

FIPRESCI

Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique

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General Assembly 2016

Bari, Italy

Sunday, April 3, 09:30-18:00, Hotel Palace

Monday, April 4, 09:30-13:00, Hotel Palace

Participants

Board Members

Alin Tasciyan, Turkey, President

György Kárpáti, Hungary, Vice-President

Klaus Eder, Germany, General Secretary

Jean Roy, France, Honorary President, Responsible UNESCO

Delegates

Dominik Kamalzadeh, Austria

Ahmed Musztaba Zamal, Bangladesh

Jacques Mener, Belgium

Bojidar Manov, Bulgaria

Bruno Kragic, Croatia

Martin Horyna, Czech Republic

Nanna Frank Rasmussen, Denmark

Matti Rämö, Finland

Isabelle Danel, France

Ingrid Beerbaum, Germany

Frédéric Jaeger, Germany

György Kárpáti, Hungary

Pablo Utin, Israel

Atsuko Saito, Japan

Blagoja Kunovski, Macedonia

Hassouna Mansouri, The Netherlands

Barbara Hollender, Poland

Francisco Ferreira, Portugal

Dana Duma, Romania

Alexei Gusev, Russia

Violeta Kovacsics, Spain

Eva af Geijerstam, Sweden

Alin Tasciyan, Turkey

Derek Malcolm, UK

Alik Shpilyuk, Ukraine

Departments

Philippe J. Maarek, France, Legal Affairs

Barbara Lorey de Lacharriere, France, FIPRESCI-Awarded Films

Hassouna Mansouri, The Netherlands, Arab and African affairs

Observer

Steven Yates, UK, sponsoring
Anne Brishoual, FIPRESCI secretary

Umberto Rossi, Italy, Carlos and Myrna Brandao, Brasil, and Dana Linssen, Vice-President had to cancel their participation.

Klaus Eder, FIPRESCI General Secretary, opened the assembly thanking Felice Laudadio for his most generous hospitality despite of severe budget restrictions. He informed that fortunately Felice Laudadio has been recently confirmed in his function as Director of the Bif&st for a period of five years.

The assembly held a minute of silence to honour the memory of Ettore Scola, BiF&st President, and our Latin American colleague José Carlos Avellar, who both passed away a few weeks ago.

Klaus Eder thanked Alin Tasciyan for her extraordinary support and welcomed the delegates, particularly Atsuko Saito and Ahmed Zamal for being present despite of long distance flights. He also welcomed for the first time in the GA the delegates Dominik Kamalzadeh, Austria, Martin Horyna, CZ as well as Ingrid Beerbaum representing the new German "Association of German Media Journalists". He also thanked Jean Roy, France, and Derek Malcolm, UK delegate, both FIPRESCI Honorary Presidents for attending the GA.

Two points were added to the agenda, to be discussed under "Any Other Business":

1. Political situation in Istanbul.
2. Legitimacy of the new German national section.

Activities of the Federation

Klaus Eder stressed the fact that due to the always increasing amount of work he has to manage tasks using the argument of priority, which explains delays in different "non-priority" daily matters. The GA agreed with this statement.

In order to improve the financial deficit, the basic fee paid by all national sections should be maintained but the GA discussed a potentially increase of the jury participation fees. Therefore FIPRESCI should support as many festivals as possible thus increasing the number of participations. Lowering the number of juries should be avoided, from this money point of view.

This subject will be further discussed under budget proposal.

Klaus Eder mentioned the importance of having professional film critics as FIPRESCI members to send them to juries. Composing 78 juries a year is currently not a problem, he said, since enough candidates are willing to attend. He suggested that we should be open and accept invitations from more festival wanting to host our jury and offering an interesting film program, supporting even smaller festivals with an interesting (often regional) program.

The report of activities of the federation (presented in written) was unanimously approved by the GA with one abstention.

Reports

Alin Tasciyan confirmed that the Greek case (problems with our Thessaloniki juries) had been solved, there would not be any conflict anymore. She underlined that she is not responsible nor representing the Turkish National Section (SIYAD). As to the Turkish National Section not supporting her candidacy for president, Klaus Eder stipulated that this is a national conflict and no concern of the GA, moreover the concerning message from SIYAD arrived at the last minute and too late to be added to the knowledge of the delegates. Alin Tasciyan's report was unanimously approved by the GA with one abstention.

György Kárpáti, who was leaving his activity as Vice-President after two terms and was proposed by Klaus Eder as Deputy General Secretary, underlined that it was much better to work without any tension and do the best in order to avoid any conflict. György Kárpáti's report was approved by the GA with one abstention.

Dana Linssen, who could not attend the GA, sent a detailed report about her activities informing that she would not candidate as vice-president for a second term. Her report was largely discussed by the GA, specifically her proposal to negotiate fees for the mentors at workshops (more under Any Other Business). Klaus Eder replied that he always tried his best but unfortunately there was no chance to get the mentors paid (even not at the Berlinale Talent Press). Alin Tasciyan stressed that it should be our duty to cooperate anyway even for free, we have to do it on a pro bono basis. Dana Linssen's report was confirmed by the GA with 10 abstentions.

The reports of the directors of department were all unanimously approved by the GA.

Elections – Candidates

Alin Tasciyan (President for a second term)
Isabelle Danel (Vice-President)
Barbara Hollender (Vice-President)
György Kárpáti (Deputy General Secretary)

Elections of a new Board

Number of votes: 24, Majority: 13

Isabelle Danel and Philippe Maarek, France, shared one vote

Ingrid Beerbaum and Frédéric Jaeger, Germany, shared one vote

Alin Tasciyan was unanimously re-elected President with 4 abstentions

Isabelle Danel was unanimously elected Vice-President with 5 abstentions

Barbara Hollender was unanimously elected Vice-President with 2 abstentions

György Kárpáti was unanimously elected as Deputy General Secretary with 1 abstention

Alin Tasciyan pointed out that it is a big responsibility and an honour to represent FIPRESCI. She considers it as a duty and has no personal ambition, nevertheless, in her quality of film critic she is eager to serve our main goal which is freedom of expression.

Isabelle Danel underlined that she would support the representation of FIPRESCI presence in Cannes, for the first time this year the jury “pourra officiellement monter les marches”, and she will do her best to develop connections within the FIPRESCI.

Barbara Hollender mentioned that the future of film criticism was mostly in the hands of freelancers doing historic or scientific works as well and we should do our best to promote our prestigious prize and open ourselves to new medias (Skype conference, Facebook, Twitter).

György Kárpáti said he is happy to accept his new responsibility and look forward to working with this new “female board” and do his best in assisting Klaus Eder as full board member in the next two years, besides his function as web editor where he is looking for a few more persons all over the world to assist with editing.

After lunch Klaus Eder said a few words about FIPRESCI history. A lot of years ago, in 1989 the GA used to take place in Milano at the MIFED. But MIFED did not want to host us anymore, Felice Laudadio heard about it and invited us for the first time in Saint-Vincent, this was the beginning of a very close and long friendship. Klaus Eder invited the assembly to think about proposals in order to thank him for his great hospitality. Alin Tasciyan mentioned that the best way to thank him right now is to write about the festival and send him the reports and publish them on our website.

Jury Participations

Klaus Eder underlined that the major problem in composing juries would nowadays be money (air tickets). Composing juries according to the prize of flight tickets (thus reducing the chance of participation for many colleagues) happens to be very disappointing and exhausting. What to do in the case of San Sebastian, for instance – where we are asked to compose our jury from colleagues being already invited by the festival? Philippe Maarek proposed to take the Grand Prix (Best Film on the Year) out of San Sebastian but not the jury. Klaus Eder underlined as well that it would be impossible to skip a jury at a major European festival, we should not skip any of those. Violeta Kovacsics, Spain, proposed to organize a brainstorming meeting with her national section to talk about the conditions of our San Sebastian jury.

Klaus Eder mentioned that, despite of participation details requested in circulars, some colleagues are just forwarding jury requests without any comment or information. It is important to choose the right persons for each jury because we need to compose good juries. György Kárpáti reminded that it is necessary to mention the language as well for a better understanding during the discussions.

In case of complaints received from a festival because of misbehaviour of a juror, the GA voted a proposal to send a letter to the national section with a copy to the concerned person for transparency in order to avoid such incident again. Alin Tasciyan pointed out that we should make a difference between two situations in such a case: 1. Unable to fulfill duties because of illness, 2. Misbehaviour.

Another point was discussed by the GA: The members of the board reiterated their concern regarding what happens if somebody attending a jury is injured, or concerned by unpredictable political circumstances: who pays. Should it be the insurance of the festival and its responsibility? Philippe Maarek informed that it depends on the nationality of the jury member. Legally FIPRESCI is French and should follow the advice officially published by the French government on its website (on the situation in the concerned country). The jury members should check with their foreign ministry if it is advisable or not to travel to this country. If too dangerous we should cancel the jury. Philippe Maarek agreed to write a sentence advising the personal responsibility.

All juries of 2016 were unanimously confirmed by the GA.

Any Other Business

1. The Turkish political situation:
Alin Tasciyan stressed that many journalists are in jail already. She would like to publish a statement against persecution and lack of freedom of expression. The situation being very critical, the GA decided to make an official statement against the increasing violation of freedom of expression in Turkey. A text was immediately composed and proposed by our legal adviser Philippe Maarek and the GA agreed with its official publication in English and French on the FIPRESCI website. Klaus Eder asked the participants to the GA to publish this statement in their own country as well.
2. Two associations form our German National Section: VDFK – Verband Der Deutschen Filmkritik, represented by Frédéric Jaeger; and the new Berufsvereinigung deutscher Medienjournalisten (BVMJ) – Association of German Media Journalists (BVMJ), represented by Ingrid Beerbaum, both sharing one vote at the GA.

This controversial decision regarding the legitimacy of a second German section was discussed by the GA since Frédéric Jaeger did not agree with the decision made already in December by the board. Philippe Maarek confirmed that the statutes definitely allow two national sections per country. The decision taken by the board would have been legal and would therefore not need a re-discussion by the GA in Bari as requested by the VDFK. Frédéric Jaeger disagreed with this decision arguing that a proposal of changing the statutes was sent before the deadline. Klaus Eder confirmed that the agenda was sent weeks ago, when two German associations existed legally and had therefore to be invited both to the assembly.

Philippe Maarek as legal adviser said a decision of the board would be legal if the majority of board members would be present.

In future, board meetings should be minuted. Isabelle Danel promised to write a protocol at the board meetings in order to get more transparency about decisions taken by the board members who are present.

To prove the legitimacy of the new German association, Philippe Maarek checked a list of seven members of professional film journalists belonging to this association, seven members being a minimum for a new association, therefore it was definitely a democratic process.

Alin Tasciyan underlined that national matters are none of our concerns, therefore the legitimacy of the members of the new German association having been checked by our legal adviser, this association could be confirmed as new member. Alexey Gusev, Russia, pointed out that separation is democratically always better than integration!

Klaus Eder said he dislikes national affairs being discussed on an international level. This is the first time that the GA has to discuss about excluding colleagues (as requested by the German VdFK). Our goal is to bring film critics together and not the contrary. FIPRESCI members cannot be excluded who are well known critics and work for FIPRESCI for many years. It doesn't matter much if a country has two associations forming one section, the most important is to have the best critics of the country as our members.

Sponsoring

Klaus Eder thanked Steven Yates, responsible for sponsoring, for his support and proposal. He said sponsoring is a very sensitive question and we should be very cautious regarding the kind of sponsoring we agree with. Festivals are already sponsoring us by inviting us and paying our airfare. We should try to get financial support for ceremonies from TV companies and cultural ministries, but should not accept sponsorship from publicity companies. Jean Roy stressed that he could not recommend CICT as best sponsor since UNESCO accepted poor countries and has to face low budget restrictions..

Klaus Eder came to the conclusion that after five years without any result, the only way to do it properly is to look for a professional company ready to do the job under the condition that we pay after getting some results. Steven Yates said he would look for a company to make a business plan because unfortunately none of us is qualified in this field.

Advertising

Barbara Lorey exposed her proposal of an increased collaboration with “Festival Scope”. Festival Scope offers a FIPRESCI label for films which won our FIPRESCI Prize sending a newsletter on their website. They offer FIPRESCI members to get a link between our websites, thus increasing our visibility. This is no sponsoring but a collaboration with a cost of 70€ for a period of 15 months. This proposal will be followed up in the next weeks.

Budget Proposal

Klaus Eder as General Secretary is getting a part of his travel costs reimbursed. As to the membership fees, it is difficult to guess which country is richer or poorer. Philippe Maarek underlined that being a rich country has no meaning because all national sections are small. Board meetings are taking place where the board members are invited, so refund for travel costs are most of the time not necessary. The only exception being the reimbursement of travel costs to the General Assembly by the respective national section. A fair thing would be based on a balance of how many jury participations each country has.

Proposal: - Increase the participation fee from 25€ to 30€
 - Increase the basic fee from 200€ to 250€

However, it is obvious that some national sections have difficulties to pay even the 25€. Alin Tasciyan said Turkey experienced a high inflation within a year. We have to make sacrifice in the cultural field and fight for our independence. Each national section should support FIPRESCI and should pay the basic fees as well as the participation fees on time.

A proposal of increasing the fees will be officially announced by Klaus Eder and will be put on the agenda for voting at the GA next year.

Klaus Eder stressed that, in case he is prevented to do his job, the new Deputy General Secretary György Kárpáti will certainly be able to help very soon. All FIPRESCI documents are in a cloud, György Kárpáti and Leo Bankersen have both access to it.

Felice Laudadio

As this point Marco Spagnoli, Vice-President of the BiF&st and FIPRESCI member, came to visit us in the name of Felice Laudadio who could not come due to other duties at the festival. Felice Laudadio thanked us for being there every year and expressed his acknowledgement of our work.

Marco Spagnoli informed of the state of Italian cinema, as reflected in the festival. He proposed the GA participants to contact him in order to organize interviews and to develop contacts.

Klaus Eder talked about organizing in Bari next year screenings of the best Italian movies and the possibility to introduce a panel with Italian and international critics. This topic will be discussed by the board in order to be more present at the BiF&st, thus thanking Felice Laudadio for his everlasting friendship and generous hospitality.

Skype conferences

Another important topic was brought to the attention of the assembly, how to introduce Skype connections in the meetings. Klaus Eder confirmed that he did not experience any problem with board meetings taking place on Skype. However, Dana Linssen's proposal to have a Skype connection with the general assembly could not be approved by Philip Maarek. As legal adviser he confirmed that, according to the statutes, one has to be present to be able to vote and votes have to be secret, meaning that one has to be physically present. Moreover Alin Tasciyan underlined that Skype connections are unproblematic when taking place at home, but board meetings would need a public place. Not to forget about the time-zone difference.

The GA discussed the possibility of changing the statutes in order to allow all national sections to participate in the GA with a Skype connection. Klaus Eder mentioned that FIPRESCI unfortunately cannot afford the technical costs of an expensive Skype connection during the GA.

To be able to take advantage of these new modern means of communication in the future, a proposal was made which will be put to the agenda at the next year GA in Bari.

A right to a proxy-vote should be accepted. Each participant to the GA will have a proxy-vote with an authorized person of his choice. This participant at the GA will take full responsibility, he will be directly in a Skype connection with the other person and will be allowed to vote in his/her name. Philippe Maarek pointed out that this proposal doesn't need any change of the statutes.

Klaus Eder said that he always tried to run FIPRESCI as a friends association despite of the increasing number of 20 juries at the beginning to 78 a year in 2016! Unfortunately a lot of people are nowadays losing their job and earn less money. Nonetheless we should keep together and please let us not get on this trend of fighting against each other!

Anne Brishoual
April 20, 2016