



Minutes of the General Meeting of the REELC/ENCLS, Clermont-Ferrand, 6 September 2007

A General meeting of the REELC/ENCLS was held on 6 September 2007 at the Maison de la Recherche et des Sciences de l'Homme, Clermont-Ferrand from 18.30 to 19.45 in the context of the Second REELC/ENCLS International Conference, "Fortunes et Infortunes des Genres Littéraires en Europe", 5-7 September, 2007.

The meeting was chaired by the outgoing General Coordinator, Dr Lucia Boldrini.

The following agenda items were discussed:

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) The minutes of the 2005 General Meeting were approved.
- 3) Matters arising.

There were no matters arising that were not also substantial items of the Agenda to be discussed within the meeting.

- 4) General Coordinator's 2-year report.

Less was achieved in the last two years that was hoped, mainly for two reasons: the GC's personal and health problems, which hampered her activities, and the problems encountered in setting up the website, which absorbed most of the energy. These factors, as well as costs, also made it impossible to hold the expected yearly meeting in 2006 (the same type of difficulty had prevented the holding of a meeting in 2004: the issue of the requirement of yearly meetings needs to be addressed; see below, item 6)

Nevertheless, there was significant progress for the REELC/ENCLS, which is establishing itself as an important organization in Europe in the field of Comparative Literature. For example:

- Membership has significantly increased (moreover, all participants in the conference are automatically members).
- The website despite the delays is now active and efficient, and warmest thanks must be offered to Ales Vaupotic, Jola Skulj, and the webteam at ZRC SAZU Ljubljana for their efforts. Thanks are also due to Narvika Bovcon for the design (see also item 5 below).
- REELC/ENCLS has been approached to explore possible support of or collaboration with summer schools and research projects (e.g. the ALICE [Another Landscape: Imagining Contemporary Europe] project whose bid to the EU is led by the University of Bologna).
- In late 2005 the REELC/ENCLS participated in a campaign to try to save the Institute of Comparative Literature in Innsbruck, which had some effect in protecting the permanence of the discipline within degree programmes, even if the decision to close the Institute was not reversed.

This type of activities should be pursued further, and some considerable effort will be devoted to this in the next two years to develop this aspect of our mission. All members are urged to suggest possible initiatives, and how REELC/ENCLS can help (NB: the Réseau / Network does not have any funds, so no financial help can be offered).

- 5) Website (www.eurolit.net, www.eurolit.org, www.encls.net, www.reelc.net).

The Webmaster, Ales Vaupotic, demonstrated the functioning of the website and reported on future needs and plans.

Colleagues present at this conference are invited to register on the website if they have not already done so (registration is free!)

Measures have been taken to reduce the number of illegitimate registrations (e.g. advertising products). Posts about events and announcements still need to be moderated. Moderation has so far been handled by the Webmaster and the GC, and this has put an increasing strain on their time. As membership expands, moderation will become even more demanding. The help of local / regional

moderators is therefore sought to make the procedure more efficient. Volunteers are invited to come forward, and if not enough are recruited, the GC will write to members to identify possible moderators.

The Webmaster also announced a pilot scheme to publish e-texts (two samples are published on the site)

The Website will be developed further; e.g. a request was made to introduce a separate section for relevant job advertisements (e.g. postdoctoral fellowships, visiting scholarships, new jobs, etc.)

6) Review of the Administrative Structure and Charter.

A rewriting of the Charter along principles agreed at Florence should have happened before this meeting, to be formally approved here, but this is one of the activities that were delayed (see report in item 4, above). The Charter needs to be streamlined; sections that multiply the administrative layers should be revised and the structure simplified; similarly, it was agreed that – while it is important to have representatives from several different countries / areas on the Executive, and rotate them – the mandatory nomination of one representative at least for each country (which, incidentally, has raised questions such as why nationality is preferred to other criteria, such as language) is a needless bureaucratic stricture for a Network, and it is more important to ensure that membership is as varied as inclusive as possible than to try to define groups and categories of members.

The GC (outgoing and the one appointed for the 2007-09 period) will rewrite the Charter; this revised draft will be posted on the Website for consultation, before approval (this, depending on the timescale, can happen as online voting through the website).

It was agreed that meetings of the Executive Committee in the years when the biennial international conference is not held would no longer be a requirement, as contacts can be kept electronically (though of course if the opportunity arose to hold a face-to-face meeting, this would be taken).

The form of nominations and elections of the members of the Executive Committee also needs to be made clearer (see item 11 below).

7) Membership.

It has been the policy of REELC / ENCLS not to charge any membership fees so far. At this stage it is advisable to continue with this policy, but to be aware that it is possible that at some stage in the future our increasing activities may require us to introduce a membership fee. This would however require us to change our legal and fiscal status, investigate in which country we should be based and hold our bank account, how to conform to the legal requirements there, how to collect membership fees, at what level to set them, whether to have differential ones for different countries or not, etc. The discussion would be a long and complicated one, and this change is not envisaged in the near future. In any case, such a change would be possible only if balanced by regular, effective, efficient and valuable service for our members.

8) Summer schools.

The establishment of summer schools has been one of the aims of the REELC/ENCLS since its foundation, although we are aware that for the time being we do not have the resources to organize one independently. Members have approached the GC to propose collaboration with other existing Summer schools. The General Meeting approved the recommendation by the Executive Cttee to pursue such contacts, and to entrust the GC and Dr Florian Mussgnug (UCL. U of London), to liaise with the Synapsis Summer School in the first instance, and pursue any other possible links that may be suggested.

9) 2007 Conference.

Prof Alain Montandon reported on the present conference, which is going extremely well. The interest was noticed especially from some countries, while others (e.g. the UK) had sent in very few proposals. A discussion took place about the form of publication of papers from the conference – should it be all papers or only a selection of the best ones. The latter was the preferred choice for the majority of members present. Prof Montandon was asked to edit the collection, and to consider publication on the REELC/ENCLS website after proper peer-reviewing of the selection.

Prof Montandon, Dr Saulo Neiva, and all their team were congratulated and warmly thanked for their excellent work.

10) 2009 Conference.

No definite plans are in place yet for our third biennial international conference, but a number of tentative suggestions have been made and will be explored in the next few weeks, hoping to reach a

decision as soon as possible. An Eastern European location would be preferable given that the first two conferences have taken place in Italy and France respectively.

11) Election of the Executive Officers, 2007-09

Some matters were discussed before proceeding to the elections. In particular:

- The necessity of one additional ex-officio member to the Executive Cttee was discussed: As the webmaster must be on the executive committee but may not have the power or position to ensure the institutional support needed, it was agreed that a colleague from Ljubljana who can ensure this support should be a member of the Executive Committee. The nomination of Jola Skulj to this position was approved unanimously.
- The General Assembly was reminded that some members could not stand for re-election to the Executive Committee having already served two terms; that the Webmaster, the Officer for Web Matters just appointed, and the immediate past General Coordinator would be ex-officio members (unless any of these stood for election and were elected)
- The proposal was made that there should be postgraduate representation on the Executive Committee. The proposal was accepted.
- A discussion then ensued on the number of elected officers to the Executive Committee: the Charter indicates 9; since postgraduate officers have been added, the question was whether the number should be raised to 11 (or even higher to ensure larger representation). After discussion, three proposals (9, 11, 13 officers) were put to the vote and 11 was the preferred choice.
- The next point for discussion was whether postgraduate candidates should have reserved places or be nominated and only elected if they received sufficient votes – the former solution was chosen, and it was decided that members would vote for up to 11 names, of which 2 had to be postgraduate candidates.

A vote then ensued, and votes were counted straight away. 9 candidates were elected clearly (including 3 postgraduate candidates), while 4 were ex-aequo; a discussion ensued on the methods for selection of two of these, but there being no agreement, a vote ensued and the assembly reversed its previous decision to nominate 11, and went back to 9; the ex-aequo candidates were thus not elected.

The confusion and inadequacy of these extemporaneous decisions was remarked on by the chair of the meeting, despite their having been voted by a majority of members present, and the need for clearer regulations was emphasised. This will be tackled as part of the revision of the Charter, and a new, clearer proposal will be presented through the website for consultation and online voting so that the new, stronger regulations will be in place for the 2009 elections.

The officers elected to the Executive Committee for 2007-09 are, in alphabetical order:

Aude Ameille (Postgraduate representative)
Cecilia Barret (Postgraduate representative)
Nele Bemong (Postgraduate representative)
Lucia Boldrini
Marko Juvan
Roland Lysell
Alain Montandon
Dolores Romero López
Roumiana Stantcheva

Additional ex-officio members:

Ales Vaupotic
Jola Skulj

The elected officers present met to nominate one of their number as General Coordinator for 2007-09. Lucia Boldrini was re-elected to the position.

12) Any other business:

There being none, the meeting ended at 19.45.