



**55th International Congress
General Assembly
15 January 2008
Hotel d'Angleterre (Copenhagen, Denmark)**

Present:

AUSTRALIA
AUSTRIA
BELGIUM
CANADA
CHINA
CHINESE TAIPEI
CZECH REPUBLIC
DENMARK
FINLAND
FRANCE
GERMANY

GREAT BRITAIN
HELLAS
HONG KONG
HUNGARY
ISRAEL
IRELAND
ITALY
JAPAN
KOREA
MEXICO
NETHERLANDS

NEW ZEALAND
NORWAY
PORTUGAL
SINGAPORE
SPAIN
SWITZERLAND
THAILAND
TURKEY
USA

Absent:

BRAZIL
LUXEMBOURG
MALAYSIA

MOROCCO
PHILIPPINES
ROMANIA

RUSSIA
TURKEY

Observers:

ARGENTINA
DUBAI

POLAND
QATAR

SWEDEN

1. Welcome to General Assembly

President Roger Bastoni welcomed everyone to the assembly and thanked President Arshad Khokhar and his committee for doing a wonderful job. President Khokhar received a standing ovation.

2. International President's Report

It has been 10 months since the Vienna Congress, and President Bastoni has now familiarized himself with his responsibilities. He wished to thank all the members, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee for their assistance during his presidency so far. He's traveled a lot over the past year, and he will continue to do so in the coming year. Trips are already planned to London, Ireland, and Vancouver.

President Bastoni reported that the International Review is in good health, with a number of sponsors who help offset production costs. Presidents were asked to send information and/or articles soon to help prepare the Spring 2008 edition. The publisher's contract for the Review is presently up for renewal, and the Executive Committee has also received a proposal from a new printer. They are examining their options, but they have not made a decision yet.

President Bastoni is pleased to report that, today, the UICH Treasury has 17,000 Euro in the bank. President Bastoni is happy with the appointment of Mr. Jean-Roland Boutillé as Assistant Treasurer, and he is quite

pleased with the work he and Treasurer Poirier have done. It costs approximately 110,000 Euros annually to run this association.

President Bastoni thanked President Roderick Levéjac for developing the new UICH international website. The original contract with web designer Apicius has now been annulled. Everyone is welcome to visit the site regularly as a way to stay informed. President Bastoni publishes a new note to members each month, and he feels this is a good way for him to stay in touch with the members. One of the features of the website allows sections to post their annual meeting dates. President Bastoni is pleased with this aspect, in particular, as it will better allow him to correspond (or attend) sections' events.

The new 2008-2010 Book of Members is complete and available for distribution at this meeting. While perfection is, of course, difficult when printing a book of this magnitude, President Bastoni and his colleagues have done their best. It was an extremely difficult task to get everyone to submit their membership information, and when it arrived, it was not always in the best order.

The international Board of Directors has been appropriately registered in France. Also, the new statutes have been officially translated and recorded in accordance with French law.

President Bastoni briefly invited each member of the Executive Committee, the Zone Directors, the Board of Directors, and the Comité des Sages to introduce themselves. There are 31 of 39 member sections present at today's meeting.

Germany had to withdraw its offer to host the 2010 Congress. Portugal and Singapore both bid for the Congress, and President Bastoni thanked them for their generosity. Portugal won the bid and will host the 2010 Congress.

President Bastoni declared that one of his mandates is to develop stronger and more long-term partnerships with vendors. This is vital for the health of the Treasury and this is one of President Bastoni's top priorities.

The Swiss account is now closed, and all Bucherer key orders are now filtered through the French account. Presidents can purchase keys by contacting the rue Cambon headquarters. Keys were available for pre-sale at today's meeting. President Bastoni thanked Mr. Aldo Giacomello for his long service as the main liaison between Bucherer and UICH.

President Bastoni has worked hard with the Zone Directors to strengthen their role and develop specific job responsibilities. He credited his Zone Directors with enhancing the efficiency of communications between the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee. Distributed at today's meeting was a preliminary draft of an organigram, which will formalize the responsibilities of the Zone Directors, the Board of Directors, the Comité des Sages, the Executive Committee, and the members.

President Bastoni thanked the Danish section for producing such a meaty and fulfilling educational symposium. He is sure that members are pleased to be bringing home effective materials to share with management.

In conclusion, President Bastoni thanked everyone for serving so passionately and efficiently over the last year.

3. Introduction of Newly Elected National Presidents

General Secretary Virginia Casale announced new presidents elected since the Vienna Congress:

- Mr. Christian Neubauer (Austria)
- Mr. Alex Lai (Chinese Taipei)
- Mr. Roderick Levéjac (France)
- Mr. Spiros Arathimos (Hellas)
- Mr. Federico Barbarossa (Italy)
- Mr. Philippe Muller (Japan)
- Mr. Jeff Kim (Korea)
- Mr. Ragu Kumarasamy (Malaysia)
- Mr. Ben Wahlte (Netherlands)
- Mr. Catalin Malureanu (Romania)
- Mr. Praneet Wangcharoensook (Thailand)
- Mr. Maurice Dancer (USA)

4. Lecture of Correspondence and Roll of Deceased Members

A lecture of correspondence was heard from President Catalin Malureanu (Romania) and Mr. Liborio Pimenta (Portugal). Mr. Nuno Jardim Condeço, President of Portugal, was unable to come because his mother was ill.

Members were asked to stand for a moment of silence in observance of deceased members:

China: Tiger Huang Er Tai (Vice General Secretary)

France: Charles Barelli
Jean Soyez
Jean-Claude Vrinat

Great Britain: Jack Hobbs (Holiday Inn Glasgow)
Nunzio Nestola (Hyde Park Hotel, London)
Bob Thompson (Station Hotel, Newcastle)
John Medaglia (Britannia Hotel, London)

Germany: Deitrich Bergmann
Hans Oberlander
Gunter Ullrich
Giovanni di Gennaro

Hellas: Ioannis Stefanidis (International Honorary Member)

Holland: Dirk Huizinga

Hungary: Daniel Verbovszki (Four Seasons, Budapest)

Israel: Marcell Sternhell

USA: Joanne Norris, Georgette Saleh, James Mistrot

General Secretary Casale also gave special mention to First Vice President and International Honorary Member (post-humus), Mr. Andy Pongco (Philippines)

5. Adoption of Argentina as 40th Member Section

First Vice President Robert Watson announced the acceptance of Argentina as the 40th member section of UICH. They were warmly welcomed into UICH with a standing ovation and resounding applause.

President Pablo Castro thanked the assembly and took his official seat at the Board of Directors table. President Castro thanked the individuals who were instrumental in Argentina's success. He assured UICH that Argentina will uphold all its responsibilities with vigor.

Delegates enjoyed a short video about Argentina. At the conclusion of the video, President Pablo Castro invited his Section's delegates to come to the stage, and each was introduced.

6. Adoption of the Minutes of the General Assembly in Vienna

By a show of hands, the minutes from the General Assembly of the Vienna Congress were duly approved.

7. Treasurer's Report 2007

Treasurer Gérard Poirier reported that a new accounting firm has been hired to help Les Clefs d'Or with its books. He then reviewed a summary of 2007 income/receipts. Malaysia, Philippines and Russia are delinquent in their subscription fees; all other countries are paid in full. Treasurer Gérard Poirier reviewed the 2008 Budget. He explained that the Book of Members costs will be fully paid in 2008 rather than spread into two years of payments (2008 and 2009), as done previously.

By a majority show of hands, the Treasury Report was approved.

8. Resume of Decisions Take at the Board of Directors Meeting

Ms. Virginia Casale read a summary of highlights from the Board of Directors meeting held 12 January 2008.

9. Zone Director Reports

Brief oral reports were heard from each of the seven Zone Directors: Mr. Shujaat Khan (American Zone), President Colin Toomey (Australia/Oceania Zone), Mr. Christian Sussman (Asian Zone), Mr. Mario Eroico (Mediterranean Zone), Mr. Claudio Caser (Western European Zone), President Raffaele Sorentino (Central European Zone), and President Arshad Khokhar (Scandinavian Zone). Full copies of their reports were distributed at the meeting.

10. Website Presentation

President Roderick Levéjac presented highlights of the newly designed international website. The address is www.uichlesclefsdor.org.

Because only three national sections do not have their own web page, President Levéjac believes it is easiest to look up membership lists by clicking on the link to each section's national website. There is no reason to recreate a central membership list, as this would require Presidents to maintain current information in two places instead of just one.

Features of the website include:

- The ability to have news articles sent to members' email addresses.
- General news articles (and President Levéjac encourages the Board of Directors to submit articles for consideration)
- Letter from the President (changed monthly)
- Copy of the Statutes
- Calendar of upcoming AGM and international meetings around the world
- Information and photos of the Paris office
- Information and photos of the Comité des Sages and Executive Committee members
- Information and photos of Zone Directors (presently under construction)
- Archived photos and articles
- A home page for each of the national sections with links to their respective websites

11. Future Congresses

56th International Congress (Hangzhou, China): President John Sun Dong presented a short video on Hangzhou and the New Century Hotel (where all delegates will be housed). The Congress dates are 3-9 March 2009. Information on the Congress may be found on China's national website: www.lesclefsdorchina.com. China is able to accommodate 700 people and expects to charge a fee of 900 Euro (single) and 800 (double). President Sun Dong sincerely looks forward to welcoming colleagues to his country. Before concluding, President Sun Dong wished to particularly thank Ms. Marjorie Silverman and Mr. Aldo Giacomello for helping him to develop his section over the past several years.

57th International Congress: Vice President Joaquim Alves (Portugal) wished to thank President Gregory Tan (Singapore) for offering to host this meeting as well. This is Vice President Alves' first meeting, and it has been a special and rewarding one for him. It will be an honor to receive his Les Clefs d'Or family in Portugal in 2010. The Congress will probably take place in Paco de Arcos for six days -- 3 days of meetings and 3 days of touring. No specific dates have yet been set.

58th International Congress: President Geoff Argue is pleased that Canada will host the 2011 Congress in Toronto, Ontario, in the Spring. He introduced Ms. Mary Steadman, Mr. Toni Daoud, and Mr. Lanfranco Guilandi, chairs of the congress planning committee. Most of the days will be spent in Toronto, but President Argue did say that one day will offer a tour of the spectacular Niagara Falls. Toronto is the largest and most metropolitan city in Canada, and it is also Canada's cultural and financial capital. He looks forward to welcoming delegates in 2011.

59th International Congress (Great Britain): Mr. Ron Crowdy and the British section gave a presentation on their plans to host the 2012 Congress. In three weeks, Mr. Paul Still will replace Mr. Crowdy as President of the Great Britain section. Congress Planning Committee Co-Chairs Brad Davis, Simon Thomas, and Neil Cowen presented a short video on London, followed with brief commentary. 2012 is the Olympic year for London, and delegates will be able to tour the Olympic facilities. London is intent on making the 59th Congress a green one. At the moment, they expect the price of the congress to be both reasonable and flexible, because delegates who can arrange to stay at their own hotel chains, if possible, will pay a separate and reduced registration rate. Great Britain has good support from sponsors and the tourism arm of the government. The British are sure to host an excellent congress.

12. Partnerships/American Express

Ms. Daniela Cerboni, VP Membership Service Travel International at American Express, gave a short slide presentation to delegates. Ms. Cerboni is responsible for luxury travel to all premium Platinum and Centurion American Express cardholders.

Her presentation covered highlights of the history of American Express and explained why the relationship between her company and Les Clefs d'Or is such a fruitful one: the two organizations share the same customer base, serving travelers around the world. Because of Les Clefs d'Or, Ms. Cerboni is more successful and her customers are happier.

American Express is pleased to recommend a Clefs d'Or hotel and thus ensure a higher level of (seamless) service for their guest. The Clefs d'Or concierge and the hotel property both gain a reputation of quality amongst the high-end traveler.

Ms. Cerboni provided a few testimonials as to the ways the Clefs d'Or concierges have helped her achieve the impossible for her clientele. In return, because the partnership between American Express and UICH is a reciprocal one, she is happy to be able to support UICH in its endeavors.

The relationship works so well because it works informally and through personal relationships. This will be a key factor as additional sections develop national and local relationships with American Express representatives in their areas.

What the clientele wants is simple. They want authenticity and exclusivity. They want to have their motivations understood and validated. Answering these needs will ensure customer loyalty to UICH and to American Express. Travel is more than an industry. It is the way people come together in a truly cultural exchange. Both American Express and UICH play a part in that exchange.

Ms. Cerboni thanked Mr. Aldo Giacomello for his collaboration and support over the years. She's proud of his personal commitment to UICH. She also thanked President Roger Bastoni and the Executive Committee for inviting her to speak to today's assembly. Finally, she thanked First Vice President Robert Watson for helping her develop national and local contacts from an operational standpoint and practical perspective.

President Bastoni thanked Ms. Cerboni for her support. UICH is privileged to have American Express as a sponsor. President Bastoni acknowledged Mr. Aldo Giacomello for nurturing the partnership into what it is today. Mr. Giacomello responded by saying how much he enjoys putting his energies toward branding. Developing solid relationships like the one with American Express is the best way he knows to solidify the brand image of the crossed gold keys.

13. Presentation of Membre de honorer Diplomas

International honorary memberships were distributed to the following individuals:

UICH: Ms. Daniela Cerboni, Vice President, Membership Travel Service International, American Express

China: Mr. Wang Dong, General Manager, International Conference Center Hotel, Zhuhai

Czech Republic: Mr. Ladislav Erban, Director of Sales, Moser Glass

Denmark: Mrs. Trina Lantz, Managing Director, Lantz Catering
Mr. Alberto A. Kappenberger, General Manager, Radisson SAS Scandinavia
Mrs. Iben Marburger Juul, Managing Director, Marburger Human Value
Mr. Preben Paske, Managing Director, Auto Paske
Mr. John Christensen, Director of Marketing & Sales, Avis Denmark

Great Britain: Donald MacDonald, CEO, MacDonald Hotels

France: Mr. Eric Tredjeu, American Express, and Mr. Jean-Claude Vrinat (Restaurant Taillevent) post-humously

Hong Kong: Mr. George Kay, Jr., Baron Kay's Tailor

Hungary: Mr Imre Deak, President and General Manager, Danubius Hotels Group

Japan: Mrs. Ono Momoko, Concierge, Grand Hyatt Tokyo and Founding President of Les Clefs d'Or Japan

New Zealand: Mr. Paul Evans, Director of Hotels, Melview Developments/Galway Tourism Investment Group

Philippines: Mr. Ibrahim Yaqoot, Tourism Department, Government of Dubai

Portugal: Dr. Pedro Vasconcelos, Manager, El Corte Inglés Gaia

Singapore: Mr Raymond Tham, Director, Justmen's Tailor

Switzerland: Hans Krebs, Owner, Grand Regina Grindelwald

Thailand: Mrs. Khamitha, Baan Khamitha Restaurant, Bangkok

14. Andy Pongco Award

Past President Denis O'Brien outlined details of the newly created Andy Pongco Award in recognition of Mr. Pongco's dedication to mentoring the youth of our profession. Mr. Pongco loved to involve young people, nurture them, and help them become strong leaders.

By way of apology, Past President O'Brien explained that this year's award is a pilot program, and that it was put together quickly. He expects to see changes and enhancements to the award in future years as it becomes more established.

The Andy Pongco Award is for young concierges who are 35 years of age or less and who are at this year's congress – gratis – from their national section. There were seven nominees for this year's award, and each completed a questionnaire and underwent a personal interview with the Executive Committee.

- Tony Chang (Chinese Taipei)
- Dean Madison (Great Britain)
- Anders Ruggerio-Olsted (Denmark)
- Mark Hubert (Hungary)
- Francois Pascal leBlanc (Canada)
- Emilie Garnier (France)
- André Kleinschmidt (Germany)

Before announcing the winner, Past President O'Brien asked delegates to applaud these individuals because they are all winners. They are also forever in the rich historical annals of UICH history as being the first ever nominees of the Pongco Award.

As the reward's inaugural recipient, winner Tony Chang (Chinese Taipei) will receive free airfare and registration to the 2009 Congress in China. Mr. Chang thanked everyone and acknowledged the many contributions made by Mr. Andy Pongco, who nurtured his section to fruition. Without Mr. Pongco, Tony Chang would not be standing here today.

Mr. Aldo Giacomello announced that American Express offered to sponsor the annual Andy Pongco Award. This announcement met with resounding applause.

15. Questions

President Roger Bastoni asked the delegates to come forward with any questions or commentary.

- President Khokhar was acknowledged and lauded for his efforts to put forth a strong educational component at this Congress. The speakers at this year's meeting were well received. It is nice that the Congress Hosts listened to the desires of the delegates to have a stronger educational forum.
- American Express was asked to please remind their clientele that the Clefs d'Or concierges work very hard to meet cardholders' requests. Achieving the impossible takes work, and it is nice when an American Express cardholder congratulates the concierge on a job well done.
- President Colin Toomey is presently developing a commission to explore and create a standardized application form that would help streamline the membership process and unify membership standards.
- President Bastoni is aware and vigilant about rising congress costs and how prohibitive they are to some nations' members. He asked delegates to remember that the registration fees cover no more than 30% of total overall costs to host a congress. The Executive Committee acknowledged how difficult it is for some nations to afford to send delegates to meetings.
- Perhaps UICH could look into taping some portions of its meetings, which could then be posted on the website so that all members have access to the knowledge, even if they are not present physically.
- Many delegates suggested that the Book of Members move to an e-format (or pdf file) on the UICH website. Many other members preferred a printed version. President Bastoni agreed that this would allow UICH to save a lot of money, but there is the question of what to do with countries that would neither update nor submit current membership lists. In order to do the job effectively, everyone in Les Clefs d'Or needs access to *all* colleagues at *all* times. Furthermore, he believes the Book is a good way to cement the brand of Les Clefs d'Or to colleagues and management. But, as Mr. Herbert Ruhs (Austria) pointed out, "Nothing is more expensive than tradition," and so UICH will look at alternate formats for future printings. No concrete decisions were made.
- For security reasons, perhaps the website should have a password system that prevents the public from accessing membership lists.
- As Clefs d'Or members, it is everyone's first duty to interact with a guest. When you are looking at a computer, you are not interacting with a guest. Computers must not supersede guest interactions.
- The Executive Committee was praised for doing an excellent job over the past year.
- Delegates enjoy receiving the Board of Director highlights and the educational minutes at the General Assembly. It makes it easier for delegates to follow the meeting. It also allows members to go back to management with substance.
- Having concrete job descriptions will greatly streamline the efficiencies of UICH. President Bastoni was applauded for his efforts to put together the organigram that was distributed.
- It is great that the French government sponsors a tourism school in Paris. Delegates might enjoy a presentation about this school.

16. Commentary from the Comité des Sages

Ms. Marjorie Silverman thanked President Arshad Khokhar and his wonderful team for putting on a magical congress in Copenhagen. It is good to see printed job descriptions, and this will help UICH run efficiently. She pointed out that many job descriptions can also be found in the statutes. She will shortly forward a revision of the organigram regarding the role of the Comité des Sages.

Mr. Aldo Giacomello shared words with the delegates. The Comité des Sages is comprised of past international presidents whose task is to ensure that UICH statutes are respected, understood, and upheld. The Copenhagen Congress has been a good one – good business was conducted, an excellent educational symposium took place, and Les Clefs d'Or looked hard at future directions it wishes to take. In particular, Mr. Giacomello is pleased that delegates have been issued minutes and summaries to take back to their hotels in such a timely fashion.

To host a congress takes much planning and careful logistics. There is also a great deal of protocol involved (i.e., flags, alphabetization, seating arrangements, use of titles, etc.). The Comité des Sages would like to assist host countries to ensure that all the minutiae are managed properly. In every aspect, UICH must assure a fair, respectable, and equitable venue for *every* member. Because they have historical perspective, the Sages can help be sure that all the right things are done at the right moment, in the right place, and in the right way. Mr. Giacomello reminded all delegates to stay aware of the collegial rules, to learn them and respect them, and to assure adherence to protocol in every event.

In a final note, it is encouraging to see so many young people in the Danish section and in other sections as well. The young are the future of the association. The Andy Pongco Award is a good testament to this. It is a pleasure to see the young people so participatory, too. At the end of the day, UICH is not the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors. It is the members. It is everyone's society. All members, together, can move Les Clefs d'Or into the future.

17. President's Conclusion and End of Meeting

President Roger Bastoni believes much progress has been made in the first year of his mandate. He pledged to continue to work hard in the coming year in order to leave a good heritage to the next President. He encouraged all the young and upcoming officers of UICH to begin now to think about effective leadership methods and what they, too, can offer Les Clefs d'Or's future.

President Bastoni acknowledged the many individuals who helped make the Copenhagen Congress such a success: the sponsors, Ms. Lone Ricks, President Arshad Khokhar and his entire Danish delegation. He also thanked his Board of Directors, the Comité des Sages, the Zone Directors, and the delegates for their participation, passion, contributions, and courtesy.

The meeting was officially concluded.