

Minutes of the ICLA Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday 9 June - Friday 11 June 2021, 9-11am (US East Coast time)

Wednesday June 9th, 2021

Present at 9:30, Princeton time, for all or part of the meeting: William Spurlin, Kitty Millet, Xiaohong Zhang, Sangjin Park, Sandra Bermann, Rita Schmidt, Marie-Thérèse Abdelmessih, Marc Maufort, Noriko Hiraishi, Robert Gafrik, Toshiko Ellis, Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen, Massimo Fusillo, Isabel Gil, Haun Saussy, EV Ramakrishan, Robert JC Young, Liedeke Plate, Irma Ratiani (for the discussion on the 2022 Congress), Kathleen Komar, Takayuki Yokota- Murakami, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Matthew Reynolds, Adelaïde Russo, Paulo Horta, Tracy Lassiter, Yang Huilin, Oana Fotache, Chandra Mohan, Youngmin Kim, Stefan Helgesson, Marina Grishakova, Zhang Hui, Lucia Boldrini, Anne Tomiche, Adam Kola, Marko Juvan, Isabel Gomez, Roberto Vecchi, Ipshita Chanda.

Nicole Bergman

Sandra Bermann, President of the ICLA, opened the meeting and welcomed and thanked the participants, especially Irma Ratiani, organiser of the Tbilisi Congress.

As most of the reports had been approved electronically, only those reports for which a vote or discussion was required would be presented.

1. Report on the Early Career Scholars' Workshop, 4-6 June 2021

Sandra Bermann reports on what was a first for the ICLA: a recently concluded conference specifically for young scholars. It was a great success and the result of a collaboration between Princeton University Press, the ICLA and the Princeton Fung Global Fellows Program. The free, fully online conference welcomed 233 young scholars from 42 countries, 6 continents, and working in a wide variety of humanities and social science disciplines. The conference was attended by 24 colleagues from Princeton University and Princeton University Press, 14 members of the ICLA Executive Committee (who moderated roundtables and various events). Speakers included Saidiya Hartman, Jhumpa Lahiri and Aleksandar Hemon. Notable events included roundtables moderated by the director of the Princeton Press and publishing specialists; writing workshops moderated by Bill Germano and Wendy Belcher; 9 roundtables moderated by senior scholars; and a one-on-one session with one of the Press editors for each young scholar. The conference was also an opportunity to discover a new online platform, "Spatial Chat", for informal discussions. Sandra Bermann gave special thanks to Paulo Horta, who came up with the idea of a conference for young researchers on publishing, to all the colleagues who participated and, above all, to Nicole Bergman, who managed the online event brilliantly.

Sandra Berman indicated that she was working on sharing and disseminating the sessions that had been recorded, and hoped that such an event, co-organised by the ICLA and university presses, could become a recurring event within the ICLA.

The entire Executive Committee congratulates and thanks Sandra Bermann for this magnificent success.

2. The 2022 Congress with Irma Ratiani, President of the Organising Committee and President of the Georgian Society of Comparative Literature, invited by the Executive Committee to present on the state of progress of the preparation of the 2022 Congress.

Irma Ratiani thanked the ICLA for choosing Georgia for its 2022 Congress and thanked the members of the Executive Committee with whom she works for their support.

The Executive Committee thanked Irma Ratiani for her work. There followed a rich exchange between Irma Ratiani and the Executive Committee, who asked her several questions:

- Liedeke Plate asked whether the call for proposals for the ICLA research committees should go through the general call for proposals route. Irma Ratiani confirmed that it did and that acceptance would be automatic for ICLA committees.

- Paulo Horta asked for clarification on how participants who could not come to Georgia could participate. Irma Ratiani confirmed that the conference would be a hybrid one: following discussions with Sandra Bermann and Nicole Bergman, an external company would be chosen to organise the online part of the Congress (after a call for tenders).

- William Spurlin asked to clarify the deadline for submission of proposals for the Standing Committees. Irma Ratiani replied that it was the general date of August. He then intervened to highlight his concern about the current transphobia and homophobia in Georgia and asked about the safety of LGBT+ people in Congress. Irma Ratiani said that she understood the concern but was reassuring about what would happen in Congress.

- Anne Tomiche pointed out that at this stage the two guest speakers posted on the website were men and wondered whether the gender balance would be respected. Irma Ratiani said that she could be asked to be a speaker. She asked the Executive Committee to make suggestions. She added that she would like to invite writers - Vargas Llosa could be one of the writers invited.

- Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen asked a practical question regarding the holding of working meetings of the different committees. Irma Ratiani said that the logistical organisation of the Congress provided for them and that there were no problems with rooms.

- Marie-Thérèse Abdelmessih asked whether there was a limit to the number of participants in a seminar and whether seminars could be held over several days. Irma Ratiani replied that a seminar can be reduced to a single session taking place over one day or can take the form of small seminars taking place over several days (up to 5 days).

- Chandra Mohan pointed out that students who want to participate want to know if there will be activities and events specifically for them. He also asked about what form the hybrid congress and in particular the voting would take. Irma Ratiani replied that she was working closely with William Spurlin, Chair of the Committee for Young Researchers (ECARE), and indicated that there would be a reception specifically for young researchers and several events specifically for them, in particular a seminar entitled NextGen. She reiterated that the hybrid organisation would be outsourced to a company outside the university. The aim was to allow those who could not come in person to participate.

Sandra Bermann indicated that she would come later to the question of the elections and the vote for the renewal of the ICLA board. She concluded by thanking Irma Ratiani and expressing her satisfaction at the excellent collaboration between the Georgian organisation and the ICLA.

3. Expressions of interest and proposals to organise the 2025 ICLA Congress

Anne Tomiche reported that, since the call for expressions of interest in May, she and Paulo Horta have received a significant number of requests for clarification regarding the 2025 Congress, mainly from professional congress organisers (Netherlands, Canada, Australia, Hungary, Scotland, Abu Dhabi). To date, two expressions of interest have been received: one from Korea for a Congress in Seoul (HUFS University of Foreign Studies) on the theme "Literatures in the Era of Hyperconnectivity: National Literatures, Comparative Literature and Technology" (proposed date: 28 July to 1 August) and the other from Greece for a Congress organised from Athens with several other sites (at a distance of less than 180km from Athens) around a theme entitled "Literature and Illness / Illness of Literature" (proposed date: the second half of September to avoid the heat and the summer tourist period). Anne Tomiche indicated the next deadlines: 15 September for new expressions of interest and 1 December for final proposals.

Paulo Horta suggested that, in order to make exchanges between institutions and members of the Executive Committee easier and to keep track of them, a google document (googledoc) should be created in which any member of the Executive Committee who had an exchange with an institution interested in the organisation of the Congress could indicate this. He undertook to set it up.

Chandra Mohan intervened and indicated that Indian colleagues were also interested in organising the 2025 Congress (the last Congress held in Delhi was in 1990...). The congress could be organised on several sites (Dehli, Calcutta, Hyderabad...). It should be held in 2025 because after that date, both he and EV Ramakrishan will have retired.

Sandra Bermann encouraged Chandra Mohan and Indian colleagues to develop a project and send a proposal (expression of interest by 15 September and final proposal by 1 December).

4. Discussion on the nominations for the 2022 elections

Isabel Gil, Chair of the Nominations Committee, explained the background of the process that led to the list she sent to the Executive Committee. She began by stressing that the Nominations Committee was constituted in such a way that the members of the ICLA were fairly represented, both in geographical terms and in terms of diversity of research fields. She recalled the principles that guided the Nominations Committee in drawing up the list of nominations: transparency and clarity in the process of drawing up the list, inclusive representation (in terms of geography, status and approach) on the list, and democratic, honest and open elections. The Committee's statutes, which were old and did not sufficiently take these principles into account, were therefore amended and the changes, submitted to the Executive Committee, were approved prior to the meeting. Isabel Gil recalled the three major changes:

- Article 6: as far as possible, at least two candidates for each position, including that of President
- Article 7: to ensure a broad representation both geographically, of different career stages and of different research areas
- Article 12: to set up voting procedures according to a precisely defined and explained process.

The work of the Nominations Committee began with a call for nominations: 15 nominations were received from individual members, 17 from Executive Committee members and 3 from national associations. The Nominations Committee studied and discussed these at length, to arrive at a list that was gender balanced and inclusive in terms of geography, career stage and field of study.

To date, the Committee has not been able to get 2 candidates for absolutely all positions, but for most of them.

This list is the first step in the process. With possible additions by the Executive Committee and after approval by the Executive Committee, the list will become final.

To this list, once adopted, may be added candidates with 7 endorsements. All 7 recommendations, together with a CV and the explicit agreement of the candidate, should be sent to the ICLA Secretaries (and no longer to the Nominations Committee).

The Executive Committee warmly thanked Isabel Gil and the Nominations Committee, and approved the principles that had guided the Committee's work. There was a general discussion, after which the latest status of the list was presented and voted on:

Position of President:

Lucia Boldrini; Joao Cezar Castro Rocha

Positions of Vice-Presidents :

Stefan Helgesson, Noriko Hiraishi, EV Ramakrishan, Haun Saussy, Marcio Seligmann-Silva, William Spurlin, Anne Tomiche, Zhang Xiaohong

Secretaries :

Anne Duprat, Sowon Park

Treasurers :

Adelaide Russo, Roberto Vecchi, Yuriko Yamanaka

Executive Committee:

Toshiko Ellis, Oana Fotache, Robert Gáfrik, Isabel Gómez, Marina Grishakova, Marko Juvan, Youngmin Kim, Adam Kola, Sangjin Park, Takayuki Yokota-Murakami, Xiaohong ZHANG, Clotilde Thouret, Susan Bassnett, Gaby Schwab, Michal Ben Horin, Loredana Polezzi, Alexandra Ambrósio Lopes, Frederik Tygstrup, Hyung-jin LEE, Sayantan Dasgupta, Ato Quayson, Liina Lukas, Fatiha Taib, Sarah Nutall, Raoul Calzoni, Emanuelle Santos, Paulo Horta, Christina Sharpe, Jerónimo Pizarro, Christianne Solte Gresser, Wen-chin Ouyang, Carole Boyce-Davies, Hubert Roland, Alexis Tadie, Antonio Monegal, Adelina Angusheva Tihanov, Boutheina Khaldi, Lobna Ismail, Véronique Porra, Irma Ratiani, Rita Terezinha Schmidt

Results of the vote :

21 votes cast:

1. Presidency: Yes: 20; No: 1
2. Vice-Presidency: Yes: 19; No: 1
3. Secretariat: Yes: 19; No: 1
4. Treasury: Yes: 21
5. Executive Committee: Yes: 18; Abstentions: 2

Chandra Mohan asked about voting for those who would not be there and for the students. Sandra Bermann replied that she would deal with the question of voting the following day. She again thanked Isabel Gil and all the members of the Executive Committee for their contributions to the list.

She closed the first day of the Executive Committee meeting.

Thursday June 10, 2021, 9-11am (US East Coast time)

Present at 9.15am: William Spurlin, Kitty Millet, Xiaohong Zhang, Sangjin Park, Sandra Bermann, Rita Schmidt, Marie-Thérèse Abdelmessih, Noriko Hiraishi, Robert Gafrik, Toshiko Ellis, Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen, Massimo Fusillo, Helena Buescu, EV Ramakrishan, Liedeke Plate, Kathleen Komar, Takayuki Yokota, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Matthew Reynolds, Adelaide Russo, Paulo Horta, Tracy Lassiter, Yang Huilin, Oana Fotache, Chandra Mohan, Youngmin Kim, Stefan Helgesson, Zhang Hui, Lucia Boldrini, Anne Tomiche, Adam Kola, Ipshta Chanda, Roberto Vecchi, Marcio Seligmann, Isabel Gomez.

Nicole Bergman

1. Elections for the renewal of the ICLA board

Sandra Bermann began the meeting by addressing the question of the voting modalities for the renewal of the ICLA board at the Tbilisi Congress: it is planned that the vote will take place online. The switch to electronic voting has been a topic of discussion within the ICLA for more than ten years. With the health crisis, it has become essential. It is also the right time, as Lucia Boldrini has made a lot of progress on the establishment of reliable lists and Nicole Bergman is providing us with her technical expertise. Necessity is therefore combined with opportunity.

As the Nominations Committee rules do not provide for online voting and, furthermore, as candidates, the two secretaries are excluded from the committee that has to ensure the smooth running of the election process, Sandra Bermann proposed that the chair of the Nominations Committee and her committee, together with the chair of the Structures Committee, Kathy Komar, should set up an "election committee" which would start by working out the practicalities of the voting process in order to add an article to the Nominations Committee rules, which would be put up for discussion at the next executive committee meeting in January.

A discussion ensued. Marie Thérèse Abdelmessih insisted on the importance of having a secure vote so that the same person only votes once and so that members are not unable to vote. Sandra Bermann was reassuring on these two points, especially as Nicole Bergman would be able to provide assistance. Kitty Millet then asked what period the voting would take place: would it be for the duration of the Congress? Would there be the possibility of voting during a week? Sandra Bermann did not want to prejudge the work of the election committee, which would have to come up with a plan to address this question, but she felt that it was likely that the vote would not only take place during the Congress. Chandra Mohan asked whether it would be a "mixed" voting system (those physically present voting in person) or whether even those physically present would vote online. Again, Sandra Bermann did not want to prejudge the work of the electoral committee, but she thought that it would not be a problem if the voting was fully electronic, including for those present. EV Ramakrishan pointed out that electronic voting has become very common. He suggested that the election committee should find out what procedures other international associations use and contact them to do this. He also suggested that there should be a period before the opening of the voting period during which ICLA members can request a correction to the lists (and request to be included on the lists if they are not on them). Sandra Bermann thanked EV Ramakrishan for these suggestions.

A vote was taken on whether the establishment of an "electoral committee" to develop concrete procedures for electronic voting in a transparent manner was approved. The proposal was adopted unanimously by the 24 voting members.

2. Report of the Working Group on Finance and National Associations

Kathy Komar, Chair of the Working Group, recalled that the task of the group, which consisted of Lucia Boldrini, Liedeke Plate and herself, and which worked in consultation with the three Treasurers, was to clarify the financial situation of the ICLA. Kathy Komar thanked the committee and the treasurers.

She reminded the meeting that the ICLA is composed of one treasury (and not three separate treasuries according to geographical areas). The working group estimated that the current incompressible expenses (website, literary research, support for the triennial congress, bank charges, etc.) amounted to \$38,000 per year. At present, there is 223,000 dollars in the overall cash flow of the ICLA. The association is therefore not in immediate financial danger but, as things stand, the income from subscriptions does not cover \$38,000 per year. Kathy Komar made several suggestions:

- Increase (double) membership fees
- Recruit new members by inviting organisations to join the ICLA.
- Rethinking the funding of research committees (see the report of the Research Development Committee)

The ongoing clarification of membership lists (who has paid and who has not paid their membership fee; who is a member, with or without a membership fee, and who is not) is a great step forward. In order to make the different statuses within the ICLA clear, a distinction was made between "member organisations" (whose individual members are automatically members of the ICLA since these organisations pay 10 dollars to the ICLA for each of their members) and "partner organisations" (for organisations that only pay a global fee for all their members who are therefore not members of the ICLA and who must individually pay the fee).

A discussion ensued. Matthew Reynolds pointed out that there was a lot of money in the bank. In these circumstances, he took a stand against the idea of increasing the subscription in the immediate future. He thought that the ICLA should first do more for its members and show it, and only then ask them to pay more. At the moment there is, in his opinion, too much money in the bank to increase the membership fee. The question is what to do with the money in the bank.

Kathy Komar replied that, while the ICLA is a non-profit organisation, she agreed that some of the money in the bank should be spent, and that it was therefore perhaps premature to increase the fees. But she wanted to get the ball rolling.

Adelaide Russo also thanked the committee. In response to Matthew Reynolds, she pointed out that the amount of money held in the bank by the ICLA would, without any income, cover current expenditure for 5 years, which is not a lot of money.

Isabel Gil stressed the importance of finding a good balance between stability, or even financial security (which implies having some reserves) and excessive hoarding (which gives a bad image of the association). Individual membership fees of \$20 would not be huge. In any case, we need to be more active in recruiting members.

Paulo Horta recalled that the American Association (ACLA), which used to pay about 16000 dollars when it paid 10 dollars for each of its members, now only pays a global contribution of 1000 euros. This will contribute to a rapid decline in the bank fund. But at the same time, he agreed with Matthew Reynolds that we should wait until we have shown what the ICLA does for its members before increasing the fees. He then returned to the requirement to be up to date with dues in order to vote. A discussion ensued on this point, with Kathy Komar insisting that ACLA has chosen to exclude its members from the ICLA by not paying their dues, but that the American association has undertaken to post on its website, as of July 2021, that its members are no longer individual members of the ICLA, so that it is up to ACLA members, who have been informed of the situation, to pay dues individually.

Noriko Hiraishi, as Treasurer for Asia, was concerned about the difference in status between "member organisation" and "partner association": if the Japanese association wanted to move to "partner" status, how could they be prevented from doing so? Kathy Komar replied by pointing out that the distinction was made so that members of national associations would know where they stood and whether or not they were members of the ICLA. If other associations want to do what ACLA does, their members will be treated the same way. She stressed the importance of members of a partner association being aware that they were no longer automatically members of the ICLA.

EV Ramakrishan intervened to say that he considered this to be a bad year to increase dues. He suggested that the increase should be postponed. On the other hand, as far as the American and British associations were concerned, it was to be hoped that they would change their minds and become full members again. Sandra Bermann had to use her moral authority to bring ACLA back into the membership of the ICLA... Sandra Bermann reminded the meeting that the agreement with ACLA was for 3 years. She hoped that the interest of ACLA members to be also members of ICLA would be sufficiently obvious to bring the American association back into ICLA.

Kathy Komar also reminded the meeting that any decision to increase membership fees must be taken at the General Assembly. Nothing can therefore be decided before the Congress in Georgia at the earliest.

Lucia Boldrini pointed out that the drop in the ICLA's income was recent and perhaps partly linked to the health crisis caused by the coronavirus. On the other hand, a chronic difficulty is linked to the transition between European treasurers: the difficulty of accessing the account in the transition phase could lead to periods of 6 to 9 months during which the European treasurer was not in contact with the national associations. Lucia Boldrini therefore suggested that the outgoing treasurer should remain in contact with his/her successor, including in terms of signing on the account. A good transition would solve this problem. She also recalled, like Kathy Komar, that it was up to the General Assembly to take the decision to increase the membership fees. All the Executive Committee can do is to decide to put the increase to the vote at the General Assembly. She thought that the issue could be revisited at a later date and that the most urgent thing was to renew the links. She added, with regard to membership fees, that ACLA had refused to give a list of its members so that the newsletter could be sent to them. And she appealed to colleagues on the Executive Committee who were members of associations that had not paid their membership fees to pay individually... if only to ensure that the decisions taken in the Executive Committee were legal.

Rita Schmidt said that the link to the ICLA newsletter was on the website of the Brazilian association (ABRALIC), but that ABRALIC had always had difficulty paying its membership fee, as had individual members. This is due to the difficulties of transferring money. She asked for a clear explanation of how individual membership fees can be paid.

Her question made the transition to the next report.

3. Report on the website: state of play and projects

Lucia Boldrini did not go back to her written report but added some elements:

- A new page has been created on the website for memberships (dues-paying and non-dues-paying memberships), with a link to allow payment of individual dues by credit card via the University of Louisiana website. This new feature will make individual memberships easier.

- It is possible for a member to request a status check to see if he or she is up to date with dues, which can be done easily.

- The newsletter is sent to the national associations and to the members of the executive committee.

- Katharina leaves her position at the end of July. Lucia Boldrini thanked her warmly for all the work she had done. She will need another assistant but it will probably be for half of Katharina's time if she can get a student "placed" (under work placement status). She would welcome an intern from another university if some members of the executive committee have student placements in their respective institutions that are funded by those institutions and that they could do at the ICLA.

- Lucia Boldrini raised the question of whether or not, for security reasons, the sending of information to the membership list should be separated from the electronic voting. She was pleased that she would not have to deal with the issue of electronic voting, which would be handled by the electoral committee.

- Lucia Boldrini raised the question of the payment method via paypal. On the one hand, increasing the possible choices of payment methods is a good thing. But on the other hand, a paypal payment is more expensive than a credit card payment. Moreover, the paypal account has to be held, so someone has to be responsible for it (one of the treasurers? or someone else?). This person may have to pay taxes, which is a problem. But it is complicated for an association to have a paypal account. Last but not least, if the paypal account is hacked, the whole account of the ICLA could be emptied. This is very risky from a security point of view.

Sandra Bermann thanked Lucia Boldrini for the presentation. She suggested that the members of the Executive Committee send her any comments and suggestions. Sandra Bermann added that online donations were now possible and that, like Kathy Komar, she herself had made a donation of \$5000. The Executive Committee thanked her warmly.

4. Scholarships and prizes

William Spurlin began by reminding the meeting of the events planned for young researchers at the Tbilisi Congress:

- a group session, entitled NextGen, will be reserved for them: he will take charge of the organisation of this first edition and hopes that in the future it will be a young researcher who will take over. He does not yet know whether it will be a single session or several days (seminar).

- A reception specifically for young researchers will be held just before the start of the Congress.

- workshops are planned.

William Spurlin added that if the recently concluded Princeton Young Scholars Conference is to become a regular, annual event, workshops of the type planned for the Congress could also take place in this context.

He announced that Emmanuelle dos Santos had been elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for Young Researchers: she was one of the founding members, at one time a doctoral student. She is now a senior lecturer in Birmingham.

William Spurlin announced the 3 awards that his committee had worked on:

- Prize for the best paper at the Congress for a postgraduate student: \$250 and publication in Literary Research. Nominations will take place during the Congress and the announcement of the award will be made, if possible, at the second General Assembly. A celebratory event will be held online at a later date.
- First book grant: annual award of \$1500. The book must be in comparative literature and the application cannot be made later than 5 years after graduation.
- Best Translation Prize: a prize of \$1000 awarded every three years, in the year of the Congress, with the assistance of the Translation Committee. There is no language restriction. The announcement will be made at the General Assembly.

There was a discussion. Isabel Gomez raised the question of the time period during which an application for a publication grant can be made: limiting the notion of young researcher to 5 years after the defence of the thesis is too short a time frame, particularly when it comes to publishing a book. She suggests a slightly broader and more flexible definition of 'young researcher'. It could be as simple as asking for a CV. Paulo Horta agreed that 5 years was too short a period, and he thinks that a very concrete workshop on publishing a book would be very useful.

The prizes proposed by William Spurlin were put to the vote. The proposal was adopted unanimously by the 21 voters.

5. Travel grants

Sandra Bermann thanked Helena Buescu for all the work done to revise the Committee's rules. The rules should be voted on. Helena Buescu pointed out that two decisions had to be taken:

- The first one concerns article 1 (see report) and how to decide which categories are eligible for membership
- The second is how to distribute the money between the categories decided to be eligible for the grant: an amount per category or a global amount to be distributed?

Sandra Bermann suggested that we choose to have one fund for the different categories.

The following proposal was put to the vote:

- Eligibility: young researchers and senior members in countries or contexts that do not allow them to finance the trip.
- Distribution: one fund will be distributed between the different categories.

The proposal was accepted unanimously by the 24 voters.

Anne Tomiche asked whether it would be possible to start setting up these grants at the next congress by determining an amount. Paulo Horta pointed out that there would be a problem of equity between those who could apply and those who would not even be allowed to travel. Helena Buescu stressed that the rules should be put online as soon as possible. The decision on whether to open these scholarships as early as the 2022 Congress was postponed until the January meeting.

6. Research Development Committee

Matthew Reynolds, Chair of the Research Development Committee (RDC), pointed out that most of the current research committees are self-funded and that while it was appropriate for this self-funding to develop, the ICLA should nevertheless be able to provide funding to committees where necessary. In practice, funds have so far been granted on an ad hoc basis. He suggested that this principle be explicitly formulated. For this it is necessary to know how much money the ICLA has available to fund its research committees. The report of the Working Group on Finance suggested 4000 dollars per year.

Matthew Reynolds proposed to start from 4000 dollars per year. To avoid the problem of 8 committees asking for a large sum in the same year, he suggested some rules: a single committee can ask for 1000 dollars every three years (knowing that there are 11 committees so far, if each committee gets 1000 euros every 3 years, we stay within 4000 euros). We can also add a clause that a committee can apply for exceptional funding for publication costs. Matthew Reynolds suggested adding a sentence or two to the description of the committees about funding. He concluded by suggesting that a discussion of where we publish would be useful and interesting.

Matthew Reynolds' proposal - regular funding (1000 euros every 3 years is possible for each committee that applies) + possibility of applying for exceptional funding for publication - was adopted unanimously by the 22 voters.

Sandra Bermann closed the day's session by thanking everyone.

Friday 11 June 2021

Present at 9:15pm (US East Coast time): Paulo Horta, Xiaohong Zhang, Stefan Buchenberger, Lucia Boldrini, , Marko Juvan, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Sandra Bermann, Marie-Thérèse Abdelmessih, Anne Tomiche, Zhang Hui, Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen, William Spurlin, Noriko Hiraishi, Takayuki Yokota-Murakami, Massimo Fusillo, Liedeke Plate, Robert Gafrik, Kathleen Komar, Stefan Helgesson, Rita Schmidt, Youngmin Kim, Chandra Mohan, Marcio Seligmann, Isabel Gomez, Helena Buescu, Toshiko Ellis, Oana Fotache, Tracy Lassiter, Ipshita Chanda, Kitty Millet, Matthew Reynolds, Adelaïde Russo, EV Ramakrishan, Adam Kola, Zhang Jing (in the absence of Yang Huilin), Haun Saussy

Nicole Bergman

Sandra Bermann opened the meeting and noted that in the absence of Yang Huilin, Cathy Zhang would sit as a non-voting member.

1. Resumption of the discussion of the Research Development Committee (RDC) proposals

a. CHLEL dossier

Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen, Chair of the Committee on the Comparative History of Literature in European Languages (CHLEL), thanked the Research Development Committee for its work, and said she was very pleased that research committees were able to apply for exceptional grants in addition to regular funding. She returned to the "CHLEL file" and the request for reimbursement to CHLEL of 6,000 euros, granted at previous ICLA Executive Committees and never paid to the CHLEL committee. At its meeting in January 2021, the Executive Committee had asked CHLEL to substantiate the claim more precisely by indicating what had actually been spent. Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen reported that her committee had reduced its request to CHLEL for repayment of the ICLA debt to 4000 euros (she thanked Mark Sandberg, the main person responsible for the Nordic project, who had agreed to find the 2000 euros that ICLA had given for the photographic rights elsewhere). She therefore requests the payment of these 4000 euros, granted in 2016 and again in 2017 but never paid to CHLEL. At the time, no receipts or other proof of expenditure were requested. At the same time, she asked for 2000 euros for a new project, that of Dirk van Hulle on the Literary Draft.

A discussion ensued, with the Executive Committee asking Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen for clarification on two points. Firstly, does she have any receipts or at least email exchanges or other evidence of the expenses actually incurred by the committee (e.g. receipts for photographic reproduction rights)? Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen recalled that the money had been granted, that all the documentation had been sent to the treasurer Roberto Vecchi, but that receipts were not requested at the time. On the other hand, the Executive Committee asked Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen to confirm that the amount of 2000 euros granted in Vienna in 2016 for the project on migrant literature and then in Utrecht in 2017 (also 2000 euros) was for the same translation project: was this money granted twice because it was not received after the first application? Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen replied that the second application was made in addition to the first because the external funding that CHLEL had hoped to obtain had not materialised; it was therefore a two-stage application for 4000 euros for the translation of the same project.

For reasons of transparency, but as receipts were not required at the time the money was granted, the Executive Committee asked Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen to indicate as precisely as possible and document the expenses incurred, and decided to revisit the matter at the latest at the January 2022 meeting. Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen pointed out that she would no longer be President of

CHLEL in January 2022 and would like to have this matter resolved before she leaves, so that her successor does not have to take over. Sandra Bermann asked Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen to send the requested information as soon as possible.

b. Research committees coming to an end and proposals for new committees.

The Research Development Committee received several requests:

- A request to renew the committee on art, literature and media. In view of the balance sheet and the project submitted to the RDC, the recommendation of the RDC was unanimously in favour of renewal for 3 years. Massimo Fusillo, Chairman of the Committee, gave a brief presentation of its activities and achievements. The vote of the Executive Committee was unanimously in favour of the renewal (22 voters).

- A request for the creation of a new committee: "Interdisciplinary Committee". Matthew Reynolds presented the RDC's analysis. This interdisciplinary committee would take over from the neuroscience committee which Suzanne Nalbantian did not want to turn into a standing committee. This is a request for a time-limited committee and the RDC thought the proposal was excellent. However, the RDC is reluctant to recommend immediate approval for two reasons: the objectives are unclear and there is a very strong geographical concentration of committee members in North America and some in Western Europe. In fact, the proposal seems to have been made in a hurry. The RDC therefore recommends that the interdisciplinary committee project be taken up, clarified and developed. It suggests that it be inaugurated as a time-limited committee next year, when more members from different geographical areas will have joined the committee and when the objectives have been clarified.

A discussion took place. Helena Buescu suggested that, in order to open up in terms of geography, the proposed committee should get in touch with researchers already producing in interdisciplinary fields: she mentioned in particular the medical humanities and, specifically, a project underway at her university. She provides links to the description of the medical humanities project developed at her university (<http://ulices.letras.ulisboa.pt/en/projects/medical-humanities/> and

<http://ulices.letras.ulisboa.pt/events/caring-and-sharing-health-and-humanities-in-todays-world/>) as well as the contact details of Isabel Fernandes, who is coordinating the project, and hoped that the committee would make contact. Kathy Komar would like to make sure that this committee will not interfere with the committee on intermediality chaired by Massimo Fusillo. For this to happen, the project needs to be a little more elaborate.

The proposal to send Suzanne Nalbantian encouragement for this beautiful project, but also a request for a geographical enlargement and a clarification of the objectives, in view of an agreement that would be given next year, for the next congress, was adopted unanimously by the 22 voters. It was also suggested that the members of this future committee make a proposal for a group session for the next congress.

- A request to transform the "Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature" committee into a standing committee. Matthew Reynolds recalled the history of the request, which had already been made to the previous Executive Committee in January 2021. The Executive Committee had expressed reservations at its last meeting and made more recommendations: that the committee be attentive to a wide variety of scriptural traditions and that it clarify its research guidelines. Matthew Reynolds pointed out that the committee is very active and conducts a lot of activities. Matthew Reynolds considers that the RDC has already given its opinion and that the new document meets the reservations of the Executive Committee.

Zhang Hui, as Chair of the Committee, gave a brief presentation on the revision work that had been carried out to construct the new proposal. Lucia Boldrini intervened to thank the Committee for this clarification which she appreciated. However, she still felt that the focus was more on the relationship between China and the world than on scriptural reasoning. She suggested that future reports should emphasise how the activities will relate to scriptural reasoning. She also suggested that the committee take into account the need for gender balance. Haun Saussy encouraged the project designers to also talk about scriptural reasoning in other traditions than China. Kitty Millet emphasised that diversity does not only mean that the members of the committee come from more diverse geographical locations but also means intellectual diversity. She considers that the committee's project has really evolved favourably. Chandra Mohan considers that India is absent: there is a tradition of scriptural reasoning and work on this issue in India. He offered to mediate with the committee organisers to include Indian scholars. Marie-Thérèse Abdelmessih asked whether the term "scriptural" was used in the double sense of "sacred text" and "any written text", which would justify including world literature. Zhang Hui replied that it is not about reading texts in general. Cathy Zhang clarified that the term "scriptural" refers primarily to the dialogue between Christianity and Chinese tradition, and that the committee wishes to broaden its perspectives.

The vote on the request to transform the short-term committee "Scriptural Reasoning" into a permanent committee was adopted by a majority of 22 voters: 20 "yes", 1 "no" and 1 abstention.

2. Towards the future...

Sandra Bermann returned to a comment by Chandra Mohan and EV Ramakrishan: EV Ramakrishan felt that the election committee should be more representative. He agreed with the idea of moving to electronic voting but felt that the election committee should be broader by co-opting members who represent parts of the world that are not sufficiently represented. Sandra Bermann agreed: she clarified that the electoral committee is not fixed and stressed the need to be as inclusive as possible.

She then gave the floor to Haun Saussy to report on his reflections on the relationships that the ICLA could establish with "friendly" or "allied" associations. Haun Saussy recalled the history of the membership of the ICLA, linked to the history of the definition of the discipline, and pointed out that the model, which dates from the mid-

1950s, is no longer the model by which the ICLA operates. He thinks that we should recruit and strengthen links with colleagues who are not institutionally defined as "comparatists" but whose approach necessarily includes a comparative dimension (even if it is not claimed as such): translators, writers' or film adapters' associations, etc., all of whom are organised in "groups" in the form of "associations". It would be a question of engaging in conversation with colleagues who are not necessarily multilingual but who, together, can build a comparative dimension.

The whole executive committee was enthusiastic. Sandra Bermann suggested that the establishment of relations with those associations which are not specifically comparatist but which share interests with comparatists should be taken care of by the National Associations + (NA+) Committee. Paulo Horta suggested that a separate NA+ committee be dedicated to this task. Lucia Boldrini said that Katharina had done a lot of work to identify associations or groups worldwide (not only in Europe and North America) that are not members of the ICLA but are doing interdisciplinary and/or comparative work. This work will be useful to the future committee and may also constitute part of the work of Lucia Boldrini's next assistant. The challenge is not only to find funding but also to broaden our comparative horizons and ways of comparing. Toshiko Ellis wondered, if a separate NA+ committee is created, what will remain for the NA+ committee to do and how the NA+ committee and this new committee will work together as collaborative work would be essential.

Haun Saussy's idea to develop links with "friendly" associations close to comparatists but not specifically comparatists was adopted unanimously by the voters.

Sandra Bermann thanked everyone for these three days of rich and stimulating discussion, closed the executive committee meeting and invited all the participants to join, following the indications given by Nicole Bergman, the "Spatial Chat" space to prolong these three days of work in an informal way and discover this platform.

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