# AITA/IATA asbl

## 42nd General Assembly Forum Book

## Antwerp, 22 August 2026

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# Programme: 42nd Congress of AITA/IATA asbl: 42nd General Assembly and Open Forum

**Saturday 22 August 2026: General Assembly, Venue: Het Vleeshuis, Museum of Music, Vleeshouwersstraat 39/40, Antwerp, Belgium**

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|---|---|
| 10:30 | Formal welcome to delegates by President of OPENDOEK, Emmanuelle Verhagen and the President of AITA/IATA, Sofia Wegelius |
| 10:45 | General Assembly starts |
| 12:00 | General Assembly ends |
| 12:05 | Short Closing Performance of General Assembly: AITA/IATA Youth Ensemble (In Person & Online) |

**Sunday 23 August 2026: Open Forum, Venue: OPENDOEK vzw, Italiëlei 6, 2000 Antwerp**

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|---|---|
| 10:00 | Open Forum starts |
| 12:00 | Open Forum ends |

# Agenda of the 42nd AITA/IATA asbl General Assembly

*Saturday 22 August 2026*

1. Official opening of the 42nd AITA/IATA asbl General Assembly - address by the President of OPENDOEK, Emmanuelle Verhagen and the President of AITA/IATA, Sofia Wegelius
2. Introduction and welcome from the President of AITA/IATA asbl, Sofia Wegelius
3. Appointment of the Presiding Chair of the 42nd General Assembly

   Vote of GA
4. Agree the Agenda of the General Assembly

   Vote of GA
5. Roll call of all Members in attendance (Antwerp and online)
   a. Confirmation of voting rights
   b. Notification of proxies
6. Appointment of Tellers and the Drafting Committee

   Vote of GA
7. Approval of the Minutes of 41st General Assembly in Monaco 23 August 2025

   Vote of GA
8. Admission of new members by the General Assembly

   Vote of GA
9. AITA/IATA asbl review 2025 - 2026
   a. Council review from President Sofia Wegelius and Councillors, presentation from AITA/IATA Youth

   Vote of GA
10. Finance review 2025 - 2026
    a. Review of finance by Treasurer Patrick Schoenstein and approval of finance report.
    Vote of GA
    b. Discharge to Councillors

    Vote of GA
11. Other proposals submitted for consideration by the General Assembly Vote of GA
12. Budget 2026 – 2027
    a. Proposed budget

    Vote of GA
13. Host for future AITA/IATA World Festival for Children and Youth
    a) AITA/IATA World Festival of Children's Theatre, Lingen, Germany, Summer 2028
14. Host for future AITA/IATA Festival:
    a) AITA/IATA International Amateur Theatre Festival, New Zealand 2027, presentation by Paul Percy, Theatre New Zealand
15. Host for future AITA/IATA Festival, Congress and General Assembly:
    a) AITA/IATA International Amateur Theatre Festival, Italy 2031, proposal by Diego Navone, FITA

    Vote of GA
16. Other business
17. Closing of the 42nd General Assembly of AITA/IATA asbl

# Constitution of AITA/IATA asbl

## I. NAME, REGISTERED OFFICE, PURPOSE AND DURATION

**Article 1**

The association is named "Association Internationale du Théâtre Amateur - International Amateur Theatre Association - Asociación Internacional del Teatro Amateur", in short "AITA/IATA asbl", hereinafter referred to as "the Association".

**Article 2**

The Association is constituted as a Belgian non-profit organisation, according to the Belgian Code of Companies and Associations of 23 March 2019, published in the Belgian Moniteur on 4 April 2019 (hereinafter referred to as the "Belgian CCA").

The registered office of the Association is established in Belgium, Brussels Region.

The registered number of the Association is 0863.683.050.

**Article 3**

The Association is formed for the purpose of:

a) Fostering dramatic art by all theatrical groups of the world devoted, without remuneration, to artistic and cultural aims;
b) Promoting by permanent international contact and relationships those activities common to its members;
c) Co-ordinating the actions of its members in their purpose of enriching human experience and educating through the medium of theatre;
d) Facilitating international exchanges between all groups belonging to amateur theatre.

To establish these aims, the Association will employ the following means:

a) The organisation or participation in the organisation of international congresses, conferences, seminars, festivals, courses, exhibitions and any other activity;
b) The publication or assistance in the publication and distribution of books, periodicals and stage plays;
c) The maintenance of one or more support, information or study centres on amateur theatre;
d) Co-operating with other international organisations having similar aims or devoted to theatre and culture in general.
e) The Association may undertake or support any initiative and organise any activity that may contribute to establishing its aims or objectives.

**Article 4**

The Association has been constituted for an unlimited period of time.

## II. MEMBERSHIP

**Article 5**

The number of members of the Association is unlimited. Its minimum is fixed to two (2).

**Article 6**

The General Assembly of the Association is composed of the Members.

The admission of Members is decided by the General Assembly (hereinafter referred to as the GA) following the proposition of the Council. The Council may grant provisional admission to new Members, which must, however, be confirmed at the next GA.

The organisation accepts 2 (two) categories of Members:

- A **National Centre Member** is an organisation or a federation of organisations who are networks, concentrators of activity, local and global, working proactively in the field of amateur theatre and/or representing amateur theatre activity on a national basis, where "national" indicates a nation, a self-governing territory, or self-governing territories.

  **National Centre Members** are hereinafter referred to as "**National Centres**".

- An **Associate Member** is an organisation, a federation of organisations, or an individual with an interest and/or activity in the field of amateur theatre.

  **Associate Members** are hereinafter referred to as "**Associates**".

**Article 7**

All Members are required to pay the appropriate annual Membership Fee, relevant to their Membership category, as determined by the GA. The maximum amount of this Membership Fee is set at five thousand (5,000) Euro.

Non-payment of the Membership Fee will automatically result in resignation by default of the Member.

## III. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Article 8**

A **National Centre** who is up to date with their membership payments is entitled to six (6) votes in the GA.

These votes have to be cast in one block of six (6) votes.

An **Associate** who is up to date with their membership payments is entitled to one (1) vote in the GA.

A Member can delegate their votes by proxy to another Member. Each Member is limited to carrying one proxy.

A natural person can represent a maximum of two (2) Members.

**Article 9**

Resigning and resigned, suspended or expelled Members, as well as their heirs or those having rights over a deceased Member, have no rights over the assets of the Association. They cannot reclaim Membership Fees, claim or request statements, rendering of accounts, nor inventories. Neither can they affix seals or proceed to precautionary attachment ("saisie conservatoire").

**Article 10**

The legislative power of the Association is held by the GA. In accordance with the Belgian CCA, powers that are exclusively reserved for the GA are the following:

a) Alterations to the Constitution;
b) The appointment and dismissal of Councillors and of the President of the Association;
c) Granting discharge to Councillors regarding their obligations as Councillors of the Association;
d) The approval of the budget and the accounts of the Association;
e) The dissolution of the Association and the destination of the net assets of the Association following such dissolution;
f) The expulsion of Members of the Association;
g) The conversion of the Association into a company with a social purpose;
h) All cases required by the articles of the Association.

In addition to the powers mentioned above, it is the authority of the GA to appoint one or more independent persons, who cannot be Councillors, as "third party" examiners of the accounts.

**Article 11**

The GA is chaired by the President of the Association or by any other chair appointed by the GA at the beginning of the GA.

**Article 12**

The President of the Association, on behalf of the Council, or upon request of at least one fifth (1/5) of the Members of the Association, will convene the GA by any appropriate means of communication as agreed by

the Council. In both cases, notification which will include the draft agenda of the GA, will take place at least eight (8) weeks before the GA.

Any proposal to be considered by the GA must be supported by at least one twentieth (1/20) of the Members of the Association before it can be added to the agenda of the GA. Proposals must reach the Secretariat not later than four (4) weeks before the GA. The final agenda of the GA, containing all proposals by Members and all relevant documents, will be distributed to Members not later than fifteen (15) days before the GA.

The GA can be held in any physical or digital format considered appropriate by Council.

**Article 13**

***1. Attendance in the GA***

Regardless of the number of Members in attendance (present or represented), the GA is **constitutionally valid**, except for the decisions relating to:

a) The expulsion of a Member;

b) alterations to the Constitution;

c) changing the purpose of the Association

d) the dissolution of the Association.

Decisions relating to the expulsion of a Member alterations to the Constitution, changing the purpose of the Association and to the dissolution of the Association require the attendance of at least two thirds (2/3) of Members (present or represented).

A second GA may be called if, in compliance with the Belgian CCA, the abovementioned attendance criteria are not met, regardless of the number of Members in attendance (present or represented). Such a second GA may not be held within fifteen (15) days following the first GA.

***2. Decisions in the GA***

All **decisions** are taken by a simple majority (fifty percent (50%) plus one (1)) of the votes of Members in attendance at the GA (present or represented), except, as is compliant with the Belgian CCA, for decisions relating to:

a) the expulsion of a Member;

b) alterations to the Constitution;

c) changing the purpose of the Association;

d) the dissolution of the Association.

Decisions relating to the expulsion of a Member, as well as decisions relating to alterations to the Constitution, require a majority of two thirds (2/3) of the votes of the Members in attendance (present or represented).

Associates do not have voting rights with regard to the decision of the expulsion of a National Centre.

Decisions relating to alterations to the Constitution concerning the purpose of the Association, as well as decisions relating to the dissolution of the Association, require a majority of four fifths (4/5) of the votes of Members in attendance (present or represented).

***3. Voting in the GA***

Voting procedures and/or systems in the GA are decided by the Council. Voting may be manual, postal, electronic, or digital or by any means that the Council considers to be appropriate.

Abstentions and/or invalid votes are not taken into account when counting the votes and/or when defining majorities, neither in the numerator nor in the denominator.

The GA can vote only on issues that are included in the Agenda.

## IV. THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND NETWORKS

**Article 14**

The GA delegates the governance and day-to-day management of the Association to the Council.

The GA will, through an election process, appoint one (1) President and a maximum of eight (8) Councillors.

The President and the Councillors jointly form the Council. Their mandate ("the Mandate") is not remunerated by the Association.

The Council has the authority to appoint and dismiss from among the Councillors, officers as appropriate ("the Officers"), for example: Treasurer, Secretary, or any other function the Council considers appropriate.

Officers may resign or be dismissed from their assigned functions without effecting their Mandate as a Councillor.

The President and the Councillors of the Association are natural persons.

**Article 15**

The President of the Association and Councillors are elected for a mandated period of four (4) years ("the Mandate Term").

An individual can serve a maximum of three (3) consecutive Mandate Terms on the Council, of which a maximum of two (2) consecutive Mandate Terms as Councillor, or a maximum of two (2) consecutive Mandate Terms as President.

In exceptional circumstances, the GA can extend the Mandate Term of the President, a Councillor and/or several Councillors, for a period to be decided by the GA. This decision requires a majority of two thirds (2/3) of the Members in attendance at the GA (present or represented).

The Mandate of a Councillor and/or the President will cease:

a) At the end of the Mandate Term;

b) Should the GA decide to end the Mandate. This decision requires a simple majority by the GA;

c) Upon receipt of a written resignation (by letter, email or any other form of text message) to the Council.

Should a Councillor (including the President) be unable to complete their Mandate irrespective of cause, this Mandate will count as a fully completed Mandate Term.

Should a position on the Council become vacant, owing to the death, incapacity or resignation of an appointed Councillor, the Council may appoint a temporary replacement until the following GA. The appointee will function as a Councillor without voting rights.

**Article 16**

The Council is convened by the President of the Association by any means that the Council considers appropriate and will meet at least twice between two GAs. The Council is constitutionally valid (quorate) if 5 out of 9 Councillors are present or represented.

Council meetings can be held in any physical or digital format considered appropriate by the Council. Voting procedures and/or systems during Council meetings are decided by the Council. Voting may be manual, postal, electronic or digital or by any means that the Council considers to be appropriate.

A Councillor can delegate their vote by proxy to another Councillor. Each Councillor can carry only one proxy.

**Article 17**

The Council has unlimited executive powers in matters relating to the governance and day-to-day management of the Association.

Unless a power is, under the Belgian CCA or under this Constitution, explicitly stated to belong exclusively to the GA, all powers are under the authority of the Council.

The Council may appoint any contracted individual and determine their job description and remuneration.

The Council has the right to delegate the day-to-day management of the Association, including the authority of signature in relation to the day-to-day management, to any contracted individual.

**Article 18**

a) External relations

The Council can establish or terminate any operational relationship, at any time, with any appropriate party, natural person, de facto association or legal entity, in the interest of the Association. These operational relationships are called **Networks**.

b) Internal relations

The Council can establish or terminate, within the organisation, one or more **Committees**, where appropriate chaired by a coordinator or coordinating team. The Council will approve a Committee's internal rules.

The Council will appoint the members and the coordinator of any Committee. The Council can terminate the appointment of any coordinator or Committee member, at any time.

## V. LANGUAGE

### Article 19

The languages to be employed in all official business conducted by the Association are French, English and Spanish. In case of difficulties of interpretation of the Constitution and/or official documents of the Association, the French language will take precedence.

It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that sufficient skills are available in the Council in order to address the Association's official languages and cultural issues.

## VI. MISCELLANEOUS

### Article 20

The Association is represented in legal agreements, including those where a public officer or a law official intervenes, and in legal actions, either by the President of the Association or by two Councillors.

### Article 21

The financial year will run from 1 April to 31 March of each year.

### Article 22

In case of voluntary dissolution of the Association, the GA will appoint two (2) liquidators and determine their powers.

### Article 23

In case of voluntary or judicial dissolution of the Association at any time and for any reason, the net assets of the Association will be allocated to an Association involved in similar works and with similar aims to the Association, as agreed by the GA.

This decision will be taken by a simple majority (fifty percent (50%) plus one (1)) of the votes of the Members in attendance (present or represented).

### Article 24

All decisions of the GA and of the Council are recorded in the form of minutes and signed by the President of the Association. The record is kept at the registered office where all Members and third parties may consult it.

### Article 25

All that is not explicitly stated in this Constitution will be determined by Belgian Law, in particular the Belgian CCA.

Made in Monaco, 22 August 2021
Signed, Béatrice CELLARIO, President

# Draft Minutes of the 41st AITA/IATA asbl General Assembly

*Saturday 23 August 2025 at Auditorium Rainier III, Monaco and online via Zoom*

## 1. Official opening of the 41st AITA/IATA asbl General Assembly (GA)

a. Patrice Cellario, Commissaire Général of the Mondial du Théâtre welcomed all delegates to Monaco. The Commissaire General wished everyone a fruitful event.

b. Delegates and Observers were invited to a short reception hosted by His Excellency the Minister of State of Monaco.

## 2. Introduction and welcome from the President of AITA/IATA asbl

a. President Aled Rhys-Jones thanked Madame Melanie-Antoinette de Massy and the Commissioner for his kind words. He noted that AITA/IATA had returned to Monaco, its spiritual home, for the 18th time and the Association was very grateful to the Principality for their support. He was delighted to welcome the Deputy Director of ITI Madam Chen Zhongwen, who will be appointed Director next month and former Presidents Rob Van Genechten and Beatrice Cellario. It was also his honour and duty to pay tribute to those Members whom AITA/IATA had lost. Paddy O'Dwyer was a great man of theatre and served on the Standing Committee for Children and Youth and as President from 2007 to 2011. He was unique and welcomed wherever he went and could give calm to troubled waters. His last contact with him was to thank him for attending PAT - Performing Arts Toyama - event in Japan. Many tributes have been paid to him and he will always be remembered for his gentle smile. President Aled also remembered former AITA/IATA Vice President Dr Roger Ellis who edited the printed AITA/IATA Newsletter and had a great love of text based theatre. A little known fact about him was that, despite being a conscientious objector, he was drafted to fight in Vietnam and was awarded a purple heart. Our thoughts also go to Anna Karen-Waldemarson an AITA/IATA Councillor who served for many years in both NARA and NEATA. At the Debrecen General Assembly, we paid tribute to Bernard Cellario but it is absolutely fitting that we record his memory here in Monaco. He also remembered Bernard Soenens a much respected director of Opendoek from Belgium who has passed who was accompanied by Luc Vloeberghs from Flanders who also passed this year. He wanted to recognise their lives and their passing with a round of applause from delegates in Monaco.

b. On a much happier note, President Aled reported on a note he had received Dr Alfred Mechnigg an AITA/IATA Honorary President and a former President of AITA/IATA who wrote: "Dear President Rhys-Jones, dear friends at Studio Monaco, dear General Assembly, dear theater lovers from all over the world! I am following the rapid development of IATA AITA with great joy – especially seeing how it is trying to keep pace with the technological

megatrends of the time that are radically changing the world, in keeping with the association's motto. As President, I had the honor and the fortune of steering the IATA IATA vehicle with the media of theater and "Drama in Education" through difficult but exciting times for six years with my co-pilots Georg Malvius and John Ytteborg. I am sorry, this time, I am unable to attend due to an urgent appointment in Estonia.

I wish you, dear Mr. President, a successful General Assembly. May the willingness to progress and consensus prevail on difficult problems.

Thanks and appreciation to the friends at Studio Monaco for their willingness to continue inviting national centers and groups from all over the world every four years.

May the many ensembles from all over the world contribute to building bridges through theater to the AITA IATA motto: Understanding and Education through Theater!"

c. President Aled then moved to the third item on the Agenda, the appointment of the Presiding Chair of the 41st General Assembly (GA).

**3. Appointment of the Presiding Chair of the 41st General Assembly**

a. Council proposed Dirk De Corte, Flanders (SGT) as the Presiding Chair.

**Unanimously approved by a show of hands**

b. The Presiding Chair noted that delegates had the agenda on page 3 of the Forum Book. He sought permission of the GA that the meeting be recorded and that the agenda was agreed to.

**4. Agree the agenda of the General Assembly**

a. Council sought the agreement of delegates to the agenda of the General Assembly.

**Unanimously approved by a show of hands**

**5. Roll call of all Members in attendance (Monaco and online), confirmation of voting rights and notification of proxies**

a. The Presiding Chair asked those who were either present in Monaco or attending online by Zoom to confirm their presence. Delegates from the following **27** Members (NC - National Centres) were present at the start of the GA and responded to the roll call:

b. Austria - 6 votes; Catalonia – 6 votes; Bangladesh – 6 votes; Belgium, Flanders (SGT) – 6 votes; Denmark – 6 votes; Estonia – 6 votes; Faroe Island – 6 votes; Finland – 6 votes; France – 6 votes; Germany - 6 votes; Great Britain (SGT) – 6 votes; Hungary – 6 votes; Iceland – 6 votes; Indonesia – 6 votes; Italy – 6 votes; Japan – 6 votes; Latvia - 6 votes; Lithuania – 6 votes; Monaco – 6 votes; Slovakia – 6 votes (carrying the proxy of Czechia – 6 votes); Slovenia – 6 votes; Sud-Tyrol (SGT) – 6 votes; Spain – 6 votes; Sweden (ATF) – 6 votes; Sweden (ATR) – 6 votes; USA – 6 votes.

c. The Presiding Chair noted Norway was not included because they were not yet Members. The Presiding Chair then invited the Associate Members (AM) who were either present in Monaco or attending online to confirm their presence. Delegates from the following **18** Associate Members responded to the roll call:

Patrick Russell (Australia) – 1 vote; Josef Hollos (Austria) – 1 vote; Rob Van Genechten (Belgium, Flanders (SGT)) - 1 vote; de WAANzin (Belgium, Flanders (SGT)) – 1 vote; The Saint John Theatre Company (Canada) – 1 vote; Zillur Rahman John (Canada) – 1 vote; Theatre de la ROËLE (France) – 1 vote; TPZ, Lingen (Germany) – 1 vote; Aled Rhys-Jones (Great Britain (SGT)) – 1 vote; Mary Pears (Ireland) – 1 vote; Theatre New Zealand (New Zealand) – 1 vote; Teatro de Balugas (Portugal) – 1 vote; Grémio Dramático Povoense (Portugal) – 1 vote; DUPLAFACE - Companhia das Artes (Portugal) – 1 vote; Piano Theatre (Russian Federation) - 1 vote Theatre Association Partizánske/Divadelné združenie Partizánske, (Slovakia) – 1 vote; Südtiroler Theaterverband/Theaterpädagogisches Zentrum Brixen (Sud Tyrol) – 1 vote; Federació de Teatre Amateur de la Comunitat Valenciana (Spain) – 1 vote; Carlos Taberneiro (Spain) – 1 vote. Other AM's may have joined during the GA.

d. The Presiding Chair confirmed that 27 NCs and 18 AMs were present making a total of 45 out of 75 Members with a total vote of 180 which gave 60% attendance and made the General Assembly quorate. He noted that each NC had six votes and each AM one vote.

## 6. Appointment of Tellers and appointment of Drafting Committee

a. The Presiding Chair explained the need for Tellers and Drafters. Drafters would check new text, although this requirement was unlikely. Tellers would count the number of votes cast. All voting would be anonymous and only Barabara Cellario and the Presiding Chair would see the figures on the laptop. Thus, two 'innocent' pairs of eyes would be needed to check the figures on the laptop.

b. Council recommended Michalis Karampelis (Great Britain) and Arnfinnur Nesa (Faroe Island) as Tellers and as Drafters, Mary Pears (English), Gilles El Zaim (French), and Brigitte Auguet (Spanish).

**Unanimously approved by a show of hands**

## 7. Confirmation of new Members (Associate and National Centre 2024 – 2025)

a. The Presiding Chair noted that one new NC Member and 19 new AM's were listed in the Forum Book on page 17. The Presiding Chair explained the voting procedures and asked for the patience of delegates as the process would take some time. He reminded everyone that when voting, abstentions would not count. A test poll was made to ensure that the voting worked.

b. Delegates were reminded that, as in previous years, the first round of voting would be for NC's with AM's Associates in the waiting room and they would then be reversed for the second round of voting. In case of issues with the Wi-Fi in Monaco, some manual voting might occur. A total of 45 were voting, so it was important to distinguish between current and future NC's and AM's and also to note that not all Members had logged in or named their organisation or individual and he asked delegates online to do so.

c. The first action was to approve the new NC and Members so they could then vote. The first vote was:

i. To accept Norsk Amatørteaterforbund, Norway as a National Centre Member of AITA/IATA asbl

**Using the online poll, Norsk Amatørteaterforbund was unanimously approved**

d. In respect of the confirmation of the 19 AM's, the Presiding Chair outlined two options. The first was for delegates to confirm en bloc that all 19 Associate Members be accepted. This would require the unanimous agreement of all voting delegates. If one delegate did not wish to proceed this way, delegates would be asked to say yes or no to each of the 19 Associate Members. The Presiding Chair launched the en bloc vote.

i. To accept en bloc the 19 organisations and individuals approved by Council as Associate Members

**Using the online poll, the 19 organisations and individuals approved by Council as Associate Members were unanimously approved by delegates as Associate Members *en bloc***

e. The Presiding Chair welcomed the 19 new Associate Members and in particular the ones who had been able to join the Zoom:

- Neretva, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- LITF - Liverpool International Theatre Festival, Canada
- Theatre 11, Bremen, Germany
- PLATS (Latvia), Great Britain
- Theatre Group "Other Side", Greece
- Teatro la Fragua, Honduras
- Mudra A Creative Gesture, India
- Saaduddin, Indonesia
- Vilnius University Drama Theatre, Lithuania
- FITAS Agadir, Morocco
- Hassany Anouar, Morocco
- James Bell, New Zealand
- Lithuanian Amateur Theatre, Norway

- Grémio Dramático Povoense, Portugal
- Opera Academy, Singapore
- Theatre Studio BELOE, Switzerland
- Ömer Şahinbaş, Türkiye
- World Stage Theatre Co, USA
- CHIPAWO, Zimbabwe

f. The Presiding Chair noted that the Association now consisted of 30 National Centres and 65 Associate Members.

**8. Call for written questions to Candidates for Election to Council**

a. In preparation for the voting of the President and Councillors, the Presiding Chair asked any delegates who wished to submit a written question to do so.

**9. Approval of the Minute of 40th General Assembly by Zoom 15 June 2024**

a. The Presiding Chair directed delegates to the minutes of the 2024 General Assembly in the Forum Book on page nine. There were no questions or comments on the minutes.

**On as show of hands, one National Centre Member voted not to accept the Minutes of the 40th General Assembly**

**10. AITA/IATA asbl review 2024 – 2025**

a. Council review from President Aled Rhys Jones – President Aled noted the Council activity report on page 20 in the Forum Book. He proposed only to highlight some areas of the report. He had attended the AITA/IATA World Festival of Children's Theatre in Lingen, Germany and noted that the Director, Nils Hanraets would give a short report later in the day but he wanted to thank Nils and his team for a tremendous event after a seven-year pause due to COVID. The extreme temperatures and a freak storm did not make it any easier for the organising team but they worked round these issues and on behalf of the AITA/IATA Members he offered thanks. Delegates applauded.

b. He was pleased to note that the FITAS Festival, Morocco had just been accepted as a new Associate Member and he asked their Director Hamza Sbai to stand for delegates to recognise him. He and Hamza were working on behalf of AITA/IATA to make contact with amateur theatre companies in the Gulf States with a view to convening a meeting of theatre representatives from across the region. He hoped that the new AITA/IATA Council would continue this work. He handed over to Councillor Kelli McLoud-Schingen to talk on visa issues.

c. Kelli McLoud-Schingen noted that many companies struggled to attend international events because of visa issues and AITA/IATA wanted to partner with other international

organisations such as ITI to gather information and to start to advocate for an improvement. Indeed, she noted there had been difficulties for some of the groups attending this festival. On behalf of Council, she would work with organisations to gather information to try and improve the situation. She invited delegates to see her in the breaks to let her know any problems they had encountered and hopefully, AITA/IATA could help to mitigate them in the future.

d. President Aled then asked Vice President Sofia Wegelius to report on Children and Youth and digital matters. Sofia noted that since last year, not all AITA/IATA's plans had succeeded, partly due to the lack of finance. The proposed youth event had been postponed but AITA/IATA planned for it to happen in summer 2026 in Brixen, Sud-Tyrol. On digital developments, AITA/IATA had continued with the digital Masterclasses and she hoped to make these more engaging in the future and offered in different languages: one in English and French had taken place and plans were in hand for one in Spanish. AITA/IATA continued to invite people to put their theatre on the world map on the AITA/IATA Website and indeed only today she had approved a new theatre and she hoped to develop this further to show how large the amateur theatre family is around the world. AITA/IATA was also active on social media which was a great way to get the word out to our theatre Members and to seek new Members.

e. President Aled noted the notable absence in the form of Anne Gilmour who had been with AITA/IATA as the Secretariat working freelance since 2012. Despite her health issues, she had decided to continue her work until a replacement had been found. Taking the minutes today would be one of her last official duties for the Association. He agreed with Councillor Stephen Tobias's view that Anne's input to the organisation was the single greatest contribution and support to AITA/IATA's health and continuity through five AITA/IATA Presidents. He noted his great working relationship with Anne and he could not thank her enough for the work she had done, especially over the last 12 months under the most challenging circumstances.

f. The council had not, however, been idle in finding a successor for Anne and he announced the appointment of Alexandra Mihály, from Hungary who many delegates would remember from the 2023 Festival in Debrecen. She would start work tomorrow and Anne would slowly hand over the work during the coming weeks. He also offered many thanks to Ksenia Nesterova, who was standing down from Council, for her work and contribution to AITA/IATA. He also thanked the Members of AITA/IATA for their trust and confidence in electing him to lead the organisation as President for the past four years.

g. In conclusion, President Aled noted he had stood for Council under President Thomas Hauger as the English Speaking Secretary had become Vice President and then President. It had been the greatest of duties and the greatest of honours and during that time he had worked with fabulous people and made many friends. He found it a truly wonderful organisation and he had great faith in its purpose and in its future. Alfred Meschnigg had noted it was a challenging role but what greater and more worthy challenge than working towards a truly global organisation that brings people together in a common love of theatre. Delegates stood to applaud President Aled Rhys-Jones.

**Council's report unanimously approved by a show of hands.**

## 11. Finance review 2024 – 2025

Review of finance and approval of finance report by Treasurer Patrick Schoenstein – Patrick Schoenstein reported that, the results of the income statement are similar to those from the previous financial years. The statement shows a reasonable deficit for the financial year of
€2,793.95 for a total income of €20,736.32 and total expenditure of €23,530.17.

Our association's only income comes from the Membership fees of NC's and of AM's and expenditure consists mainly of the cost of the Secretariat, Accounting, Internet and Zoom subscriptions along with the administrative costs of registering the Association in Belgium, which are unavoidable.

There were no questions for Patrick Schoenstein and the Presiding Chair confirmed that the GA would proceed to the vote on the budget for the 2024 - 2025 financial year.

**The Review of Finance and Financial Report 2024 – 2025 was unanimously approved by Zoom.**

a. Granting Discharge to Councillors – the Presiding Chair explained this requirement under Belgian Law that Members of AITA/IATA gave the task of running the organisation to Councillors and thus they carry the legal responsibilities of the organisation in good faith. By granting them Discharge, Members say they are fine with all the deeds they have done over the past year from a legal perspective.

**The Granting Discharge to Councillors unanimously approved by a show of hands**

b. The Presiding Chair noted that any delegates with a written questions for the those standing for election could present them to him over lunch.

**The General Assembly broke for lunch and reconvened at 14:00.**

## 12. Preparation for the elections

a. The Presiding Chair had received no questions for the candidates. There was only one candidate for the role of President, Sofia Wegelius and her statement was in the Forum Book: he invited her to take the floor.

b. Sofia confirmed she was from Finland and was President of NEATA, where she worked specifically with Children and Youth and had worked with President Aled as the AITA/IATA Vice President for four years. She was standing for President because for her, it was about the work and she got excited about the work that could be done. She had a lot of visions and ideas about what she wanted to do and what she could work on which is why she wanted to run for President. It was a task that, if elected, she would work together with the Council as for her, teamwork was the key word and she would work together to achieve a more engaging organisation for Members. She wanted Council's thoughts for the future to be for you, the Members, and she wanted AITA/IATA to be more engaging and pro-active about contacting and engaging with theatre people and to have a louder voice.

c. Yesterday, during the forum, those who had attended were asked what they found exciting about international work. To answer that question from her point of view she noted that when she returned home from AITA/IATA events she was sometimes asked why she should be supported on international work. She replied saying that when she travelled she got new ideas and visions and crazy thoughts about how she could do her job better and how she felt international work benefitted theatre back home. This was what she found most inspiring about the international context.

d. She wanted to continue to develop the Masterclasses and indeed, new ideas had been generated at the forum. She also wanted to continue the Curtain Up! events which are not always easy to finance but she felt that events between festivals were needed. She also wanted to focus more on youth work and already AITA/IATA had involved youth in decision making and they had confirmed they wanted events that brought them together. She was pleased to be able to say that this is what will happen next summer in Brixen.

e. She also wanted to support all of Members who work with festivals. Here in Monaco, she had noted the volunteers and the staff who made the event possible and, as a festival organiser, she knew how tiring this was. She wanted to be a supportive figure and to help, where she could, the organisers of international events. Council had talked about communication and how we all struggle with it and she hoped to improve this. She asked what would Members get if they elected her? She had said to Council, that she was not going to beat about the bush: she was a mum and she had a full time job but she would work incredibly hard to make the organisation as great as it could be and to work with

Councillors to make it as relevant as possible for its Members. She believed in teamwork and would seek to find the strengths in the new Council and find out what can could be achieved together.

f. It was clear that things would change because Anne was leaving. She noted that Anne had meant a lot to the organisation and she thanked her for taking care of her while on Council. She was very thankful to have a great person taking over from her and she was confident that they would work well together as there was good chemistry and they had trust in each other. She wanted to build on the foundations built by previous Presidents but she would work hard and make changes to make sure the organisation thrives. While she might not be able to travel round the world and attend all Members' events, she would do her best to make the organisation relevant for its Members.

g. The Presiding Chair invited those standing for election as Councillors to speak to delegates.

h. Kevin Dowsett, Great Britain - said he had been on a long journey and was of the older fraternity and, therefore, he could bring experience. He asked what were the challenges for the organisation? One was finance and so a question was how to generate more income, a tough thing to achieve. Another challenge was the digital world: the procedures during this GA were a case in point. Members had to meet but also be sustainable: but you have to be in the same room to meet and, if I am talking with people and talking to them and finding solutions I like to see their eyes and their body language and feel a rapport. Meetings can be online but they are not really 'there'. Thus, you needed a Council that was live and held meetings and was looking to the future. He agreed that this was a challenge.

i. He asked what he could bring if elected. He thought it would be an understanding of young people as he had been a teacher. What he loved about international work was that it reminded him of the common humanity of being alive, enthusiastic and truthful: he thought all knew truthfulness when they saw it. He would bring this knowledge to Council if elected. He felt that theatre is a space was where the world was, where the world is, and a place where the future can present itself as a story with which people can connect and come together. At the end of the day the most important thing is that we bring is understanding and education through theatre.

j. Joke Quaghebeur, Belgium – said hello to everyone and noted she was the General Manager of Opendoek and that some delegates might know her from the Spots Op West Festival held in Westouter, Belgium at the same time as the 2015 AITA/IATA General

Assembly in Ypres. She spoke in French and, for the English and Spanish Minutes this is a translation. "Following my statement, I would like to emphasise, as the only female candidate, that I am not here to add another title to my CV but to dedicate myself to the wonderful world of theatre. Our organisation needs of an infusion of youth. And yes, I may not be the youngest member of the group, but I am open to it and ready to help to bring this to life by campaigning and actively reaching out. Digitization is no longer something we can ignore in today's society. How will we, as an organisation, embrace this? Let's inspire each other, share our knowledge, because honestly, we all face the same challenges, work towards the same goals, and share the same passion: theatre. Believe me – and those who know me can confirm this – I am bursting with energy and love a direct approach that brings everyone along in the same story."

k. Lakó Zsigmond, Hungary – referred to the previous day's forum and thanked Sofia and Kelli for its organisation which had made him reflect on why he had started in theatre. He had been an introverted child but had opened up through theatre and thought that if he could do theatre, anyone could. He saw it as both an education and an art form. As far as his connections with AITA/IATA was concerned, back in 2019 one of his theatre's productions was accepted for the AITA/IATA Festival in Saint John, Canada and he was so impressed by the event and by the cultural life generated and the organisation and that he got the funds to organise the very successful AITA/IATA festival in Debrecen in 2023. He was pleased to note that he still received good comments and feedback from those who were there. He was then elected President of the Hungarian NC, a very busy job, along with his work at the University of Debrecen. As for his vision of AITA/IATA, he believed that an organisation needed a firm structural background: theatre was very free but also very concentrated. And when organising an international event, there had to be a system that is safe so others can play on it and he wanted to strengthen the structure of AITA/IATA. He would want to bring in as many people as possible and take care of these friendships and given them a chance to play together in ATIA/IATA.

l. Patrick Schoenstein, France – The president had asked him if he wanted to take on the role of treasurer in 2023, which he did. He has a theatrical career and, like many people there, it started when he was young and he had dedicated himself to theatre all his life. He had been Vice-President and then President of the French National Centre for more than 30 years. He had always been impressed by the quality of the IATA/AITA Congresses and had attended many events in Monaco as well as in Ankara, Ypres, Halifax, and St John, thus acquiring a good knowledge of the organization. He had contributed to the implementation of the French-language master class and had thought that AITA/IATA should do more in this

direction. He had been eager to develop relationships in the professional theatre community and to ask friends and acquaintances to come help with the operation of amateur theatre. It had also been important to develop and increase the number of national centres and associate members because the organization depended on these finances for survival. But he also noted that amateur theatre is represented by only two continents in the AITA/IATA Council: The Americas and Europe. It is important to try to integrate representatives from other continents into Council so that a real exchange of theatre that concerned the whole world could take place. The Council still had six Europeans and two Americans, so more work had been needed on this point. He thanked the delegates for listening to him.

m. Cândido Sobreiro, Portugal – he was the director of Teatro De Balugas in Portugal and also the director of three festivals: Palco De Terra Festival; the Língua Festival for Minority Languages; and the Gil Vicente European Amateur Theater Awards. He thanked AITA/IATA for the opportunity to say a few words and noted that through amateur theatre, he had learned that theatre is the most courageous of all the arts. It rescued small communities and preserved minority languages and empowered us to tell our own stories in a truly global world. He felt that when there is a stage for this, we can all tell stories with a profound sense of mission. Whether or not he was elected he would continue to dedicate his life to building a better world and he thanked delegates for their time and their trust in him.

n. Election of the President of AITA/IATA - the Presiding Chair explained that the GA would first proceed to the voting of Sofia Wegelius for President. He noted that this would be a yes / no vote and provided she received at least 50% + 1 of the votes she would be elected President. The NC voted first followed by the AM's. Once voting was complete and the Tellers approved the outcome, the Presiding Chair noted that Sofia Wegelius had received 154 yes votes and 28 no votes meaning she had been elected with 85% of the vote.

**Sofia Wegelius was approved as President of AITA/IATA with 85% of the vote.**

o. Sofia was congratulated and presented with a badge of office by the now former President with much applause by those in the GA.

p. Election to the Council of AITA/IATA – The Presiding Chair turned to the election of new Councillors and explained there would be two rounds of voting. In the first round, delegates should vote for a maximum of four of the five candidates. Those who received the two highest number of votes would be appointed Councillors. In the second round of voting, delegates should vote for a maximum of two of the three candidates. The Presiding Chair

noted the need to check that there were no invalid votes – an invalid vote would be one where a delegate voted for more candidates than appropriate.

q. The Presiding Chair confirmed that valid votes had been received had been counted and agreed by the Tellers. The voting was as follows:

- Candidate Kevin Dowset received 95 votes
- Candidate Joke Quaghebeur received 112 votes
- Candidate Lakó Zsigmond received 147 votes
- Candidate Patrick Schoenstein received 145 votes
- Candidate Cândido Sobreiro received 147 votes

Thus, in the first round, Candidates Lakó Zsigmond and Cândido Sobreiro were elected to the Councill of AITA/IATA and the Presiding Chair offered them his congratulations.

r. The Presiding Chair confirmed that in the second round of voting, delegates now needed to elect two of the remaining three candidates who were Kevin Dowsett, Joke Quaghebeur and Patrick Schoenstein. The voting was as follows:

- Candidate Kevin Dowsett received 97 votes
- Candidate Joke Quaghebeur received 110 votes
- Candidate Patrick Schoenstein received 129 votes

s. Thus, in the second round Joke Quaghebeur and Patrick Schoenstein were elected as Councillors of AITA/IATA. The Presiding Chair congratulated the four successful candidates.

There was a 20 minute break and then the newly elected President and Councillors joined took their seat at the table

t. Aled handed President Sofia Wegelius the badge of office as his last official role in AITA/IATA.

## 13. AITA/IATA Vision statement by the new President Sofia Wegelius

a. The Presiding Chair invited the new President Sofia Wegelius to address the GA. President Sofia said her first task was to work with the new Councillors and with the new Secretariat and she hoped that delegates would have patience while that change took place. She felt that the digital costs were unnecessarily high and she would work with Council to reduce these costs in order to make the budget more stable. She would then start to plan for the coming year and this would be the focus of the first meeting of the new Council taking place the following day.

b. She first thanked the now former President, Aled Rhys-Jones. She noted that as long as she had been on Council, Aled had always been there and she felt they had gone forward together. He had been supportive from the start and she presented him with a small gift. She also thanked former Councillor Ksenia Nesterova who was stepping down. Ksenia had been the bubbliest Council member who was dancing on the balcony in true bubbly manner and had a small gift for her. President Sofia was looking forward to working with the new Council and getting to know everyone better: together we are stronger.

**14. Other proposals submitted for consideration by the General Assembly** – The Presiding Chair confirmed no proposals had been received.

**15. Budget 2025 – 2026**

a. Proposed budget and proposals for fees and subscriptions – Patrick Schoenstein addressed delegates on the finance matters in page 42 in the Forum Book. He noted that on the last page of the Forum Book, delegates would find the proposed Provisional Budget for the 2025 - 2026 financial year which was a balanced Provisional Budget. He was able to do this becasue fortunately he had been helped by the very good results of the membership campaign that which had resulted in an increased NC Membership and a significant rise in the number of AM's. This had enabled him to present a balanced provisional budget with expenditure of £24,780.00 and income of £24,780.00. There were no questions from delegates.

**The proposed budget was unanimously approved by a show of hands.**

b. The Presiding Chair, on behalf of Council and delegates, thanked Barbara Cellario for her considerable assistance with managing the Zoom and the voting procedures.

**16. AITA/IATA World Festival of Children's Theatre, Lingen, Germany 2028**

a. The Presiding Chair invited Nils Hanraets to make his presentation. Nils confirmed he was the Vice President of the German Federation and of TPZ in Lingen and the Artistic Director of the Lingen Festival. He congratulated the new members of the Council. He then showed a short video about the festival which he noted had been held after a break of seven years. The festival had been jointly hosted with the city of Lingen and in co-operation with the University of Applied Science in Lingen and the European Theatre House. Fifteen groups had attended with about 280 participants bringing 18 performances which had reached about 7,500 spectators in two venues. This had only been made possible by the large number of volunteers – around 140 - that help make it such a success. After a seven year break it had been important to get it 'right' and also to make it fit for the future and he

thanked CEC for their co-operation and their panel discussion on the sustainability of festivals and about learning from each other. He also thanked AITA/IATA for their co-operation. He felt that festivals like this were even more important in today's world when we need to bring people together. He thanked delegates and hoped to see them in Lingen at the next festival in 2028.

**17. Hosts for future AITA/IATA Festivals**

a. Presentation by Joke Quaghebeur and Joke Bereton, OPENDOEK for the AITA/IATA World Children's and Youth Performing Arts Festival 2026 in Antwerp - the Presiding chairman invited Joke Quaghebeur and Joke Bereton to the stand. Joke Quaghebeur had
been very inspired by the Lingen Children's festival and wanted to bring something similar to Antwerp. She had put flyers out for delegates to take back to their country and then invited Joke Bereton to talk about ITAC 8 (International Teaching Artists Conference) which will take place alongside the Festival. Joke B said that Opendoek were proud to present Antwerp as the next venue for the World Children's and Youth Performing Arts Festival and showed a video about Antwerp.

b. She noted that between 21 and 30 August 2026, 15 theatre groups for those aged 8 – 20 will be welcomed to a fun event which would cater to these different age groups. They felt it was crucial to give youngsters a voice not only on the stage but also in the organisation of the festival and they would seek their feedback. One of their main focus points was accessibility on all levels – financial, mobility, access, gender and language. She noted that the festival would take place alongside ITAC 8 – International Teaching Artists Congress - who are connectors who make the world a better place through the universal language of the arts. She noted there were many good city centre venues in Antwerp for events. The broader age range meant they could create a catered programme for the children and performers who would be hosted both with people and in hotels. They plan to have a full programme ready by April 2026 and tickets would be on sale at the of May 2026. The Royal Conservatory of Antwerp, Opendoek, ITAC and AITA/IATA are partners and the festival is support by the Government of Flanders and of Antwerp. She then showed a second video about the Louder Together event.

c. The Presiding Chair thanked both Joke Quaghebeur and Bereton and Opendoek for their presentation. He noted that, between Antwerp and Lingen in 2028, it was hoped to hold the 2027 AITA/IATA World Festival and General Assembly in Wellington New Zealand which would be very special as AITA/IATA had never before held a festival in the Southern Hemisphere. He asked Paul Percy from Theatre New Zealand to take the stand.

d. Presentation by Paul Percy Theatre New Zealand for the AITA/IATA International Amateur Theatre Festival 2027, Wellington, New Zealand – Paul welcomed the new members to the Council and thanked Monaco for their hospitality and support.

e. He noted that New Zealand was a whole different world and he offered a slide presentation behind his words. He stressed that in the vibrant heart of Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, there were many different theatres and a thriving and vibrant arts community. New Zealand was a special place with a formal treaty with the native people and was a very multicultural country. He thought there was something for every taste and type of theatre and was a place where people come together and celebrate their unique voices. He said Art was not a luxury, it was soul of who we are in New Zealand. It was also the first country in the world to give women the vote.

f. He agreed that it was a long way from Europe but the air was fresher and the journey was easy, once there, leaving was the hard part. He noted that in Wellington the theatres and shops and restaurants are all on the waterfront and can be easily reached. Beyond, was the wild countryside, beautiful beaches and vineyards and forests no more than an hour away where every corner holds a new wonder to be discovered. He said that if delegates went beyond Wellington they would see the wonderful regions and striking contrasts they offer. It was a land of striking contrasts and he asked delegates not to forget where they would be in March 2027, in Wellington. He showed a second video. The festival motto would be Standing on the Edge and he wanted the festival and conference to serve as a vibrant platform for courageous artistic exploration. In summary, he said they were forward thinking and he would be able to confirm the dates very soon. He invited delegates to come and experience the New Zealand culture and art. Come fly with us.

g. Delegates were asked to approve the three festivals.

**The proposals for the three festivals to carry the AITA/IATA title was unanimously approved by a show of hands.**

## 18. Other business

a. The Presiding Chair asked if anyone wanted to take the floor. Josef Hollos, Austria spoke about the Drama in Education Congress taking place in Austria, 27 March – 1 April 2026 and he invited delegates to send in their proposals. There were no further questions from delegates and the Presiding Chair thanked the delegates for their co-operation and patience and handed over to new President of AITA/IATA Sofia Wegelius.

**19. Closing of the 41st General Assembly of AITA/IATA asbl** – President Sofia Wegelius thanked Dirk De Corte for his fantastic role as Presiding Chair and asked delegates to give him a round of applause for his excellent work to keep the GA on track and she then declared the General Assembly closed.

**Meeting ended 16:30**

# Current Membership of AITA/IATA asbl

**AITA/IATA asbl Membership Figures as at 6 August 2026 (including new members):**

**Member (National Centres)**

**31** Paid by 31 March 2026, or with the agreement of Council, by an extended deadline.

**Member Associates**

**69** Paid by 31 March 2026, or with the agreement of Council, by an extended deadline.

**Countries and territories represented** **50**

# Admission of new members by the General Assembly

You can access the details of all new members by clicking on the member's name marked with blue. Please note that the information for members from a given country is available on the same page; in some cases, you may need to scroll down to find the information for the relevant member.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Zimbabwe**: | National Centre - AITA/IATA Zimbabwe |
| **Gibraltar:** | Associate Member - Gibraltar Cultural Services |
| **Spain:** | Associate Member - Cía de Teatro Noite Bohemia |
| **Tunisia:** | Associate Member - Quantara Association |
| **Italy:** | Associate Member - I Sani Da Legare Aps |
| **Great Britain (SGT):** | Associate Member - Mathilde Petford |
| **Bangladesh:** | Associate Member - Khowai Theatre |
| **Great Britain (SGT):** | Associate Member - Anne Gilmour |
| **Bulgaria:** | Associate Member - "BelArt" theater troupe |
| **Slovenia:** | Associate Member – DiáXínpad |
| **Hungary:** | Associate Member – Mezőcsáti Színjátszó Egyesület |
| **India** | Associate Member – ANASS - NAGPUR |
| **USA**: | Associate Member - Lynn Ruhl |
| **Cyprus** | Associate Member - Theatrical Workshop Monika Meleki |
| **Italy** | Associate Member - Daphne Teatro |

**Membership Applications of Rejoining Members to be confirmed by the General Assembly**

| | |
|---|---|
| **North Macedonia** | National Centre - Theater Youth of Macedonia (TYM) |
| **Côte d'Ivoire** | Associate Member - GASCA - Groupe d'Action Socio-Cultural d'Adzopé |

Vote of the GA

# AITA/IATA asbl Council 2025 – 2026

**Council**

| | |
|---|---|
| President | Sofia Wegelius (Finland) |
| Councillor (Vice President) | Heidi Troi (South Tyrol, Italy) |
| Councillor (Vice President) | Stephen Tobias (Canada) |
| Councillor (Treasurer from 25/10/23) | Patrick Schoenstein (France) |
| Councillor | Cândido Carvalhosa Sobreiro (Portugal) |
| Councillor | Carlos Taberneiro (Spain) |
| Councillor | Joke Quaghebeur (Belgium) |
| Councillor | Kelli McLoud-Schingen (USA) |
| Councillor | Zsigmond Lakó (Hungary) |

# AITA/IATA asbl Council Meetings 2025 – 2026

Since the last General Assembly held in Monaco on 23 August 2025, the Council of AITA/IATA has met (weekly and/or daily WhatsApp and email discussions and coordination meetings are not listed here):

- 24 August 2025 — Monaco (post-General Assembly)
- 9 October 2025 — Zoom meeting online
- 11 December 2025 — Helsinki, Finland
- 03 February 2026 — Zoom meeting online
- 03 March 2026 — Zoom meeting online
- 20 April 2026 — Zoom meeting online
- 26 May 2026 — Zoom meeting online
- 01 July 2026 — Zoom Meeting online
- 22 July 2026 — Zoom Meeting online

*Arranged at time of writing*

- 21 August 2026 — Antwerp (pre-General Assembly)

Notes to Members: Our members can access brief summaries of each Council meeting via THIS link.

# Council Activity Report 2025 – 2026

*AITA/IATA Council Report*
*Report of the President, on behalf of Council*

Dear AITA/IATA Members,

This is my first report to you as President, and I want to use it to tell you about the work Council has done together this year, rather than simply the places we have travelled to. Over the past twelve months we have focused on a few clear priorities: strengthening the services we offer our members, building a youth movement that young people lead themselves, and sharing the work of representing AITA/IATA across the whole Council. Below is an account of what that work has looked like in practice.

## *Focusing on our members*

One of Council's main targets this year has been to offer more direct service to our members. We have begun collecting articles about amateur theatre from around the world, so that AITA/IATA can act as a stronger, better-informed spokesperson for the amateur theatre movement globally. You can find the articled on THIS link. We have also been building collaborations with other organisations to offer our members discounted access to services.

For **World Theatre Day**, we launched a campaign inviting groups and individuals from around the world to tell us, in their own words, what amateur theatre means to them — a simple way of letting our members' voices carry the message rather than our own. Find out more about this campaign on THIS link.

We have also launched a **Newsletter** aimed at non-members. The idea is to reach more people beyond our existing network, market our members' events more widely, and give greater visibility to the work of the world organisation itself. You can read the most recent Newsletter on THIS link or sign up on THIS link.

AITA/IATA is now also on **LinkedIn** — part of our wider push to expand where our community can find and connect with us. We look forward to connecting with members there. Find our latest post on LinkedIn on THIS link.

We have also partnered with a number of new festivals, which members will be hearing more about shortly.

AITA/IATA maintains one Instagram account under the profile name @aita_iata and one takeover account under the profile name @weareamateurhteatre, one Facebook account, and relaunched a Youtube channel.

The growth over the past year is reflected in the individual accounts as follows:

Facebook: We have 327 more followers on Facebook, it equals to a total of 3,449 followers.

AITA Instagram: We have 210 more followers on Instagram, which represents a total of 867 followers.

Weareamateurtheatre Instagram: We continue to build our audience, which currently totals 632 followers. Over the past year, 10 theatre companies took over the channel for a full week each to show the digital world what the theatre is currently up to.

We have also initiated a **Membership Solidarity Contribution** — a new, voluntary opportunity for members who are able to do so to support greater global inclusion within our community. By making a contribution in addition to the standard membership fee, members can help make it possible for an applicant from a country with one of the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) rankings to join AITA/IATA. Putting this principle into practice, Council was also pleased to be able to financially support two youth groups from countries within the lowest UN HDI Index this year.

## *Youth Engagement — IATA Youth*

We have launched IATA Youth, an initiative that is run and managed by the youth themselves. They will present their own activities in their own words going forward, but Council is enormously proud of them and of this project. The first ever IATA Youth gathering was held in Brixen, Italy, in May. A big thank you to Councillor Heidi Troi for hosting the gathering, and to Magdalena Troy and Roope Lappalainen for taking the lead on the project. Both Magdalena and Roope have also been part of the selection committee for Louder Together.

It was very important to Councillor Joke Quaghebeur that young people be involved in every aspect of organising the Louder Together festival, and this is a principle I believe strongly in carrying forward. I do not want IATA to run projects for young people where adults decide what they should do — I want to empower young people to be in charge of their own activities. That has been the guiding idea behind IATA Youth from the start. A huge thank you to Joke and the whole staff at Opendoek for their hard work in making Louder Together possible — a World Children's and Youth Performing Arts Festival showcasing so many incredible productions from around the world.

## *Council Actions This Year*

As I said when I stood for President, I believe in dividing the task of representing AITA/IATA across the whole Council, rather than concentrating it in one person. This year the Council put that into practice: our first meeting was held in Helsinki, hosted by the Finnish AITA/IATA Centre, where we set the direction for the year and agreed how responsibilities would be shared among us.

Council also acted to strengthen AITA/IATA's place within the wider international theatre community. I attended the European Theatre House General Assembly and Artistic Advisory Board meeting in Lingen on 27 April 2026, taking up our seat and engaging directly in decisions that shape European theatre cooperation. I also had the chance to attend the General Assembly of AACT, opening a stronger line of contact with our American counterparts, and am very grateful for the invitation. At World Fest Festival 2026 in Venice, Florida, I had the honour of leading the colloquium together with Councillor Kelli McLoud-Schingen — a role that let us shape the conversation rather than simply attend it.

Vice President Stephen Tobias took on the role of contact person for future festivals earlier this year, giving hosts and prospective hosts a clear point of contact within Council as they plan ahead.

# Council Subgroup Reports

*Council has formed dedicated subgroups to lead specific strands of our shared vision. Each subgroup will present its own report below.*

## *75th Jubilee of AITA/IATA in 2027*

In 2027 will mark the **75th anniversary of AITA/IATA**. 75 years of connecting amateur theatre makers across the world. This remarkable milestone is an opportunity to celebrate our shared history, achievements and, above all, the people and organisations that have helped build an international community through theatre.

A range of activities is currently being developed to mark the 75th Jubilee of AITA/IATA. These include a commemorative online booklet, a special anniversary logo, and a series of international initiatives and activities designed to connect AITA/IATA members throughout the year.

The Jubilee will be a celebration of 75 years of theatre, cooperation and achievement, bringing our international community together and looking towards the future of amateur theatre.

## *Festival Handbook Revision*

The Festival Handbook was due for an update. The previous version still referred to regional structures, which are no longer applicable, and it also needed to be modernised by incorporating inclusion and safety guidelines that reflect AITA/IATA's values. In addition, the Council decided to include the organisation's mission statement.

The working group has developed a new document with a clear distinction between the different types of events that are supported, organised, or for which AITA is seeking a host within the framework of AITA/IATA. These events are divided into three categories: **festivals**, **General Assemblies,** and **Council Meetings**.

The festival categories have been simplified to two types, with the level of AITA/IATA's involvement clearly defined for each. We also encourage official AITA/IATA Festival organisers to use the AITA/IATA logo in their event communications to increase the visibility of both the organisation and our international network.

The new guidelines will be presented during the General Assembly.

## *Media and Marketing Strategy*

The Media and Marketing Subgroup continues developing initiatives to strengthen AITA/IATA's visibility and engagement at international events. **AITA/IATA Friend Booklet** was prepared to serve as an interactive keepsake, designed to encourage connections among festival participants through theatre-related and personal questions in the Association's three official languages. Friend Booklet is first distributed during Louder Together 2026. The subgroup also began developing **temporary AITA/IATA tattoos** as a fun and visible promotional item, with input from AITA/IATA Youth on the designs. Further ideas discussed included an AITA/IATA festival wall displaying participants' photographs, updated banners, stickers, and other creative promotional materials. The subgroup also encouraged Councillors to attend National Centre meetings, particularly online, to strengthen communication and promote international opportunities: the **Book an AITA/IATA Councillor** initiative can be reached at THIS link. The temporary tattoos are currently in production for use at upcoming AITA/IATA events. The subgroup will continue exploring new ways to make AITA/IATA more visible, approachable, and engaging for members and festival participants alike.

## *Global Inclusion — Less Eurocentric AITA/IATA*

The Global Inclusion Survey gathered thoughtful perspectives from respondents representing different regions and experiences within AITA/IATA. While each respondent approached the questions from a different perspective, there was remarkable alignment on the organization's greatest opportunities to strengthen global inclusion.

**Representation should be proactive, not passive.**

Respondents agreed that AITA/IATA should actively seek relationships with countries and theatre organizations that are not currently represented. Suggested approaches included creating Regional Ambassador or mentor programs, encouraging National Centres to sponsor emerging organizations,

and establishing regional working groups to build long-term representation rather than waiting for new members to find the organization.

**Financial barriers remain the greatest obstacle to participation**.

Travel costs, visas, membership affordability, and access to international festivals continue to limit participation for many organizations. Respondents consistently encouraged expanding virtual participation, developing sponsorship opportunities, promoting regional events, and exploring hybrid models that reduce financial barriers while maintaining meaningful engagement.

**Digital engagement presents the greatest opportunity for growth.**

Participants identified online networking, virtual festivals, webinars, social media campaigns, digital showcases, and multilingual resources as practical, low-cost strategies to expand AITA/IATA's global reach while increasing visibility for underrepresented communities.

**Inclusion should be embedded throughout the organization.**

Rather than viewing inclusion as a stand-alone initiative, respondents recommended integrating inclusive practices into governance, leadership development, standards, festivals, communications, accessibility, and policy development. They emphasized that diverse cultural, economic, and artistic realities should be reflected in every aspect of AITA/IATA's work.

**Accountability requires measurable outcomes.**

Respondents encouraged AITA/IATA to establish clear indicators to measure progress, including representation from underrepresented regions, multilingual resources, participation rates, leadership diversity, and transparent reporting. Several suggested creating simple digital dashboards and annual inclusion reports to monitor progress and promote shared accountability across member organizations.

Across all responses, **a common message emerged**: meaningful global inclusion is less dependent on significant financial investment than on intentional leadership, stronger relationships, creative use of technology, and sustained collaboration. Respondents consistently called for AITA/IATA to become more proactive in reaching underserved regions, lowering barriers to participation, and creating opportunities for every member organization to contribute to the future of amateur theatre worldwide.

These findings provide a strong foundation for the Global Inclusion Committee to develop a strategic framework that is measurable, achievable, and aligned with AITA/IATA's mission of fostering international collaboration through amateur theatre.

# *Theatre Twins Project*

The **Theatre Twins Project** is an international exchange initiative by AITA/IATA connecting associate member theatre groups from different countries to build partnerships and encourage the sharing of knowledge, experiences and good practices.

Participating groups will be matched with a "theatre twin" and encouraged to develop their own activities. The call for applications and application deadlines will be announced soon.

The project aims to strengthen international cooperation, foster cultural and artistic exchange, and create a more connected and collaborative global amateur theatre community.

## *AITA/IATA Youth*

AITA/IATA Youth is a new global initiative created by young people, for young people, within AITA/IATA. It connects theatre enthusiasts aged 18–25 and aims to build lasting international relationships through amateur theatre.

Following a global open call, 11 young participants from eight countries met for the first time in Brixen, Italy, in May 2026 to establish the initiative and shape its future. Since then, the group has continued developing the project through regular online meetings.

The initiative focuses on two main activities: organising the annual A-IA-YAH! youth theatre festival and volunteering at international amateur theatre festivals. The first pilot edition of the A-IA-YAH! festival is planned for 18–22 August 2027 in Brixen, Italy.

AITA/IATA Youth members will also volunteer at Louder Together 2026 and present the initiative during the AITA/IATA General Assembly. The project is entirely volunteer-led and operates under the umbrella of AITA/IATA with the support of the Council. As the initiative develops, it aims to welcome more young people through an open application process and expand international opportunities for youth in amateur theatre. National Centres and festival organisers are warmly invited to collaborate with AITA/IATA Youth and support its future development.

# Appendix to the Council Report: Representations of the Council 2025 – 2026

For reference, the events below were attended on Council's behalf during the reporting period.

| Event | Date | Council representative(s) | Purpose |
|---|---|---|---|
| Festival Scénická žatva 2025, Martin - Slovakia | 27-30.08.2025 | Cândido Sobreiro | Attending the festival and the opening ceremony organized by Národné osvetové centrum - National Centre of Slovakia |
| Premio Worldwide Mecenate - Rome | 10.11.2025. | Lakó Zsigmond | Attended the FITA Awards Ceremony in Rome, had a meetinf with Diego Navone and Fiammetta Fiammeri, and presented an award as a council member. |
| ETH GA 2025 | 17.11.2025 | Sofia Wegelius | I am now part of the council and artistic committee. |
| CONTE 2026 - Portugal's National Amateur Theatre Festival, Póvoa de Lanhoso – Portugal | 30.01.2026 | Cândido Sobreiro | Support and assistance for the international theatre company (Noite Bohemia - associate member of AITA) invited to perform at the opening of the Portuguese National Theatre Festival |
| AACT Board Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah | 13-16.02.2026 | Kelli Mcloud Shingen | Representation:Spoke about AITA/IATA at the International Committee meeting |
| FITA - AITA meeting 2031 Festival organization | 24. 03. 2026. | Sofia Wegelius<br>Lakó Zsigmond | FITA candidacy for the organization of the 2031 AITA International Festival |
| ETH | 27.04.2026 | Sofia Wegelius | artistic advisory board and General assembly |
| ETH | 27.04.2026 | Joke Quaghebeur | artistic advisory board |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| La Mostra (International Amateur Theatre Festival), Pineda de Mar - Catalonia | 1-3. 05.2026 | Joke Quaghebeur and Cândido Sobreiro | Meeting with the Federació De Grups Amateurs De Teatre De Catalunya of Catalonia- National Centre and the FNCTA Fédération Nationale des Compagnies de Théâtre amateur et d'Animation - National Centre of France |
| Sapperlot | 7-10.5.2026 | Joke Quaghebeur | meeting AITA Youth |
| World fest and AACT GA | 22.06-28.06.2026 | Sofia Wegelius<br>Kelli Mcloud Shingen | Leading the theatre talks and attending the GA |
| LÍNGUA – International Festival of Theatre in Minority Languages, Barcelos - Portugal | 07.06.2026 | Cândido Sobreiro | Round Table about theatre and the safeguarding of linguistic heritage with Escenamateur - National Centre of Spain, Národné osvetové centrum - National Centre of Slovakia and Federazione Italiana Teatro Amatori FITA - National Centre of Italy. |
| ESCENAMETEUR Awards 2026, Getxo - Spain | 19.06.2026 | Cândido Sobreiro | Attending the awards ceremony organized by Escenamateur - National Centre of Spain |
| 1 st Ibero-American Amateur Theater Festival (FITA) Tortosa, Catalonia | 04.07.2026 | Cândido Sobreiro | Meeting with the organisation to support the festival |
| NEATA festival | 9-13.07.2026 | Sofia Wegelius | Representation and NEATA GA |
| Meeting with Paul Percy - New Zealand | 14.07.2026 | Stephen Tobias | Meeting to review preparations for IATA Festival in Wellington NZ for March of 2027 |
| Auteurs d Aujourd'hui/ Nancy /France. | 12-13.03.2026 | Patrick Schoenstein | Representation |
| UNESCO/ NGO Conference/Paris | 20-21.05.2026. | Patrick Schoenstein | Representation |

# Looking Ahead

2027 will mark AITA/IATA's **75th anniversary** — 75 years of connecting amateur theatre makers across the world. It is a milestone worth celebrating together, and the Council will be sharing more on how we plan to mark it as the year approaches.

Today, we are also launching **Theatre Twin**, a new project connecting two theatres across the world with one another. In many ways we are going old school: at its heart, Theatre Twin is about bringing back the spirit of pen pals — real, ongoing exchange between people, not just organisations. We can't wait to see what friendships and collaborations grow out of it.

Keep an eye out for our **upcoming masterclasses** — more details will follow soon, and we hope to see many of you join us.

Looking further ahead, we are very much looking forward to our upcoming World Festival: the **New Zealand International Theatre Festival & Symposium**, taking place 8–13 March 2027 in Wellington, New Zealand.

None of this work happens without the whole Council, our members, and the many partner organisations who make it possible. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

On behalf of the Council,
**Sofia Wegelius**
President

# AITA/IATA asbl Finance 2025 – 2026

To delegates at the General Assembly 22 August 2026

## Financial report

## Fiscal year 2025 /2026 AITA-IATA

## Patrick Schoenstein, Treasurer.

The financial year from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026 shows the following results: 24,353.00 Euros in expenses for 22,968.99 in revenues, resulting in a negative balance of 1,384.01 Euros.

The total amount of revenue is slightly higher than in the previous year, a difference of 1,607.00 euros more.

Expenditure remains constant from one year to the next, at 24,353.00 euros for the 2025 fiscal year compared to 24,156.00 euros for the previous fiscal year.

Nevertheless, the cash flow of the association remains stable: 74,636.43 euros to date against 72,306.60 for the previous year.

If the association wants to develop new actions, especially towards young people, it is essential to find new members (National Centres and Associate Members): the membership fees represent the only resource of our association.

### Financial Statements follow:

- AITA/IATA Profit and Loss Statement 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026
- The Statement of Balance at 31 March 2026
- The Account Controller's Certificate 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026
- Budget Proposals 2026 – 2027

On behalf of the AITA/IATA asbl Council, I submit the accounts for your approval.

5 August 2026

Patrick Schoenstein

**Patrick Schoenstein**

Treasurer

# AITA/IATA asbl Profit and Loss Statement

# 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

| | Closing balance (Debit) | Closing balance (Credit) |
|---|---|---|
| **Profit and loss statement** | | |
| Operation Profit and costs | | |
| Operating income (code 70/74) | | |
| Membership, donations, legacies and subsidies | | |
| 730010 - Membership Fees National Centres | | 17,113.60 |
| 730020 - Membership Fees Associate Members Groups | | 4,239.48 |
| 730030 - Membership Fees Associate Members Individuals | | 1,361.99 |
| **Total: Membership, donations, legacies and subsidies** | | **22,715.07** |
| **Total: Operating income (code 70/74)** | | **22,715.07** |
| Operating charges | | |
| Services and other goods | | |
| 610900 - Subcontracting Secretariat | 13,740.00 | |
| 610905 - Subcontracting Accounting | 3,000.00 | |
| 611016 - Internet & Web | 3,010.47 | |
| 613100 - Phone | 323.28 | |
| 615000 - Registration Belgium | 1248.00 | |
| 615006 - Legal Fees | 1180.60 | |
| 615007 - Subscription Accounting Package | 551.76 | |
| 616001 – Meeting Expenses | 60.00 | |
| 616002 - Travel expenses and grants paid | 680.00 | |
| **Total: Services and other goods** | **23,794.11** | |
| Other operating charges | | |
| 644000 - Miscellaneous operating charges | 508.46 | |
| **Total: Other operating charges** | **508.46** | |
| **Total: Operating charges** | **24,302.57** | |
| **Total: Operation Profit and costs** | **1,587.50** | |
| Financial revenues and costs | | |
| Financial income | | |
| Income from financial fixed assets. | | |
| 750100 - Bank interest | | 253.49 |
| **Total: Income from financial fixed assets.** | | 253.49 |
| **Total: Financial income** | | 253.49 |
| Financial charges | | |
| Other financial charges | | |
| 651002 - Bank fees | 50.00 | |
| **Total: Other financial charges** | 50.00 | |
| **Total: Financial charges** | 50.00 | |
| **Total: Financial revenues and costs** | | **203.49** |
| | | |
| Result | | 1,384.01 |
| **Total: Profit and loss statement** | **1,587.50** | **1,587.50** |

# The Statement of Balance at 31 March 2025

| | Closing balance (Debit) | Closing balance (Credit) |
|---|---|---|
| Balance sheet | | |
| **Assets** | | |
| Current assets | | |
| Deferred charges and accrued income (Asset) | | |
| 491000 - Accrued income | 58.56 | |
| **Total: Deferred charges and accrued income (Asset)** | 58.56 | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | |
| 550000 - Belfius Current Account | 18,086.51 | |
| 550001 - Belfius Savings Account | 56,549.92 | |
| **Total: Cash at bank and in hand** | **74,636.43** | |
| **Total: Current assets** | **74,694.99** | |
| **Total: Assets** | **74,694.99** | |
| **Liabilities** | | |
| Social fund | | |
| Associate funds | | |
| Starting capital | | |
| 100000 - Association Funds | | 1.00 |
| **Total: Starting capital** | | **1.00** |
| **Total: Associate funds** | | **1.00** |
| Allocated funds | | |
| 131011 - Fund for Children and Youth | | 6,593.26 |
| 131012 - Strategic Development Fund | | 7,823.00 |
| **Total: Allocated funds** | | **14,416.26** |
| Accumulated profits / Lost | | |
| 140000 - Profits carried forward | | 42,417.54 |
| **Total: Accumulated profits / Lost** | | **42,417.54** |
| **Total: Social fund** | | **56,834.80** |
| Debts | | |
| Amounts payable within one year (toel. X) | | |
| Trade debts | | |
| Suppliers | | |
| 440000 - Suppliers | | 2,960.00 |
| **Total: Suppliers** | | **2,960.00** |
| **Total: Trade debts** | | **2,960.00** |
| **Total: Amounts payable within one year (toel. X)** | | **2,960.00** |
| Deferred charges and accrued income (Liabilities) | | |
| 493100 - Accruals pre-paid income - invoices to receive | | 15,934.20 |
| 493110 - CEC Fees | | 350.00 |
| **Total: Deferred charges and accrued income (Liabilities)** | | **16,284.20** |
| **Total: Debts** | | **19,244.20** |
| **Total: Liabilities** | | **76,079.00** |
| Result | | |
| Result for selected periods: 1 - 12 | 1,384.01 | |
| Total: Result | 1,384.01 | |
| **Total: Balance sheet** | **76,079.00** | **76,079.00** |

# Account Controller's Certificate

# Book year 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

Ghent, 23 May 2026

We have examined the financial statements of AITA/IATA asbl ("the Association") for the accounting year 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026 which comprises the Profit and Loss Account, the Balance Sheet and related notes together with supporting accounting reports and copies of Bank Statements. We have also been supplied with copies of all Council Meeting Minutes which outline decisions taken with regard to financial transactions during the accounting year 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026.

We have obtained all the information and explanations that we considered necessary to carry out our role as Account Controller and can confirm that proper books of account have been kept by the Association, the financial statements are in agreement with the books of accounts, and that accounts are compliant with Belgian Accounting Practices for Not for Profit Organisations (*verenigingen zonder winstoogmerk-associations sans but lucratif*).

2025-2026 shows a loss of 1,384.1 EUR, lower than the 2,796,84 EUR loss of the previous book year. As a result, the net worth of the Association on 31 March 2026 (Allocated Funds plus Carried Forward Results) is 55,450.66 EUR.

The cash position of the Association stands at a healthy 74,636.43 EUR, up from 72,306.60 EUR last book year. The accounting loss was compensated by higher prepayments of Membership Fees, which will have a positive impact on the accounting results of 2026-2027.

Although the accounting loss warrens attention, we see no reason to question the Association's status as a going concern.

Signature

Dirk De Corte,

Ghent, 23 May 2026

# Council's Proposed AITA/IATA asbl Budget

# Profit and Loss: 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027

| **INCOME** | |
|---|---|
| Membership of National Centres and autonomous territories | € 18,000.00 |
| Group and individual associate member memberships | € 6,500.00 |
| Voluntary solidarity contribution | € 400.00 |
| Interest | € 250.00 |
| | |
| **Total Income** | **€ 25,150.00** |
| **EXPENSES** | |
| Subcontracting secretariat | € 12,000.00 |
| Secretariat travel | € 2,000.00 |
| Subcontracting accounting | € 3,000.00 |
| Internet/ Phone<br>FAIB | € 1,000.00<br>€ 425.00 |
| MAI<br>Legal Fees<br>Visa card<br>Moniteur Belge | € 365.00<br>€ 720.00<br>€ 50.00<br>€ 160.00 |
| Unesco | € 100.00 |
| Supplies<br>Flat-rate travel allowance for advisers<br>New project<br><br>**Total Expenses** | € 300.00<br>€ 800.00<br>€ 4,230.00<br><br>**€ 25,150.00** |