

## Minutes of the UBIAS Virtual Business Meeting

April 13, 12:10-14:05 (UTC)

### Participants

- Network members

Nadia Al-Bagdadi

*Institute for Advanced Study Budapest, Central European University Budapest, Hungary*

Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio

*Madrid Institute for Advanced Study, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain*

Iris Avivi

*Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel*

Clarissa Ball

*Institute of Advanced Studies, The University of Western Australia, Australia*

Susann Baller

*Maria Sibylla Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa, University of Ghana, Ghana*

Estevam Barbosa de Las Casas

*Institute for Advanced Transdisciplinary Studies, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil*

Gwladys Bernard

*Madrid Institute for Advanced Study, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain*

Sebastian Bonhoeffer

*Collegium Helveticum, University of Zurich, Switzerland*

Olivier Bouin

*French Network of Institutes for Advanced Study*

Tara Byrne

*The UCD Institute for Discovery, University College Dublin, Ireland*

Jaigyoung Choe

*Korea Institute for Advanced Study, Republic of Korea*

Martin Cloonan

*Turku Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Turku, Finland*

Ben Fletcher-Watson

*The Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

Tuomas Forsberg

*Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland*

Giovanni Galizia

*Zukunftskolleg, University of Konstanz, Germany*

Sue Gilligan

*The Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom*

Emmanuel Girard-Reydet

*Institute for Advanced Study, Aix-Marseille University, France*

Yitzhak Hen

*Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel*

Bettina Hollstein

*Max-Weber-Kolleg, University of Erfurt, Germany*

Arnaud Lefranc

*Institute for Advanced Studies, Cergy-Pontoise University, France*

Yukinori Kawae

*Institute for Advanced Research, Nagoya University, Japan*

Søren Keiding

*Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark*

Bernd Kortmann

*Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Freiburg, Germany*

Daniela Kromrey

*Zukunftskolleg, University of Konstanz, Germany*

Patricia Maguire

*The UCD Institute for Discovery, University College Dublin, Ireland*

Annette Meyer

*Center for Advanced Studies, Ludwig-Maximilians University Munich, Germany*

Michael Molls

*Institute for Advanced Study, Technical University Munich, Germany*

Dominique Moran

*The Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom*

Bongani Ngqulunga

*Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study, University of Johannesburg, South Africa*

Guilherme Ary Plonski

*Institute of Advanced Studies, University of São Paulo, Brazil*

Marc Schalenberg

*Center for Interdisciplinary Research, Bielefeld University, Germany*

Yoshiyuki Suto

*Institute for Advanced Research, Nagoya University, Japan*

Rifka Weehuizen

*University of Strasbourg Institute for Advanced Study, University of Strasbourg, France*

Satomi Yamamoto

*Waseda Institute for Advanced Study, Waseda University, Japan*

Véronique Zanetti

*Center for Interdisciplinary Research, Bielefeld University, Germany*

- Guest

Viviane de Melo Resende

*Center for Advanced Multidisciplinary Studies, University of Brasilia, Brazil*

- Note taker (via audio file of the recorded meeting, heard on April 15)

Richard Meckien

*Institute of Advanced Studies, University of São Paulo, Brazil*

## **Agenda**

1. Report by the Coordination
2. Voting session

## **The meeting**

Mr. Guilherme Ary Plonski requests all those present at the meeting to briefly introduce themselves.

He then begins to share the executive report by the UBIAS Coordination. Everyone is reminded that the Coordination went through some adverse situations during the term 2010-2020, culminating in two exits of representatives (Mr. Hisanori Shinohara, from Nagoya University's Institute for Advanced Research, and Mr. Raouf Boucekkine, from the Institute for Advanced Study at Aix-Marseille University) and the extension for Mr. Plonski and Ms. Clarissa Ball in their positions until April 2021. Similar transitions occurred in other positions of the network's Steering Committee, which is why it has been decided to include the subject on the agenda of the voting session.

Mr. Plonski mentions the improvement achieved by the Coordination in the area of communication, either by the sharing of opportunities within the network or by the creation of an institutional address to speak to members. He presents the overview of the meetings held by the Steering Committee and the entire network in the last two and a half years, and the progress status of the four editions of the Intercontinental Academia program. Also highlighted are the three Topics of the Year for the period ("Fear," "Migrations," and "Dialogue") and the global initiatives carried out by the network: "[The Corona Crisis as an Interdisciplinary Challenge](#)" Blog, by Bielefeld University's Center for Interdisciplinary Research, and the [World Pandemic Research Network \(WPRN\)](#), by the Network of French Institutes for Advanced Study.

The presentation goes on to point out the importance of the geographical expansion of the network, which is gradually gaining numbers outside the still existing concentration in Europe. Of the last six members joining UBIAS, half are Europeans and half are non-Europeans.

Finally, some of the Coordination's participation in the anniversaries of institutes and their presence to promote new initiatives in Latin America and North Africa are remembered. The negative aspect remains with the North American representation within UBIAS, composed of IASs that interact little and do not take part in official events.

The voting session starts with Mr. Plonski giving the floor to Ms. Ball, who will present the topics related to the network's Statutes.

She introduces the first topic remembering that it has been suggested that the Statutes include a short statement that addresses the open, inclusive, and non-discriminatory manner in which UBIAS-supported events and activities are conducted. One option, previously sent to the members for analysis, says the following:

*All events and activities supported by UBIAS are conducted in an open, inclusive and non-discriminatory manner. UBIAS is committed to creating and promoting equitable and inclusive environments and is deeply committed to concepts such as freedom, personhood and dignity.*

Mr. Martin Cloonan suggests that the order of the two sentences in the paragraph be reversed. Ms. Ball takes the comment and asks if she can take the topic as agreed. The silence of those present indicates agreement.

The second topic addresses the implementation of a membership fee. Ms. Ball points out that UBIAS is one of few international networks that does not charge one. What is being suggested here is that a small annual membership fee is introduced. There could be three or four tiers to be sensitive to the economic conditions that are so varied across the world. The idea is that each institute can self-select the tier that they are in according to their budget. Mr. Olivier Bouin likes the idea of collecting resources for the network. He suggests that for now the members approve the principle of it and then the next Steering Committee puts further thinking into it. A follow-up decision would be submitted via e-mail in the near future. Ms. Daniela Kromrey agrees and adds that the Committee will have to think about practical implications. There would be the need to have one institute running that on a long term basis, because the responsibility of collecting the fees can not be something to change from hand to hand every two years. It might make sense to consider having one institute running the website and the funding issues, but agreeing on the principle sounds enough for now. Ms. Ball considers Mr. Bouin's suggestion as adopted, meaning the acceptance of the principle of introducing a membership fee with details being worked out and agreed upon a bit further along.

Ms. Ball proceeds to the third topic, which comes out of the virtual business meeting that was held in October 2020 during the UBIAS Pre-Conference, when it was suggested that the network moves away from having a simple majority system to a quorum for decision-making. Having in mind that it does not want to be set too high in a way that it would never be reached and not too low so that it is not representative, it seems that a third of the members is a good ratio. The proposed statute reads:

*A quorum of one-third of the voting membership is required for the decision-making business of the Directors' meetings.*

Once again, silence is taken as agreement.

The fourth topic is presented as having been an issue for many years, being particularly problematic with all of the North American colleagues. According to Ms. Ball, there are at least eight institutes which have been completely inactive since 2013 and there are a number of institutes that have made no contribution to UBIAS since 2010. This was the subject of considerable debate at the 4th Directors' Conference in Birmingham (2016) and the 5th Directors' Conference in São Paulo (2018), when it was decided that UBIAS would take some formal steps which had never been put into the Statutes. The suggestion is that member institutes can not be absent to two conferences in a row, otherwise risking termination. Ms. Nadia Al-Bagdadi comments that, in spite of being in favor of the proposal, the idea of introducing fees will probably solve the issue automatically. Ms. Ball agrees that the fees will help, but also thinks it would be a very good thing to have this included in the Statutes because it may take another two, three or four years before getting the fees sorted out. Besides, money should not be used to force inactive people out. It should be about the principle. The proposed and approved statute is the following:

*All members of UBIAS are required to participate in and contribute to the work of the network. Each Institute is expected to send a representative to the Directors' conferences. Institutes that are not represented at two consecutive Directors' conferences will be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the network prior to their membership status being considered for termination by the Steering Committee and at the relevant Directors' meeting.*

Moving on to the fifth topic, Ms. Ball brings attention to the fact that only directors are usually taken into consideration when the network thinks about who can be on the Steering Committee. This feels somewhat uncomfortable given that there are UBIAS people who are so committed to what they do, many of whom are present at the current meeting, and yet they are totally overlooked when it comes to elections. She adds that the collective behaviour is based on an assumption rather than an actual saying in the Statutes. Moreover, there are different types of directors, including deputy, associate, managing, academic, and executive directors. The brilliant skills, knowledge, and commitment that they can all bring to the Committee show that it is about time that they be embraced as options. Mr. Yitzhak Hen comments that, in many cases, directors are changing every three or four years while the administrative staff remains as the institutional memory, meaning that some of them should be part of the Committee. Ms. Ball suggests a balance, that is, maintaining the election of directors without the exclusion of everybody else. A further issue would be to not restrict representation to one person per institute. For now, it is decided that Ms. Ball is going to draft a statute.

The sixth and last topic came to light in the last two to three years, while the current Steering Committee has existed for longer than previous ones because of COVID-19. Ms. Ball explains that there have been a few directors shifting positions and so they had to step down from their roles on the Committee, making the group gradually smaller. What needs to be answered is what exactly is being elected, if the individual or the represented institute. If it is the institute, this means that when somebody leaves their job, their respective position on the Committee

automatically goes to the new director at the same institute. If it is the individual, which appears to be how UBIAS currently makes the indications, then when somebody leaves the Committee they will have to have their position refilled. In Ms. Ball's opinion, replacement should not be needed if the situation occurs in the final six to eight months of a term, but rather in the beginning of it.

Ms. Al-Bagdadi thinks that the network should stick to the principle of individuality even if there will be some work involved in having to replace someone. Ms. Ball agrees and adds that if somebody leaves their role on the Committee in the last six months or even in the last year of the term it would not necessarily always be the case of replacing that person since there are up to nine people in the group. There would be no point in holding an election for one person to fill a position for six months. Mr. Hen suggests that an acceptable minimum is defined for keeping the continuity of the Committee, for example five if the group originally has nine people. If it comes to under five people then there can be an election, but if someone drops out at any time and still leaves eight people in the Committee then no action needs to be taken.

Ms. Dominique Moran considers that there is a lot of merit in the idea of an institute being on the Committee, rather than an individual, this partially going back to Ms. Ball's earlier comment about the value of the experience and the expertise of a range of different individuals within an institute. If the institute was the member, then there would be an opportunity for the best person to take on the role on a specific day on which a particular topic would be addressed by the Committee. Ms. Ball admits that there is something very attractive about Ms. Moran's idea although not being able to see how that would work in practicality. Ms. Moran illustrates that the Birmingham IAS could perhaps make better contributions to the Committee as a team through the different profiles of the people in it.

Mr. Plonski remembers that there are two types of members on the Committee, namely those who are or are not part of the coordinating trio. Thus, he suggests that the aforementioned "minimum" should be six instead of five so that at least three non-coordinating members remain. He also thinks that people leaving the Committee should lead to a transparent process of the related institute being able to suggest a new name to replace the position. The indicated name would then be screened by the Committee prior to approval, of course, but guaranteeing the right of the first proposal to the institute who lost a position on the Committee.

Ms. Sue Gilligan says that the Birmingham IAS nominated themselves to the Committee as a team instead of just represented by their director. Because of the particular format of the network's Committee, they understand that the normal thing would be the director to be individually indicated, but as they naturally work in partnership with administering and professional services it made more sense to them to nominate the team.

When Ms. Ball comments that the meeting should be moving towards its end, Ms. Véronique Zanetti says that the topic appears to be very critical, making it seem that it will not be possible to come to a quick decision. Mr. Plonski agrees and suggests that the topic should not be

concluded at this time. The Committee will propose a final writing of the statute and have it circulated among the network to either have it validated or submitted to changes.

Mr. Plonski takes the microphone and announces the seven candidates for the Steering Committee for 2021-2023, who have sent their nominations before the meeting:

*Iris Avivi - Israel Institute for Advanced Studies at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

*Clarissa Ball - Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Western Australia*

*Olivier Bouin - French Network of Institutes for Advanced Study*

*Giovanni Galizia - Zukunftskolleg at the University of Konstanz*

*Hisham Mehanna - Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Birmingham*

*Guilherme Ary Plonski - Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of São Paulo*

*Yoshiyuki Suto - Institute for Advanced Research at Nagoya University*

He points out that the African continent is not represented in the tentative group and that there is an imbalance in terms of gender, which leads to a recommendation in favor of the Maria Sibylla Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa, currently managed by two women. Ms. Susann Baller does not immediately commit to acceptance because she still needs to make an internal decision with Ms. Abena Oduro, who is not present at the meeting, but says that she will consider the suggestion and that one of the two may eventually be ready to join the Committee. In the absence of objections, the Committee of seven (and potentially eight) people is considered approved.

The decisions about who will compose the Steering Committee's coordination trio and which institute will host the 7th UBIAS Directors' Conference are postponed after suggestions from Mr. Hen and Mr. Bouin. It is defined that the new Committee will have a first meeting within a few days to define both points. Until this next activity, Mr. Plonski and Ms. Ball will continue to coordinate the network.

Mr. Plonski thanks all of the remaining participants and declares the meeting finished.