

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING, PRAGUE
NOVEMBER 3, 2006**

Minutes taken by Jurate Motiejunaite

Meeting opens at 2pm

Those present:

1. ANDA: Marinela Lika;
2. Azerbaijan: Abbas Abbasov;
3. BUDL: Chris Baron;
4. CKD: Jasmin Ceco;
5. BNDA: Trendafil Meretev;
6. HDD (Croatia): Teodora Dubrovic;
7. ADK (Czech R.): Rene Brinda;
8. EDS (Estonia): Katrin Viru;
9. Latvia: Reinis Berzins.
10. Youth International Forum: Ilija Zupanoski.
11. Mongolian Education Alliance: Davakhuu E. (check spelling)
12. ARDOR: Alexandru Ghita;
13. ACCD: Vedran Vucic;
14. Ukraine: Olena Pometun;
15. Belarus: Ludmila Tumanova.

Ivo opens the meeting with the minute of silence in memory of Zurab, our colleague in Georgia.

Total of 24 voting members.

Present:

- 15 in person.
- 5 proxies: JZ proxy for Kosovo; OP – for Moldova, CB – Australia, KV – Tajikistan; TM – Lithuania.
- Slovakia will be present tomorrow.

II – presents the agenda for the meeting. Correction of meeting start at 10am instead of 9am. CB proposes to include the discussion of the topic of accreditation into the agenda. 11 vote for. We vote for accepting the agenda with the modification: Unanimous decision pass.

We move to the adoption of the minutes from the last GA. No discussion. Unanimously adopted.

The GA moves to discuss the newly accepted voting members. We introduce the two new members: LOGOS (Montenegro) and VDCH (Germany). The proposal is to postpone the GB's approval of LOGOS acceptance. The resolution passes with 18 for and 2 against.

Vote to approve GB's decision to accept VDCH as a voting member. Motion passes with the unanimous vote.

From now on, there are 21 votes in the General Assembly. We add Sebastian Hirsch to the list.

The annual report is presented and unanimously accepted.

The election results are in. 2 new Board members are elected to the board: Sergei Naumoff and Arnoldas Pranckevicius.

We move to the discussion of the financial statements of 2004/2005. They are presented to the GA. We clarify the procedure of voting on the Financial statements 2004/2005. II calls a vote to approve the financial statements. Unanimous approval.

II moves to the discussion of the annual report from the staff. II presents the board's report. II emphasizes the board's recommendation to revive the conference in 2007; the new decision about the Forum venue selection procedure (uphold YF standards and financial sustainability); curriculum changes at the YF – mainly to have a capacity building track; committee structure; IDEA vision statement revision; the creation of Youth Advisory Board (in order to receive feedback from our youth and beneficiaries). The GB next face to face meeting right after the GA. VV suggests to include discussions of how the GB could help members build their independence and sustainability. One of the goals of the organization is sustainability of members.

The discussion of the Budget of 2007/2008. JM presents the budget and there is a short discussion. The budget is put to a vote. 19 for with 2 votes absent.

II proposes to discuss the IDEA-NL vision statement. JZ presents the vision statement. Emphasis on being a debate related activities, inclusion, intercultural aspect of the organization. I asks the GA if the vision statement is inspiring and worthwhile. SH asks how the international aspect is demonstrated. JZ clarifies the statement. SB proposes to change the wording from “societies” (in the first line) referring to countries which are not democratic, into word “communities”. VV suggests “democratizing activities.” II moves to add the phrase “and other vulnerable groups of youth.” The motion passes with 19 for and 1 against and 1 abstention. JZ reminds that the first sentence is changed into “active citizenship and democratizing activities.” II calls to a vote on approving the vision statement. Unanimous decision in favor.

There are 20 voting members present in the GA after the break. The number required for simple majority is 11.

Ivailo presents the vision of the GB of IDEA NL using the power point presentation called IDEA-NL GB Vision. Ivailo opens the discussion to this document. He asks for questions and comments to this presentation. Vedran (Serbia) asks if GB would welcome a paragraph of remarks and suggestions from each member to write overnight. Ivo affirms this, on top of that he suggests that the feedback can be submitted also later on. Sebastian (Germany) suggests that the German debate society would welcome members coming to take part in their program (debate tour in Germany). Also he would appreciate if IDEA could be giving travel grants for its members to provide environment for exchange of ideas and best practices between its members.

Boudewijn presents a policy paper on IDEA – NL long and short-term strategy. See the document enclosed called IDEA-NL Strategy paper.

CB opens the discussion for the ideas presented. The discussion is about the long-term sustainability of IDEA. There are 2 separate questions of IDEA's "survival" and its members survival/sustainability. IDEA is not a donor organization and until it's sustainability is assured it cannot provide members with money, but it can still find other ways of supporting its members. As a network, we all have to work on achieving the sustainability of organization. We need to break up into groups and find at least 3 ways of addressing sustainability issue.

Presentation of results

Group 1

- International projects participants.
- Resources – magazine, books which are translated are very useful for our debating communities. Info distributed in new ways.
- IDEA should do more in country training. Especially for new countries.
- TPS and Media training are useful to help the students.
- Rebuilding capacity in schools – we need to make sure that there is continuity between studentship and trainership.

Group 2

- Sustainability means keeping and expanding the vision.
- Necessary strategic planning (goals, activities, etc.)
- Establishing for profit organization establishment.
- Database of members' priorities and activities (Roma issues, etc.)
- Database of corporate funding in respective countries.
- Keep track of calls and keep information coming on a more regular basis (staff).
- Dependency culture – existing human resources need to go for other funding sources and we need to motivate existing staff to think of more issues. Among publications we should keep an outline of basic symptoms of dependency culture as well as treatments.
- Incubator projects – create projects where you could try creating sustainability and independence. So not only debate itself, but also the realization of debate.

Group 3

- Supporting national organizations to make IDEA sustainability;
- Finding patronage from local communities for national organizations;
- Get debate program approved by governmental institutions;
- Promotion of the sale of IDEA resources;
- Evaluation of research done by IDEA members on its activities;
- Increasing membership
- Alternative funding: training, workshops for member organizations on other economical issues.

CB thanks for the discussion and for the productive day. We close the meeting.

November 4, 2006

10am

We open the meeting by checking the quorum. We have 19 voters present. We have a quorum. We proceed to welcoming Slovakian representative to the meeting.

We start by discussing the Montenegrin LOGOS association's presence. NS suggests that we suggest them to wait till they come to the next year's GA. II motions that LOGOS' application will be reviewed next year provided they come to the GA. 17 for and 2 against.

II moves to the discussion of Australian voting membership. This member has not sent a representative to our GA. The GB would like to recommend to this member to become a non-voting member if they do not send a representative to the GA in Lithuania. SH asks whether the Australian member gave instructions to the vote with the proxy. CB explains that yes. VV asks where this member is from. NS explains that the member has not participated in any other way in the governance of IDEA or IDEA events. We should not set the precedent of having an uninterested member, when there is an option of non-voting membership. II moves to vote on the motion "Unless the member sends representatives to the next GA, we suspend their voting membership." 16 for, 1 against, 2 abstention. II concludes that the GB will communicate with the Australian member.

II moves the discussion to the governance documents' changes. We are not going to discuss each change, so please look through and pose questions, suggestions, etc. VV discusses the right for appeal. NS explains that one is considered "guilty" until the appeal process is done. KV asks about 3.1.8 – there is going to be double-checking, one should not be able to vote for the country. NS explains that it is unfair the GA is supposed to review the board's work, to have the Board review its own work. *Poldo interrupts the proceedings*. KV says if we have 25 members and 8 GB members, how will it work? She suggests to vote on this separate change in the statutes. Motion: who suggests we vote separately on this motion. 8 for, 5 against, 6 abstentions – motion fails. SH asks if the GA ever had delegates' meetings. NS explains that it is supposed to be useful in the event of IDEA increasing to the size where it would be too financially difficult to convene a GA meeting. TM asks about p 3 article 3.1.7 – what requirements does it refer to. NS explains that it refers to the Internal regulations section 5 and 6. II clarifies the article about how only IF the person does not meet the criteria, the board would ask to change that representative. VV asks about p 13 section 4.2.18. NS explains that it is crossed out because of the conflict of interest policy added in the end of the document. II mentions that it is added on p 14 section 4.2.22 and there is a conflict of interest policy in the internal regulations. KV does not see the point why we only need 1/3 in order to change the statutes, but we should include the rules how to close the organization. NS draws the attention to section 7 of internal regulations. HB has a question about page 1 section 2.1 – whether it limits IDEA from gaining sponsors' support. NS explains that it depends upon what kind of sponsorship we're talking about. VV seconds NS idea of the difficulty of

defining for profit and not-for-profit activity. WE ARE JOINED BY 2 MORE VOTERS. KV suggests to delegate staff to clarify the profit and not for profit regulations in NL. NS suggests that we do not incur legal fees until it's a real issue. II returns our discussion to the statutes. CB suggests that we make the final provision more generic. NS explains that this provision is generic and specific enough as required by law. II moves to the discussion of the section 4.2. and draws the attention to the internal audit committee creation as a replacement of the Treasurer position. CB is concerned about 4.2.1 – what if we do not have a candidate. NS explains that this was originally in the statutes. We have always had a Dutch person on the board of IDEA. JZ wants to know why is it important to have it as a statutory element. It limits us. NS explains that the absence of Dutch members we are not considered Dutch for fundraising purposes. VV confirms that the presence of a national of the country where the organization is registered seems to be a good idea. II proposes to approve the statutes. JZ seconds the motion. Vote: 21 for.

The discussion moves to the standards' documents and urges to have constructive discussion and see these documents as living documents and keep in mind that they can be changed, if necessary.

CB moves to the discussion of the Youth Forum standards. NS observes that these standards are the most detailed as we want them to be notes for hosts in order to make the organization easier. One change not reflected is the way forum fees were recorded. NS explains how the online registration form did not allow transferring the money to IDEA-NL's account. So we will add that IDEA-US will be financially responsible for the collection of the fees. NS mentions the biggest changes: Tournament director, Chief Adjudicator, limited preparation debate introduction, topic committee. One more vote adds we now have 22 votes.

NS summarizes limited preparation debate. KV notes that EDS will vote against the limited preparation section. We focus on D.1.d. Questions which debate rounds will be limited preparation debate. CB reminds that the decision before the forum was to have it in elimination rounds, then trainers wanted to do that during the 2 preliminary rounds. NS explains that the negotiations are still going on in the curriculum committee. JC asks about when the topics will be announced. NS explains that the topic area "Freedom of expression" has been announced already and 3 months before the forum the three topics will be announced. JZ wants to clarify KV's position about the vote against the limited preparation. KV explains that because EDS does not see the education value of limited preparation of Karl Popper debate. NS says that in practice it is not a big change anyways, as our members have already been doing limited preparation debate. KV talks about the research packet and how it is too big and too complicated. If we want kids to do limited prep debate, we need to focus on giving them material anyway. She outlines 3 questions: 1 – better research packet; 2 – limited prep debate is a good skill, but coaches need to be prepared. NS says that's exactly the point – this change will allow us to properly prepare people to practice these debates. Secondary schools have started practicing parliamentary debates, we need to teach it then. II clarifies that the only question the GA needs to consider is whether Limited prep is a useful, not how to teach it. *JZ words it: the curriculum committee shall determine YF's TD, CA and trainers*

number in relation to the size of enrollment, but in proportion that is permitted by the YF budget. NS continues about the beginners track. If one decides to join the beginner track, rather than participating in the first tournament, one will have days of instruction of beginners – in debate, not in English. It is absolutely voluntary. Then they'll become part of the mixed team. Parviz asks about the radio requirement on page 17. NS explains the need for one work-station to report the real time radio news. KV returns to the discussion of D.3.d. and we note that EDS votes against this specific provision. Motion to accept YF standards document. Votes 22 in favor.

We move to the discussion of the 2 and 4 team parliamentary debate. CB wants to authorize the committee making changes to make unsubstantial changes to standards by themselves. Motion to accept the changes. In favor: 22.

We move to the document of Accreditation standards which regulate how changes are made. II proposes adding a sentence *“The accreditation committee is authorized to make any non material amendment to existing standards documents without the approval of the GA.”* Vote 22 – in favor.

Sanctioning tournaments and trainings documents: Veronika points the unsubstantial changes. Vote – 21 and 1 abstention.

Teacher standards. No comments. Unanimous acceptance.

Teacher evaluation form. VV has a comment – are our teachers ready to support students with certain difficulties. If they aren't, something should be done to prepare them. Shall we leave it to teachers themselves or do something about it. II explains saying that if we want to include that shift, we need to discuss that more. VV says that in EU and US it is a law and we shouldn't miss that opportunity to train that. We should synchronize this with the law. CB suggests using Idebate magazine, etc to have a discussion and articles on this question. VV wants to see more motivation to include students with disabilities. II – we first need to increase the debate on the issue of the role of IDEA in dealing with students with disability. Vote: unanimous vote.

Trainer accreditation standards. II – 2 things added: minimum requirements for accreditation; and adding the qualifications of a trainer. VV is absent. Vote – 21. Unanimous.

Trainer evaluation form. JZ points put p.3 that the changes included reflect the previously approved document. VV returns. Unanimous vote for acceptance of the standards.

We move to new documents discussion.

Glossary. AA has a comment – we have the minimum number of participants for a club. In Azerbaijan it was 9 people. This requirement should be reflected in the glossary. NS points out that it is not a requirement. CB suggests using that as a recommendation/expectation rather than a requirement. Suggests to add a sentence “a

minimum of 9 debates. ML (Albania) – this should be left up to the local organization to decide that they consider to be a club. Veronika V agrees with leaving it up to the local organization. JC – it wouldn't be a restriction, but advisability. II – if we want them to aim at a certain number, we add 'advisable'. JZ – any number is arbitrary. So although the concern exists, it is not advisable to record it. JM draws the attention to the fact that it's a glossary document and not a place for standardization of the number of people. Vote – unanimous - 21. Belarus absent.

Legislative debate/student congress. NS mentions an upcoming publication on Legislative debate. II says that as we are not experts, we should just talk about the meaning of this type of activity. JZ explains why this activity is important, as a mock congress and summarizes the main points of this activity. If other countries want to do that, this document will serve as an outline of this activity so people know what they're doing. NS presents in short how the upcoming publication is an extension of the former YPP publication on legislative debate. **VV requests, if possible, to have a legislative debate video.** KV notes a similar youth parliamentary movement. Vote: 22. **II thinks it'd be a good to create standards for simulation of European Parliament – explore the possibility.** KV notes how many Estonian debaters do it without money.

Mock trial. Vvlckova – is it the same thing as moot court. JZ explains it's the same, only age difference. NS OSI is giving a grant to International Bar Association and they'll be creating teaching material on mock trial. They should be available by next GA. KV in Estonia, they have mock trial tournaments once a year. Vote: unanimous – 22.

Discussion of YF Romania. NS outlines the changes in Romania – limited preparation debate was introduced. The topic was a little too broad and too difficult for mixed team tournament. The Worlds were won by Korea. Participation was high because OSI was able to subsidize participation from remote areas. The problem is our members don't try to raise money, others cannot raise money, but we had about 200 participants. We had bears, but nobody was eaten. It was clear that IDEA needs to take more control of the entertainment part of the Forum. The organizers went over budget, and IDEA-US is not going to cover the unannounced overspending. Curriculum is becoming better this year, and although we want more new trainers, there aren't that many new applicants. Extended preparation time debate is suffering a bit and we'll need to work more on making it attractive. The challenge is make the Forum more sustainable, as now it is only happening because of OSI support. So far it has not happened, but one idea is the Youth Forum Fund. We have a registration problem, as when kids pay themselves, we have the elite and the educational process suffers. We're having a crisis with coaching – coaches aren't sent. The requirement is to send a coach with the team. KV the number of teachers is decreasing. From the pedagogical point of view, the curriculum is suffering. Hernan claims he was surprised about the amount of mean spirited debate driven by competitiveness. The experience of debate is not valued as much as it should be. JM suggests to have more small group discussions on YF.

19 votes present. We move to the discussion of the upcoming forums. TM presents the forum 2008 venue at the American University. It has the necessary facilities for the Forum organization. Veronica wants to know if the town is big and we'll need to chase

people there. The discussion focuses on how to prevent debaters from leaving the site in order to go to the city.

Meeting moves to the discussion of YF 2007. RB – introduces the forum site in Trest. It'll be high school campus, will all needed facilities: meeting rooms, sports facilities. Rooms are 3+3, etc. RB urges everyone to make arrangements for visas in advance. The discussion of whether to have the finals in Prague together with the city trip. II urges all members to send teams to the Forum, use guilders to support teams' participation. NS reminds that one member can send more than one team. II asks if we have more questions about the responsibility division and the changes in the Forum. NS wants but doesn't want more information. He adds that the curriculum

II proposes a change in the agenda to move to the discussion of visual identity. Pass with 18 votes.

HB and MS present the CD with IDEA logos prepared for the use of IDEA members. It also includes the software created by IDEA – Easy Tournament and Debatabase. HB and MS are asking to receive feedback from members on the CD. There's also an FTP site which will be available for member use.

II stops us for a coffee break.

Presentation of the Youth Forum Fund. BB – there is a problem with the Forum's sustainability. We need to demonstrate how the Forum is unique, but it isn't entirely unique. Realistically, we cannot rely on finding one donor willing sponsor the forum. We tried a few different sponsors and it didn't work. So we said, maybe we could yet it from a few different sponsors. Here's an idea of the Youth Forum Fund. It would allow us to get funds from a variety of different sources: individual donors, banks, organizations, ministries, etc. Another idea is to have a group of ambassadors to be the face of the fund, and have a brochure. It'd be good to have support and help from the members for this project. VV asks about who can be ambassador. BB explains that would be important people, like ministers, etc. MZ asks whether there's a need to have a brochure of the Forum. RB urgently needs the cd and brochure for the Forum. HB is ready to do it, but would need a lot of input. VV is interested in working on the idea of the YFF, as is Teodora (Croatia), and KV promises to contact someone from Estonia. II suggests breaking up into groups and discussing the questions: losing interest in the forum, the discipline, curriculum and losing interest of teachers.

We reconvene from the small groups.

Group 1: focus on the sustainability of the Forum. Options: 1. Canceling the YF would help more efficiently spend the money spent on the travel, etc. 2. Regional forums. 3. Get a prince to fund a more sexy event. Exotic countries, nice locations, important people. Copy the worlds. The big suggestion is to split the risks: having a fund and having the local host have a more active role in fundraising.

Group 2:

1. Decreasing number of participants:
 - i. Language problems;
 - ii. Forum is too long;
 - iii. Visa issues;

- iv. Lack of money;
 - v. Not interesting forum;
 - vi. Too competitive.
2. Lack of money:
 - a. Commercial sponsors;
 - b. Government support;
 - c. Public debates with private schools;
 - d. Seminars done by local groups to teach advocacy skills to students;
 - e. Other projects in a member country (charge for trainings);
 - f. Appeal to embassies.
 3. Marketting the Forum:
 - a. Market is as a more fun event and organized fun;
 - b. Less competitive parts;
 - c. PP about the forum;
 - d. Co-ed event;
 - e. Concrete friendships;
 - f. Instead of trophies have other types of awards;
 - g. Scholarships as awards;
 - h. Advertise life skills;
 - i. Important alumni visiting;
 - j. The host bid more than one year in advance in order to develop a marketing strategy.
 4. Sustainability:
 - a. Non-member participation;
 - b. Other donors;
 - c. For-profit organization;
 - d. Topic coordinated with a mission of an international organization/donor;
 - e. Cohesive marketing plan – services for free advertising, etc.

Group 3:

1. Competitiveness: trophies for winners is a good idea, but who are the winners? It is not necessarily the team which wins. We encourage competitiveness ourselves. We should stress that winning is not the most important thing. This should be reflected in the curriculum – analysis of debate; labs should be not only prior to the tournament but also after the tournament. Same should be done with judges – they should be sent clearer standards on how to judge.
2. Discipline and the number of participants: we need to attract more teachers, not only young people who are irresponsible.

Group 4:

1. Declining enrolment:
 - a. Challenges – students leave the debate/school after the Forum;

- b. The tradeoffs are too great – either host 3 tournaments for the cost of sending 3 students to the forum.
 - c. Forum is not unique.
 - d. Priority for many network programs is operational sustainability.
 - e. Changing the forum, not canceling it.
2. Importance of the forum:
- a. International contacts;
 - b. New debating methods;
 - c. Ability to advance debaters;
 - d. Ability of the Forum to motivate people to be more involved in debate.
3. Solutions to challenges:
- a. Emphasis on the Forum as a crucial stream to developing programs;
 - b. Capacity building – improve the IDEA network;
 - c. Training coaches and judges very specifically in order to give a more intensive experience (first week). That'd give them more value and more help to the program.

Sanctioning events

NS Regional forum in South East Asia, most likely in Thailand to allow more access from the certain region. Could be in Russian rather than English. OSI is funding it as an experiment.

IDEA Sanctioned events: IDEA needs to ensure quality control and needs to be able to show donors that IDEA is a network of members which share the common vision.

Sanctioning helps us do it. If the event a member organizes an event which will meet the standards, they apply for sanctioning, get an idea sanctioned stamp and the ability to automatically print certificates. We want that in order to create visibility and improve quality by promoting IDEA brand. This should make both IDEA and the member easier to fundraise. It is not an attempt to take credit for others' events, but rather demonstrate the strength of our network and the high quality event organization. Standards give good guidance on how to organize events effectively. This benefits us collectively only if we all use them.

KV – what about debate tracker, why do we need to remind kids to enter DT. NS – you can use the spreadsheet which we then can incorporate into the DT.

II thanks everyone and especially Rene for jumping in when we lost our GA host and for organizing a pleasant event.

The meeting closes at 7pm.