contract with Editions De Gruyter; the publication will be digital and freely available. Achim Hölter, who edits the proceedings, announces that the proceedings will be ready in time for the 2019 Conference. The report by Achim Hölter is approved unanimously with the board's thanks.

Anders Pettersson, Vice-President of the ICLA and Chair of the Structures Committee, having succeeded Jean-Marc Moura in the latter position, presents his report. The main task entrusted to him by ZHANG Longxi is to gather a reliable list of all members of the

ICLA, and to put in place a procedure for this list to be regularly updated. Anders Pettersson stresses that the elections in Vienna did not go smoothly: the problems were directly related to the lack of reliable lists. And the goal is that future elections will be held regularly and are transparent. To achieve this Anders Pettersson will collaborate with Lucia Boldrini on producing effective and reliable lists. Furthermore, Anders Petterson reports that Jean-Marc Moura has re-registered the International Association of Comparative Literature in Paris and it has the status of an Association according to the 1901 law. The report by Anders Pettersson is approved.

Lucia Boldrini, Vice President of the ICLA, was asked by President ZHANG Longxi to develop the website and to think about ways to keep an up-to-date list of members of the Association, a task that necessitates the compilation of lists of members of national associations. Lucia Boldrini announces the appointment of Livia Franchini, a creative writing PhD candidate who assists her and also administers the Goldsmiths Prize for innovative fiction. Franchini will serve as Webmaster: she will contact and liaise with the national associations; and she will collect the lists provided by the national associations and keep them up to date. Thanks to this comprehensive list, it will be possible to consult the members directly. Livia Franchini will work from an address administrator@ailc-icla.org to allow continuity with her successor. She could start on a six-month contract which would allow for any readjustments at the end of this initial phase—say, if the amount proves too high or not enough, or if the work is not satisfactory. The cost for this initial period (incl tax, etc.) will be approximately £ 3,500. Several points are raised in discussion, notably the possibility of having a section reserved for members on the site of the ICLA, which quickly achieves consensus. Kathleen Komar emphasizes that contrary to the Europe-Africa treasurer, she as treasurer has never kept a list of members of ACLA; she sent such lists to the secretary. The practicalities of implementing the list for a given year are complex because the various national associations decide on their annual lists (and pay their contributions) on very different dates. It is very likely that there will be a gap of one year between the general list of members of the ICLA and the year of the Congress for which the list will be necessary (for the elections). The difficulties are both technical and cultural in nature. Hans-Joachim Backe proposes that an excel list be shared by the secretaries of national associations, but it is difficult to expect national associations to adapt to the demands of the ICLA. In any event, it is imperative that practical arrangements are made—and whatever the chosen deadline—procedures be made clear: who can vote? Who cannot vote? Will we have the means to verify who is eligible? Anders Pettersson underlines the need for the Structures Committee to be informed of Lucia Boldrini's progress in establishing the list. In the end the board decides to wait for the next meeting of its Executive in 2018 to vote on the practical arrangements. The suggestion is unanimously embraced.

Anne Tomiche, who edited the proceedings of the Paris Conference (2013), announces that the six volumes will be published by Classiques Garnier at the end of 2017. She shares the advertisement prepared by the publisher.

ZHANG Longxi then broaches the issue of the location of the next Executive Board meeting in 2018. It could be in India, Kolkata (with two nights of hotel paid for). Distance,

however, poses its own problems in terms of funding. Kitty Millett mentions a German program that made it possible to finance the travel of 7 members of her committee. Kitty Millett will inquire and explore this possibility. The possibility of New York University Abu Dhabi is also mentioned. No decision is made.

The question of the location of the ICLA conference in 2022 is then addressed. ZHANG Longxi was contacted by Australian colleagues from the University of Sydney who could make a proposal at the 2018 Executive Board meeting. Lucia Boldrini was contacted with a proposal to host the conference in Edinburgh and several members of the board were also contacted about Dublin. Only universities can host the ICLA Congress, and they must be able to host both the Congress with its 1500 potential participants and the Executive Board before the Congress. The American Association of Comparative Literature provides guidelines for bids for hosting conferences. Liedeke Plate proposes to share these with board members of the Bureau, with an eye to adapting the document for the ICLA and communicating it to potential conferences organizers in order for them to have it in mind in developing their proposals. The board decides to request full proposals in due form by April 2, 2018. The decision is made unanimously.

The board then considers the issue of funding for travel and accommodation for members of the Executive Board. Should we fund only those deemed indispensable to running the meeting (president, treasurers, secretaries)? Or perhaps more broadly also those whose institutional funding is limited? Kathleen Komar suggests the idea of a travel fund to which members of the Executive Board could apply. Helena Buescu emphasizes that from the vantage point of her Nominating Committee, such a fund would help encourage colleagues to stand for different positions on the board. Hans-Joachim Backe adds that it could also help students. The general principle of the need for such a fund for travel and accommodation receives consensus. When ZHANG Longxi asks how this initiative could be funded, Hans-Jochim Backe replies that the ICLA has to date—in its three accounts—more than \$ 200,000 available. Achim Hölter proposes that the President and the three treasurers be in charge of this fund. It is probably not essential to decide on an amount in the first year. This source of funding will be reserved for members of the Executive Board and it could be used, depending on circumstances, for travel or accommodation. Requests must stipulate the cost of the trip, the possibility of securing funding from one's home institution, and the exact amount requested from this new travel fund. Refunds will be paid upon presentation of receipts. The motion is approved unanimously.

Lucia Boldrini, vice-president of the ICLA, then presents her report on the association's website. Since the site had not been updated for a very long time, it was necessary to make a complete backup and update, as she illustrates in PowerPoint slides. Beyond questions of design the main issues pertain to the security of the site and the possibility of having a section reserved for members. Haun

Saussy suggests creating a blog updating members on calls for papers and the formation of research committees— which is precisely, Lucia Boldrini clarifies, what she has in mind. Efrain Kristal points out that at the moment it is not possible to contact the treasurers on the site, and that indeed the link for prospective new members leads “nowhere”. Wouldn't it be possible to include a link to an email address that would allow

contact with the treasurers? Or, Wiebke Denecke adds, links to the national associations? Research committees that so desire could make public their reports, which they would have to send to the webmaster. Hans-Joachim Backe clarifies that an ICLA Facebook page exists but needs to be updated—perhaps Livia Franchini could be responsible and we could tell her what we want to see on the page? Lucia Boldrini proposes to share the current version of the site in order to collect suggestions. She is warmly thanked by the entire Executive Board for the work done. ZHANG Longxi then addresses the progress of preparations for the 2019 Congress, which he has followed closely. On the one hand, there are various causes for optimism: the president of Shenzhen University is very enthusiastic; the support of the Vice-President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is also very strong; in general progress is good. But ZHANG Longxi reports new developments that give him pause: the organization of a conference of more than 1000 participants has become very complicated not only in Beijing but even in Shenzhen, for the authorities ask for a list of participants and are becoming stricter. While the university seeks to overcome these obstacles, uncertainty remains: a website cannot go live before confirmation that the congress will take place in Shenzhen, and a final response from the authorities will take several more months. In the eventuality that Shenzhen cannot host the Congress or if there is no response from the authorities by the end of 2017, plan B is to move the conference to the University of Macao, which is also very keen to host. The territory is a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China, a part of China yet possessing its own relative freedom from a comparable scrutiny of the list of participants. But it is too soon to move to Plan B.

ZHANG Longxi then brings up the fundamental question of what the ICLA offers to member national associations. When *Literary Research* existed only in print, each member received a copy of the journal which might have been taken as a tangible consideration for the contribution paid to the ICLA. Since the journal is now digital and open access, the question arises of what exactly members of national associations receive from the ICLA. Should *Literary Research* be restricted to ICLA members only? Marc Maufort notes that if the publication of the magazine is entrusted to a publishing house, the publisher would weigh in on this question, while Kathleen Komar emphasizes that open access allows visibility of the magazine and that therefore the debate is between visibility (open access) and service to members (restricted access). Perhaps, Lucia Boldrini, suggests, a medium term could be found with limited access for 6 months and then free access thereafter?

The sense of grievance of national associations with regard to the benefit of belonging to the umbrella of the ICLA is laid bare in an official letter from the British Association of Comparative Literature (BCLA), which is read out loud by Sowon Park. The critical missive from the president of the BCLA points out that the only communication between the ICLA and the BCLA concerns the annual demand for membership fees. The BCLA questions the benefits of affiliation and emphasizes that no information is given to its members on how to join an ICLA committee or run for office. How should the ICLA executive board respond to the BCLA president, given that it is aware that this letter

represents a more general malaise that concerns other national associations beyond the British?

Several proposals are issued and receive the approval of the Executive Board:

- ZHANG Longxi will respond to the BCLA's letter by referring to the Executive Board's discussion.

- a regular newsletter should be sent to national associations.

- national associations could nominate and send 1 or 2 representatives to sit *ès qualités* on the Executive Board.

- better communication must be established via the website: contact addresses and more information will need to be provided on the functioning of research committees—such as whether or not they welcome outside nominations to their ranks, and if they do, how a member of a national association could proceed to apply to join them.

- The ICLA must welcome young researchers from national associations in particular and ensure their integration into the wider, international community of comparatists.

- ICLA Congresses should reserve forums for national associations to present and exchange research and information on their events—for instance, in the form of a round table of the presidents of national associations.

- The Executive Board agrees to recognize the need for board members of the ICLA to attend meetings of the national associations (and not just the other way around).

Sandra Bermann proposes that a committee be formed to extend this reflection. Anders Pettersson suggests that this committee also reflect on the future of the ICLA. The committee, led by Sandra Bermann, is composed of Lucia Boldrini, Wiebke Denecke, Paulo Horta, Liedeke Plate, William Spurlin and Anne Tomiche.

Kathleen Komar, Vice President of ICLA and Chair of the Balakian Prize Committee, presents her report on the Balakian Prize. She proposes several changes in the functioning of the committee: submissions could be accepted in PDF format and proposals could be sent directly to the chair of the committee, who will inform the President of the ICLA, and distribute proposals to be read and assessed—until now the proposals were first sent to the President of the ICLA. Both modifications are approved. But could one then accept online publications currently excluded from consideration for the prize? There is a consensus to remove the clause that excludes online publications. Other proposed changes currently fall outside the scope of the executive board, namely, to revisit two other clauses in the original conditions of awarding the Prize: the requirement to award the prize to a researcher under 40 and the exclusion of any publications on the subjects pertaining to gender and ethnicity. With regard to the first clause, where the wording maybe unclear, Kathleen Komar suggests verifying if the clause specified a specific age cut-off or merely was intended to denote a young researcher. The clause that excludes gender and ethnicity as legitimate fields of inquiry for consideration is more controversial, since the Balakian prize is a showcase award of the ICLA. Kathleen Komar proposes to contact the Balakian family and then return to the Executive Board, with a decision following by electronic vote. (An update: with discussions with the Balakian family and approved by the EC, the exclusion of gender issue is no longer valid, but ethnicity exclusion still stands as the original intention of the

prize is to encourage comparative studies beyond the boundaries of ethnicity or race, and thus not focus on issues of ethnicity.)

Helena Buescu then reports on the progress and what she describes as the three stages of the work of the Nominating Committee she chairs: beginning with the formation of the committee, consisting of herself, Sandra Bermann, Debjani Ganguly, Peter Hajdu, May Hawas, Marcio Seligmann-Silva, and then the consideration of criteria for the nomination of candidates: parity and a commitment to the activities of the ICLA, and a diversity of scholarly approaches and of regional and linguistic areas. Only then could the committee come up with a provisional slate of candidates, shaped with the help of President ZHANG Longxi and John Burt Foster, who embodies the institutional memory of the association in his capacity as former secretary. Helena Buescu emphasizes the provisional quality of this list, as she hopes she will be able to get 6 nominations for the 4 vice-presidential posts and a total of 28 or 29 names on the list. She mentions the difficulties in finding names in South America and Africa. Noticing that Sandra Bermann and Marcio Seligmann-Silva are both members of the Nominating Committee and candidates for the 2019 elections, Anders Pettersson suggests that any semblance of conflict of interest could be removed with their resignation from the committee. Anne Tomiche stresses the importance of having Francophone (not only French) candidates among the list of potential candidates, since the ICLA itself and Literary Research are bilingual and the association's administrative address is in France. Yet Anne Tomiche and Marc Maufort do not form part of the Board proper and there was no francophone candidate on the lists of the Executive Board during the elections in Vienna, whereas in previous Boards they were at least 3 or 4. ZHANG Longxi suggests that the names on Buescu's provisional list be contacted to ascertain whether they are indeed available and willing to serve on the Executive Board. Helena Buescu emphasizes that she welcomes any new suggestions by September with an eye to making final adjustments by the end of the year.

At this stage the Executive Board discusses the reports of the various research committees, which they will decide on whether to make public on the ICLA website. These minutes therefore do not include the reports sent by the research committees to the board before the Utrecht meeting but only action items and debates as they were presented during the meeting.

In the absence of its president, Isabel Capeloa Gil, William Spurlin reads the report of the Committee for doctoral and early career researchers (ECARE). He suggests that a doctoral candidate and a young researcher join the Executive Board. Massimo Fusillo suggests the need for a blog and the posting on the ICLA site of jobs and scholarships. These initiatives are vital for communication, even if the safety of the site and blog must be secured. The report is approved.

At 7:00pm the meeting is adjourned until the next morning at 9am.

5 July Tuesday 2017, 9am:

At the prompting of Anne Tomiche, the board considers the request by Hans Bertens at the beginning of the previous afternoon that he be reimbursed 1600 euros for costs incurred in the organization of the Executive Board meeting at the University

of Utrecht. The Executive Board votes unanimously in favor of reimbursement and decides to set up a regular fund for the reimbursement of the organizers of meetings of the executive board.

Sandra Bermann presents her report for the translation research committee, now four-years old and open to all members who wish to participate. At the ACLA the committee held both a regular workshop and one for members of the ICLA. Her report is approved. In the absence of the co-chairs of the committee on comics and graphic narrative, Noriko Hiraishi presents their report. She notes that the committee is open and willing to welcome new members. She presents the committee's dynamic program of activities since its inception in 2014-2015, and the report is approved.

In the absence of its chairman, Huilin YANG, Cathy ZHANG presents the report of the committee on scriptural reasoning, which lists the meetings organized by the committee and its activities. She clarifies that the committee is open to members wishing to participate and the report is approved.

In the absence of Manfred Engel and Bernard Dieterle, the two co-chairs, Marc Maufort presents the committee's report on the cultural and literary history of dreams. He announces the publication of the first book produced by the committee, a trilingual volume (German, English, and French), with a second and third respectively scheduled for release in 2017 and 2018. The report is approved.

Kitty Millett, chair of the committee on "Religion, ethics, and literature," presents a report that proclaims the "resurrection" of a committee once half asleep and now boasting 60 members worldwide. Open to all, it welcomes doctoral students, youth and diversity, and non-tenure track faculty. This past year the committee reflected broadly on its objectives and procedures and founded a journal, Religion, Ethics and Literature. Should the journal acknowledge an institutional affiliation with the ICLA? ZHANG Longxi answers in the affirmative, as does Sandra Bermann, who welcomes the involvement of graduate students as long as it does not prove too great a distraction from their own work. Lucia Boldrini wonders if an official ICLA affiliation with the committee's journal would make the committee, in effect, a permanent one, whereas Anders Pettersson observes that the link could be discontinued if the committee ceased to exist. Millett's report is accepted.

In the absence of Chandra Mohan and EV Ramakrishnan, co-chairs of the committee on research on the literatures and cultures of South Asia, the board is referred to the report they sent, which reflects the many activities of the committee. The report is approved.

In the absence of Suzanne Nalbantian, chair of the committee on literature and neuroscience, Anne Tomiche presents the chair's written report reflecting its activity. She indicates that, to her knowledge, the committee invites its speakers, and invitations are determined by the choice of the preferred theme for the year. The report is approved.

In the absence of the chairman of the committee on the literatures of the Islamic world, Mohamed-Salah Omri, Maria Theresa Abdelmessih raises some questions about the title, definition and scope of the committee. The committee was only established in the course of the past year, and is therefore young and embryonic. Who are its members? What procedures are in place to ensure their views are represented in the

committee draft of its report? What are its objectives? The Executive Board encourages the committee to continue its work, to discuss these issues and to present the results during the next Executive board meeting where the presence of Mohamed Salah Omri would be invaluable and is strongly urged—ZHANG Longxi himself will write to Mohamed-Salah Omri to reaffirm the importance of his presence. The report is approved.

Karen-Margrethe Simonsen proposes the formation of a committee on the literatures of Africa, a proposal seconded by Paulo Lemos Horta, Achim Hölter and William Spurlin. Kathleen Komar emphasized the importance of considering African literatures in conversation with each other, and not just in conversation with Europe and the West. The board decides to consider the establishment of such a committee, with Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, William Spurlin and Marcio Seligmann-Silva responsible for gathering names of Africanist colleagues, including colleagues based in Africa, to form a committee.

Sowon Park, Chair of the committee on literary theory, presents her report. The committee is not open to new members other than by its established procedure of internal nominations, invited talks, and elections. The committee elected four new members this year. The report presented by Sowon Park is approved.

Liedeke Plate, who succeeded William Spurlin as chair of the committee on gender, delivers a report that details its past and future activities. The committee is open to all interested members and aims to include young researchers and scholars. At the moment there are between 65 and 70 members, who are not always all present at all meetings since they are spread over all continents. Liedeke Plate's report is approved.

Haun Saussy presents the report of the committee he chairs on the comparative history of East Asian literature. The project, initiated under the chairmanship of Hans Bertens, took some time to develop. The committee is open to all potentially interested members. Its starting point is the idea that East Asia is a sphere that had developed well before the interaction with Europe. The first volume produced by the committee is in preparation: it is organized geographically and chronologically from the origin of writing systems. Anders Pettersson suggests that Haun Saussy and Mohamed-Salah Omri exchange ideas because both committees are parallels in terms of method posed problems. Haun Saussy's report is approved.

Karen-Margrethe Simonsen presents the report of the Coordination Committee on Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages (CHLEL) which she chairs, a committee consisting of 16 members, which does not admit new members during the three-year duration of the mandate of the members, and whose internal rules are published on the site of the ICLA. The report details the committee's activities, highlighting the volumes soon to be published and in progress. She adds her hope that a discussion can be established on the relationship between the work of the committees on the literatures of Europe, East Asia, the Arab world and Africa (when that committee is established). And she asks, in keeping with the ICLA's past practice of funding the translation of certain volumes, for 2000 euros for Friedrun Rienner's project, *Transculture. Contemporary Literature and Migration in Europe*. Hans Joachim Backe, treasurer for Europe and Africa, indicates that nothing makes such funding impossible.

Sandra Bermann suggests that a workshop in the 2019 Congress be devoted to the evolution of the perception of European literature from the perspective of Southeast Asia, Africa and the Arab world. Should, Hans-Joachim Backe suggests, the CHLEL be replaced by a committee on the history of literature from a global point of view?

Anders Pettersson answers that while it is possible that standing committees expire, for him the time has not yet come for the CHLEL coordinating committee. Without eliminating the committee, the board would welcome a Congress workshop that would put into perspective the committee's approach from the vantage point of a decentered and comparative history of literature in European languages. Karen-Margrethe Simonsen clarifies that while the committee is built on tradition and on a comparative literature that reasons in mainly European terms, it has opened in new directions and its chair sees no end to this movement. The need to study literatures that continue to be written in European languages will not disappear, even if their approach evolves and this development implies reformulations. ZHANG Longxi notes that any discussion of the evolution of a committee or revision of its permanent status must be initiated by the committee itself. The report presented by Karen-Margrethe Simonsen is approved. The board then considers the possibility of the creation of a committee that would focus on a comparative approach to comparative historiography and that would confront existing paradigms for the writing of literary history, an idea that arouses strong interest and discussion. Paulo Lemos Horta suggests that someone lead a reflection on a comparative literary historiography project – a project that could be organized around issues of literary historiography or questions in literary historiography. Achim Hölter proposes to organize discussions on this subject and build a project. This is a separate and complementary collaborative project to the discussion at the 2019 Congress between CHLEL and other committees on the literatures of Asia, the Arab world, and of Africa.

Several proposals will be submitted to Theo D'haen, chair of the committee for research and projects whose report is approved in his absence. Sowon Park proposes a new research committee on language and the human mind. Massimo Fusillo has developed a proposal for a committee on literature, arts, and media, which will focus on intermediality: he presents the project and a list of provisional members. The group has already met at a first workshop in Vienna on the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk and if the committee is accepted, the next Conference will be held in Tartu. The committee is open to interested members. The proposal will be submitted to Theo D'haen.

The agenda being exhausted, the Executive board considers further business, starting with the question of funding. Hans-Joachim Backe and Karen Margrethe Simonsen emphasize the importance of European sources of funding and hence of submitting European projects in order to become eligible to European funds. The European dimension is integral to the vocation of the ICLA, so we must show to the European Union the excellence of the scholarship of ICLA committees not only within the bounds of the Association but also at the core of European research projects. The proposal is that a board member be responsible for identifying projects and programs that could be funded by the European Union. The board debates how to set in motion such an

undertaking, since universities often have full-time staff to identify and facilitate the drafting of research grant applications.

Finally the Executive Board summarizes all the actions to be implemented in the short to medium term:

- ZHANG Longxi will reply to the letter of the British Comparative Literature Association and invite the presidents of the national associations to send representatives to participate, *à qualités*, at next year's meeting of the executive board.

- He will write to Mohamed-Salah Omri regarding the committee on the literatures of the Islamic world.

- A list of posts (or links to lists) will be available on the Committee ECARE page and on the website of the ICLA

- Lucia Boldrini will write to all committee chairs asking for information to be displayed on the site: contact addresses, the workings of committees, activity reports, etc.

- Livia Franchini could be in charge of a newsletter to be circulated among the national associations.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30pm

Report prepared by Anne Tomiche and translated by Paulo Lemos Horta, French and English Secretaries, ICLA