

The history of the IALE statutes and the role of the IALE Council

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SPECIAL THEME: NOMINATION OF
VICE-PRESIDENTS & HISTORY OF
STATUTES

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Bulletin

International Association for Landscape Ecology

CALL FOR NOMINATION OF TWO VICE-PRESIDENTIAL POSITIONS FOR THE IALE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2005-2009

The IALE executive committee consists of a president, the past-president, four vice-presidents, a secretary-general, a treasurer and a Bulletin editor/deputy secretary-general. The members are elected for a four-year term, with the last election in July 2003. In general, two vice-presidents are elected to a four-year term just preceding the IALE World Congress which is held every four years, whereas the other two vice-presidents are elected between the general elections, due next in 2005. The Vice-Presidents are intended to provide regional representation and should reflect the international character of the Association. They may be re-elected to consecutive terms. Of the present vice-presidents, Louis R. Iverson (USA) and Nobukazu Nakagoshi (Japan) have terms until the summer of 2007, whereas Françoise Burel (France) and Margareta Ihse (Sweden) have terms until the summer of 2005. An election of two vice-presidents will thus be carried out in the summer 2005. According to the IALE statutes (G1) a request for nominations of candidates for the two vice-presidential positions are hereby distributed to the members. Nominations shall be made by two members in Good Standing and shall be consented to in writing by the signature of the nominee. These nomination forms are due in the hands of the Secretary-General before 15 April 2005. The nomination form (download at [ftp://ftp.wsl.ch/pub/kienast/iale/nom_form.pdf](http://ftp.wsl.ch/pub/kienast/iale/nom_form.pdf) & .doc) may be used, but E-mails confirming the nomination and consent of the nominee will also be accepted, provided they are sent individually from these persons. The members proposing the nominations are asked to enclose a short description of motives and recommendations for the nominee. The nominee is asked to enclose a short C. V. and a position statement for the nomination (not more than 1000 letters), suitable for publication in the IALE Bulletin. This should be forwarded together with the nomination form.

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THE HISTORY OF THE IALE STATUTES AND THE ROLE OF THE IALE COUNCIL

by Jesper Brandt

The development of IALE as an effective association promoting common interests at a global scale is a complicated task. Crucial to the task is the ability to unite a strong coordinated international leadership supported by an efficient secretariat – represented by the IALE executive committee – with the constant mobilisation of local and regional initiatives among the members of the organisation – represented by the regional chapters and working groups, united in the IALE Council. Also for constitutional reasons (an independent nomination of candidates for the executive committee), the distinction between these two poles is important. In the following, I will describe how the relationship between executive committee and Council has swung up and down during the short history of IALE, and how the statutes of IALE have been through several revisions to fulfil the ever-changing needs of focusing the organisational effort for the benefit of the global efficiency of the organisation. However, I believe that new initiatives at the regional and super-regional level are now needed. The latest changes in the statutes contain structures and rules with such decentralised initiatives, especially at the ‘super-regional level’, but realisation of these potentials has not yet occurred.

IALE as an international cooperation of national organisations: The idea to set up an international association for landscape ecologists developed among Dutch landscape ecologists during the late 1970s, based on a Slovakian proposal: for some years landscape ecology had developed in The Netherlands in close connection to landscape planning, organised in the rather powerful Dutch society for landscape ecology (WLO). Dutch landscape ecology had at that time already a strong tradition for international cooperation, mainly in western Europe and North America, but decisive for the initiative was the participation of Dutch landscape ecologists in several landscape ecological conferences held in eastern Europe.

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The Secretary-General will deliver all valid nominations to the Chair of the Nominating Committee. The nominating committee is chaired by the present Past-President (Richard Hobbs, Australia) and the present Chairman of the IALE Council (Jesper Brandt, Denmark). They will appoint three additional members to the Nominating Committee, in a manner intended to provide regional representation and valid information concerning the received nominations. Nominations may also be made by the Nominating Committee, with the consent of the nominee.

The Nominating Committee will develop a slate with (if possible) at least two eligible candidates for each of the two positions for vice-president. Candidates will be selected from the nominations received with reference to: considerations of the Statutes of the Association, needs of each particular office, the international and regional nature of IALE, the interdisciplinary character of IALE, and other criteria likely to affect the vitality of IALE.

Before 15 June 2005, the Chair of the Nominating Committee will distribute a ballot to all members currently in Good Standing, containing the slate of candidates for all positions to be filled in the election. Space for write-in candidates will be provided for each position, but such candidates must have agreed to serve if elected. The ballot will be a secret ballot. To be valid, ballots must be returned to the Chair of the Nominating Committee no later than 1 August 2005. The ballot will be distributed as part of an issue of the IALE Bulletin, together with position statements prepared by the candidates.

Candidates for each position will be elected by a simple majority of valid ballots cast. In the event that there is only one candidate for a position, election of the single nominee by acclamation will be indicated by a simple majority of the votes cast. The results of the election will be announced in the IALE Bulletin.

Jesper Brandt and Richard Hobbs
Co-Chairs of the Nominating Committee

Jesper Brandt was member of the IALE Executive Committee from 1988-1999, representing the Danish Chapter of IALE in the IALE Council, and elected as chairman of the Council 1999-2003. On request of the present Executive Committee he has accepted to continue to function as chairman of the Council until 2007.

Richard Hobbs is former president of IALE.

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These conferences showcased the long and strong tradition of landscape ecology in Eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Soviet Union (especially in Siberia!), but also in other parts of Eastern Europe. Beginning in 1967, international conferences in landscape ecology had been organised every third year for Eastern Europe by Milan Rucicka and his team from the Slovak Academy of Science (See IALE Bulletin, Vol. 1 no. 1, Oct. 1983, and Vol. 17, no. 2, March 1999). It was clear that there was an enormous potential for closer international cooperation between landscape ecologists and landscape planners and managers in the East and the West. So the Dutch and Slovakian colleagues decided to overcome the obstacles of the continuous Cold War, and form the International Association for Landscape Ecology. IALE was initiated during the first international congress on Landscape Ecology in Veldhoven, The Netherlands in 1981, and formally founded in Piestany in Slovakia in 1982, where a final version of statutes was accepted after several years of discussion and preparation (see IALE Bulletin Vol. 1, No. 1, including the statutes of 1982). During the 1980s, the organisation was basically an association of independent national landscape ecological societies as well as appointed contact persons in nations that had not yet established landscape ecological societies, and the main task of the provisional executive committee was to initiate the formation of regional organisations at the national level. A representative for each regional organisation together with the chairpersons of the working groups and the members of the executive committee was to form the IALE Council, with the task to organise the election of any new executive committee, and with the support of the General Assembly.

This structure was practical during the foundation process of the association, in a period where the social regulation of landscapes was still first of all a national concern, following very different national traditions. But it was also necessary due to the existing political division between East and West, giving fundamental problems of formalising membership and accomplishing international transfer of membership fees. However, at the end of the 1980s still only a few of the new regional organisations were formalised in a way that permitted the Council to function as a proper election base for the executive committee. In many regions, there was only a contact person appointed by the preliminary executive committee, but no organisation. A plan to establish the Council at the General Assembly at the congress in Münster in July 1987 failed. Instead a 'preliminary Council' with 23 members, formed by the nine members of the executive committee, one representative of each of the 4 organised regions, active contact persons in countries without an organisation (8 members) and the chairmen of the two existing working groups, unanimously supported a proposal for members of

a new executive committee, presented by the former executive committee.

The formation of IALE as an international association based on personal membership: To overcome the obvious constitutional problems facing the association, a Constitutional Committee chaired by the host of the Münster-Congress, K.-F. Schreiber, was formed to prepare a revision of the statutes, and a draft was presented in July 1991 (IALE Bulletin, Vol. 9 no. 2). Meanwhile, the rapid political changes in Eastern Europe shaped a new international situation that in many ways facilitated cooperation within IALE, and making the transfer of membership fees in convertible currency principally possible.

The new proposal for statutes was based on a direct personal membership of IALE-international, and a direct worldwide election of the executive committee of IALE-international among all members. These principles were approved at the Congress in Ottawa in 1991, where the General Assembly imposed the new Executive Committee to improve the draft in text and detail, and put them into force before the next congress, as well as ensure that an ordinary Council (without E.C.-appointed 'contact persons') within the existing statutes could be functional within 6 months of the Ottawa Congress. Only two amendments to the existing statutes, concerning the inclusion of the past-president in the executive committee and the procedure for the election of honorary members were put immediately into force through a voting cast following the Congress (IALE-Bulletin, Vol. 9 no. 3, October 1991).

The draft-proposal ensured a clear and democratic base for the work of the Executive Committee, which was important for the stabilization and efficiency of the organization. However three crucial problems remained:

1) How to ensure a broad and democratic worldwide nomination of candidates for the direct election to the Executive Committee?

2) How to ensure a broad and worldwide engagement in the election of officers for the association among these candidates?

3) How to ensure that local and regional activities 'at the landscape level' would continue to flourish, provide influence on the affairs of the association, and not be left out in the cold, especially in regions with limited organisational capacity?

These problems have been dealt with since then at a formal level, but in practise they are not yet solved in any satisfying way. To ensure continuity, the nomination of candidates was delegated to the past-president. Alone, the past-president appointed a nomination committee with the responsibility to set a slate of two candidates for each position following an open nomination procedure among all members. In practise this procedure concentrated power in the past president, and ensured that the presidential power could be handed over to an almost personally appointed successor. The influence of the regional chapters was correspondingly reduced and the Council as a channel of communication and influence of the regional organisations and working groups in reality ceased to exist, almost before representatives to the Council of the mostly new established regional organisations had been officially appointed.

This risk of loosing the influence of the regions was in fact more or less foreseen in a report to the General Assembly in 1991, admitting that *'We have to stress that such a new structure should not be seen as threat against the regional organisations: On the contrary, it shall be seen as a necessary measure to develop a strong base for the development of regional activities in the future'* (IALE Bulletin, Vol. 9, no. 2).

The IALE Bulletin is distributed six times a year to the members of the IALE. The IALE - International Association for Landscape Ecology - was founded in 1982 to promote communication between scientists, planners and interdisciplinary scientific research. IALE Executive Committee: **President:** Bob Bunce 2003-2007, ALTERRA Green World Research, Wageningen UR, Postbox 47, 6700AA Wageningen, The Netherlands, bob.bunce@wur.nl; **Secretary General:** Marion Potschin 2003-2007, School of Geography, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD, Marion.Potschin@unibas.ch or Marion.Potschin@nottingham.ac.uk; **Treasurer:** Rob Jongman 1995-2007, ALTERRA Green World Research, Wageningen UR, Postbox 47, 6700AA Wageningen, The Netherlands, Rob.Jongman@wur.nl or rob.jongman@planet.nl; **Past President:** Richard J. Hobbs 2003-2007, School of Environmental Science, Murdoch University, Murdoch, WA 6150, Australia, rhobbs@essu1.murdoch.edu.au; **Vice Presidents:** Françoise Burel 1997-2005, Lab. Evolution, Université de Rennes 1, Campus de Beaulieu, 35042 Rennes Cedex, France, francoise.burel@univ-rennes1.fr; Margareta Ihse 1997-2005, Department of Physical Geography, Unit of Ecological Geography, Stockholm University, SE-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden, ihse@natgeo.su.se; Louis R. Iverson 2003-2007, USDA Forest Service, 359 Main Rd., Delaware, OH, 43015, USA, liverson@fs.fed.us; Nobukazu Nakagoshi 2003-2007, Hiroshima Univ., Dept of Environmental Studies, 1-7-1 Kagamiyama, Higashi-Hiroshima 739-8521, Japan, nobu@hiroshima-u.ac.jp; **Bulletin Editor and Deputy Secretary General:** Felix Kienast 1999-2007, Swiss Federal Institute of Forest, Snow and Landscape Research, Division of Landscape Dynamics and Management, 8903 Birmensdorf, Switzerland, felix.kienast@wsl.ch; **Chairman of Council:** Jesper Brandt 1995-2007, Roskilde University, P.O. Box 260, DK 4000 Roskilde, Denmark, brandt@ruc.dk.

IALE on the Internet: IALE International: www.landscape-ecology.org

In acknowledgement of these problems, some changes to compensate for the centralisation were developed to strengthen the efficiency of the global organisation and incorporated into the draft proposal for the Congress in Toulouse in 1995: The General Assembly was given the possibility to add nominations for the election ballot proposed by the Nominating Committee, thus creating an alternative nomination to the proposals initiated by the past-president. A credit to the role of the Council was given by adding its role of electing a replacement from among the current vice-presidents if the president should resign before the end of a term (see IALE Bulletin Vol. 13 no. 2, April 1995, listing the differences between the proposal from 1991 and the proposal from 1995). The revised proposal was used for the election of a new executive committee in 1995 and the procedure approved by the General Assembly at the Toulouse Congress in August 1995.

Initiatives to revitalise the regional influence on the work of IALE: Concurrently with the above efforts, much work was also performed to accommodate a motion from the General Assembly in 1991 to clean up the regional representation by creating a sharp distinction between Council representatives from formalised regions and regional contact persons not elected by a formalised regional organisation, who would not be accepted as members of an ordinary Council.

However, already before the Congress in Snowmass, Colorado, in 1999, the statutes were revised again (a proposal presented in parallel with the statutes from July 1995 was attached to IALE Bulletin, Vol. 16 no. 6, November 1998). The immediate background was to avoid a delay in business of several months during the election period after the nomination of candidates approved or added at the General Assembly - ensuring that a new Executive Committee could be elected before the Congress, and start its functional period already at the meeting of the General Assembly during the Congress. Instead of giving nomination power to the General Assembly, the role of the Council was strengthened as a 'second chapter' in IALE: A procedure for the election of a chairman of the Council was added, to permit a dedicated involvement of the regional interests and to involve the regional organisations (through the chairman of the Council) in the procedure of election of the Executive Committee instead of the General Assembly.

All members of IALE were asked to vote for or against the proposal in the spring of 1999, and a nomination and election of members to the new executive committee was in place before the Congress in Snowmass.

The new Executive Committee, taking over at the Congress in Snowmass, concentrated on the streamlining of the international association: upgrading of the IALE website, electronic distribution of the Bulletin, international publication activity, planning of super-regional meetings and the next Congress

and support for international exchange of young scientists and visiting speakers, especially related to these events. The support of regional activities and working groups was not neglected, but seemed more difficult to organise and especially to coordinate. The endeavour to formalise the representation of regional chapters and working groups in the Council and strengthen the functionality of the Council weakened. The chairmanship of the Council did not function (I retired from the executive committee in 1999, but accepted Council chairmanship at the Council meeting in Snowmass, which I was not able to fulfil), and its involvement in the constitutional election of two vice-presidents between the congresses in 2001 was repealed due to a decision in the Executive Committee for the continuation of the two vice-presidents until the Darwin-Congress and the two others until 2005. The Executive Committee also took over the appointment of a Nominating Committee and the election of members to the new Executive Committee prior to the Darwin Congress. No meeting of the IALE Council was held at Darwin either.

Back on two legs again: In a worldwide organisation, there will inevitably be a certain distance from the members to the elected officers, which makes it very important to observe the constitutional rules, and especially that the elected officers are separated as much as possible from the nomination of candidates for new elections. This principle has been one of the considerations always taken into account in the formulation of the IALE Statutes. But up to now, it has only to a limited degree been possible to realize the principle, and obviously the constitutional rules for the election of officers in IALE have not been observed during recent years. The Executive Committee elected in 2003 is aware of these problems and has decided to ensure a constitutional accomplishment of future elections and to support a functioning Council. Since no Council-meeting was held in Darwin and thus no chairman for the Council elected, the executive committee that has asked me to continue as chairman for the Council and join the endeavour to revitalise the Council, as described in the new plan for Council, published at the front page of this Bulletin.

The constitutional problems are however only one of the reasons why a strengthening of the Council is needed. The Executive Committee will by its nature always have to concentrate on the global leadership, the common business and the tasks related to the coming congresses, whereas regional affairs and coordination between regions and working groups tends to get a second priority. These activities, however, have to be the focus of a well-functioning Council. Initiatives from the membership at the regional and super-regional level are critical if IALE shall fulfil its mission 'to develop landscape ecology as the scientific basis for the analysis, planning and management of the landscapes of the world', so a structure that can support such initiatives are necessary. These challenges are dealt with in another article in the Bulletin.