

Summary/ minutes of EFAT (European Forum of Amateur Theatre) III

26. – 28. April 2013 in Berlin

Conference venue: Bund Deutscher Amateurtheater
Lützowplatz 9
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Participants:

Steinar Arnesen, Anders Hind, Josef Hollos, Kristian Hald Jensen, Hilmar Joensen, Jacques Lemaire, Norbert Radermacher (until 27.04. noon), Stephan Schnell, Iris Schwarz

Friday, 26.04.2012

Statement: EFAT and the consequences of the European crisis

by Norbert Radermacher followed by a discussion:

“Does amateur theatre need Europe or does Europe need amateur theatre?”

Dear colleagues,

I am very pleased to be able to welcome you again to Berlin in the head office of BDAT to take part in another working session of the European Forum of Amateur Theatre (EFAT). After the first meeting, which took place in Berlin in April last year and a second meeting of the working group in Prague, we would like to bring forward the further strategy and the formal planning, as well as the planning of content, and to prepare for the presentation of the project in Monaco.

Please allow me to make some personal comments, which at the same time may serve to start the discussion and work during this weekend.

What is Europe? Is it only a Europe of the Euro, the banks, the credits and unserious business? Is it a Europe of the individual nations or a Europe of a few politicians who are only interested in their image, or is it a Europe which has a history and culture of many thousand years and the people living here are just called Europeans?

Is it a Europe of travel freedom or one of human trafficking? Is it a Europe, which focuses on the people or is it the greed of individual banks and commercial enterprises?

Already in **1992**, a short time after the wall had come down here in Berlin, I stated in an article written on the occasion of a Pan-European Music Theatre Camp in Lower Saxony: “The increasingly critical distance which some member countries of the European Union are keeping, the rising nationalism (see Hungary today), the huge economic gap between the countries, aren’t this enough reasons to approach Europe only very carefully?”

The situation has not changed or improved considerably during the past 20 years. In my opinion, this is due to the fact that Europe is only being considered as an economical project and everything else – the human beings – is of secondary importance. Are we able to, do we want to change something about it? Do we Europe still give a chance at all?

A few words about the history of EFAT: After the closing down of the European Centre of AITA/IATA on 30th June, 2011 which was due to financial and logistic problems, we looked for opportunities to continue and improve the dialogue between the three European sections CIFTA, NEATA und CEC. In addition, the continuation of conferences, congresses and symposia with important content which were organised by the European Centre for almost 20 years is very important to me. These events have considerably contributed to the fact, that important European themes of amateur theatre and theatre pedagogy have been discussed and thus have improved the quality of amateur theatre in Europe, so that amateur theatre could start dealing with other important themes. Hereby I especially refer to the Festival of Senses – an International festival for disabled and non-disabled young people. After the closing down of the European Centre, the continuation of this dialogue was in danger. Another important reason for setting up EFAT is, that we have, within AITA/IATA, the well functioning structure of regional committees all over the world. However, we do not have a common voice on the European level.

While almost all other cultural fields and arts, professionally organised and non-professionally organised ones, speak in Brussels or Strasbourg with **one** voice, amateur theatre is barely represented on these levels at all. Consequently, we have no influence on youth and cultural

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programmes, nor is amateur theatre mentioned in reports, political statements and concepts, in spite of the fact that there are approximately 2 to 3 million people who are active in amateur theatre and that there are more than 100 million of spectators, who attend amateur theatre performances in Europe. Amateur theatre needs a lobby in Europe!

But more important is that the three European sections and the national theatre associations have more encounters and exchanges in the future as they have had so far, that they initiate common projects, as amateur theatre in Europe can only be as strong as its basis is. Although there are some international festivals and projects in Europe, many groups cannot afford the travel costs and the organisers have less and less money to finance large international festivals. CEC for example, is not in the position to establish its own CEC festival and already existing festivals invite less and less groups. Maybe we have to think about new forms of dialogues and international exchange. The working group of German speaking amateur theatre associations (AddA) organises a youth theatre camp including young people from four nations (financed by Youth for Europe) this year and BDAT organises together with the French amateur theatre association (FNCTA) a bi-national project with young people, theme: Poetry Slam.

These are wonderful new developments and therefore, in principle, we need not to worry too much about amateur theatre in Europe, however, we have to observe this development and in my opinion, AITA/IATA is obliged to develop necessary strategies.

I would like to make clear that: EFAT operates within the structures of AITA/IATA and thus it strengthens the world association, as EFAT deals with the contents of questions, problems and structures of amateur theatre.

The European Theatre House in Lingen, which will be founded in May of this year, is mainly based on local and regional structures and its major task will be, to provide a service for the town of Lingen, the World Festival of Children's Theatre, the local University of Applied Sciences and the Theatre Pedagogical Centre (TPZ). EFAT, on the other side, is to be a network of European amateur theatre, of the theatre associations and people, who work for amateur theatre on a voluntary basis.

I am very pleased, that the idea of EFAT basically has been adopted, that we can work on it together and that we will even be able to present our working results during the congress in Monaco. This weekend we will deal with the following themes:

1. Discussion on the objectives and possible contents and tasks of EFAT
2. Preparation of the presentation of EFAT in Monaco
3. Formal structure of EFAT in accordance with the constitution of AITA/IATA.
4. Development of a concrete conference theme for the meeting in Berlin in April 2014. About 20 – 25 people, who are interested in a common dialogue about amateur theatre in Europe are to be invited to this conference. We want to present this 1st project of EFAT in Monaco.

This means a lot of work. Let's get started!

DISCUSSION I

One important question to ask ourselves: What do we really need?

- What kind of information do we need/want?
- What kind of power do we want to achieve?
- What is our final goal?
 - ⇒ The first step is to find out, what exactly we want to accomplish, then make a list of things we need to do to actually accomplish them
- Jacques Lemaire: to improve work in all the small villages has to be our main goal
- Developing EFAT and properly representing it in Monaco is one of the main goals of this meeting
 - ⇒ Nobody knows we exist
- Being able to show everyone the special value of amateur theatre in the different European countries
 - ⇒ Show how much amateur theatre contributes to society
 - AT in prisons, old people's homes etc.
- Norbert Radermacher: We need a collection of the strategies/philosophy of AT in the different countries
 - ⇒ Attaining funds of cultural education

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Saturday, 27.04.2012

Perspective I: possible formal structure of EFAT

DISCUSSION II

Some specific goals

- Promotion of amateur theatre towards politics etc.
- Finding a place to come together every year, to further develop EFAT
 - Possibly meeting at a festival each year
- Prepare our presentation in Monaco
- Josef Hollos: "It is time to discuss artistic matters as well"

Structure Model

Goals for EFAT in the future

1. Political impact in Europe
 - a. Develop a presence/visibility/representation in European assemblies/platforms
2. Activity for the at-groups
3. Meeting of the organizers
 - a. Intercultural dialogue about diversity between CIFTA, CEC and NEATA

Further: see appendix MODEL EFAT

Perspective II: Discussion and preparation content-wise of a conference in April 2014

Delayed

Presentation of the first inventory (EFAT II) results by Iris Schwarz

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (see appendix INVENTORY DATA EFAT III)

Discussion and evaluation of the results

Inventory/Database-project

- How to raise money?
 - ⇒ Universities can find funds themselves
- Invite some researchers to Monaco to discuss the Inventory with them there
- Gather what kind of research has been done already
 - ⇒ Ask at Universities?
- There is a group of statistical researchers in Amateo, perhaps work with them?
- Assemble information about how things work in the different countries to help individual countries raise money

Research

1. Identify possible partner (universities)
2. Inviting letter
3. CIFTA/CEC/NEATA task force?
4. Prof. Danuta Vaigauskaite
5. Belgium: President AITU (Jacques Lemaire)
6. Countries: France, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Germany, Denmark ...

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Organizing EFAT

- Possible Problem: neither CIFTA nor CEC are registered organizations
- Suggestion: Countries are members of EFAT, represented by individual regional representatives
- We need a structure, and we need to make it as simple as possible
 - ⇒ Not put too many restrictions on ourselves

Sunday, 28.04.2012

9:30 a.m. Planning in view of AITA/IATA congress 2013

AGENDA FOR THE EFAT SESSION (31st AITA/IATA asbl Congress)

(24.August 2013: 14:00 – 15:30 Discussion on the European Theatre Forum – CEC, CIFTA, NEATA)

1. Opening EFAT/FETA: What is it about and why? (10 min)

(Presidents of CIFTA, CEC, NEATA, Norbert Radermacher)

2. Impuls: goals, vision, examples (10 min)

(Stephan Schnell)

3. First project: The inventory (5 min)

(?)

4. The unknown neighbour (25 min.)

3 Examples for the diverse practices of amateur theatre in Europe

France (Jacques Lemaire)

Lithuania (Dr. Danute Vaigauskaite)

Austria (Joco Hollos)

5. 3 Questions for the future (10 min.): Working paper/think tank

(What kind of interest exists to know about each other?)

(Steinar Arnesen)

6. Discussion (on the basis of some questions?) (30 min.)

Application for recognition as an AITA/IATA Continental Service Center (by Jacques Lemaire)

Les présidents des comités régionaux CEC, CIFTA et NEATA ont constaté lors de la réunion du 27 avril 2013 à Berlin consacrée à l'élaboration du forum européen du théâtre amateur que la disparition du Centre Européen de Service (ECE), défini par l'article du règlement intérieur, privait le projet de forum du cadre opérationnel nécessaire à la bonne gestion de ses relations avec les autorités compétentes pouvant apporter leurs soutiens en particulier financiers. La fermeture de l'ECE ayant été essentiellement causée par le fait que les subventions en Europe et en particulier en Allemagne, ne sont plus accordées à des structures n'ayant pas de personnalité juridique, il importe d'éviter de se retrouver à l'avenir dans la même situation. C'est pourquoi :

Les trois présidents demandent à l'Assemblée Générale de l'AITA/IATA asbl de reconstituer une structure identique (selon article du règlement intérieur) sous le nom d'EFAT et de donner à cette structure le caractère formel d'une filiale à 100% de l'AITA/IATA asbl, consacrée uniquement aux activités en Europe, afin que cette filiale soit enregistrée comme personne morale auprès des mêmes autorités belges qui ont enregistré l'AITA/IATA asbl.

Comme il était déjà prévu dans l'article du règlement intérieur, d'autres centres continentaux de service pourront être créés selon les besoins locaux et pourront si nécessaire être également considérées comme des filiales à 100% de l'AITA/IATA asbl.

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Presidents of Regional Committees CEC, CIFTA and NEATA have acknowledged during a meeting held in Berlin on 27 and 28 April 2013 organized to set up an European Forum of The Amateur Theatre that the collapse of the European Service Center (ECE), as defined by article ___ of the Bye laws, prevented the project of forum of having the operational structure necessary for the good management of relationships with the territorial authorities which could bring supports, especially in financial matters. Closure of ECE was essentially due to the fact (recent) that financial supports in Europe (and particularly in Germany) are nowadays no more attributed to structures not having a legal notoriety (registration). It is important to avoid being again in the same situation. This is why: The 3 presidents ask the General assembly of AITA/IATA asbl to pursue on the application of article _ by creating an identical structure under the name of EFAT (or EFAT/FETA) and to give this structure the formal feature of a 100% subsidiary of AITA/IATA, exclusively for activities on the European continent) in order that this subsidiary would be de facto registered as a legal body by the same Belgian authorities which have registered AITA/IATA asbl.
As article ___ already mention the possibility, other Continental service centers could be installed according to local needs and, when necessary, could also be considered as 100% subsidiaries of AITA/IATA asbl.