

**Candidate For The Executive Committee : Entrada # 361****Name of Centre/Network:**

Assitej Croatia

**Name of Candidate:**

Leo Vukelic

**Presentation of candidate:**

As current president of Assitej Croatia, but also a longtime promoter and initiator of theatre for children and youth in Croatia, region and internationally, I was selected to enter the Executive Committee. General Assembly is to be held May 24th, 2017 in Cape Town, RSA, and I was pronounced a candidate by Croatian fraction of Assitej:

**Presentation of Self:**

Born 45 years ago in Croatia, I am professionally occupied by art and creation for the past 20 years. Studying at Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, I obtained the academic title of Master of Painting, and the additional educational specialization at Academy of Arts in Düsseldorf provided me the title of Master of Sculpture. Since the graduation(s), I am an active member of Croatian theatre scene until today. First, as a yearlong artistic manager of one children's theatre; then, as a producer in an umbrella organization for children's and young people's art in Croatia; and last, but not least, as the president of Assitej Croatia in the past three years. I was a part of numerous group exhibitions, but I also presented my artistic work in solo exhibitions. In addition to my organizational and management capacities in theatre, I built my profile also as a practitioner: as a production designer, playwright, and director of more institutional and independent theatre productions. Lately, I started to test my performing skills as a performer in theatre pieces in Croatia and region, one of which was a part of the most prestige theatre festival in the country, Dubrovnik Summer Festival.

En masse, for Leo is a total man of theatre, Croatian theatre owes him one special credit: bringing European Theatre Night to Croatia. By doing so, Leo indirectly established a national network, which gathers 11 European countries and more than 80 national theatres in one night.

**Statement:**

As the initiator of many events and development strategies regarding the arts in general, with an extensive, inner insight in theater for children and young people, I have developed the ability for structural understanding of theater, its reaches and its capabilities. The managing position in various institutions and organizations taught me how to recognize and accept all the delays, difficulties and blockades considering the sensitive matter of theatre. What I have learned from my past experience is, that equanimity, when working in pair with analytic mind, can make companionship between institutional demands, and individual wishes, dreams and talents, possible. As artist and theater practitioner, I know that passion, effort and care invested in the artistic process frequently encounter structural problems. With the dual perspective of both practitioner and organizer, I am at the same time representative of the institution, and representative of the artistic individual. This is my first priority in the running for the Executive Committee member of Assitej International.

On the national level, I am the president of Assitej Croatia, which locally and regionally promotes and cherishes the development of theatre for children and youth since 1996. Assitej Croatia gathers 25 institutions and 10 individuals – active, well-known, successful and rewarded – engaged in this kind of art, what gives me direct approach to what is happening on and behind the theatre scene in Croatia. But from one other point of view, Assitej has a sophisticated and elaborated mission to take care of smaller theatres in small local communities, and their little audiences. Such a careful, patient and analytical approach has its tangible results: Assitej Croatia is working hard and working good for the last 20 years by organizing annual gatherings and festivals inside the network. Assitej's constant activity is one of the reasons why theatre for children and youth

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in Croatia is progressive, organized and innovative.

Consequently, I try to keep up with trends and make theatre for children and youth in Croatia connected to its broader, international context. As the president of national Assitej, I insist on annual implementation of Next Generation program in Croatia, as well as on participation of Assitej's members in festivals, workshops and congresses around the globe. I believe that networking on international level is crucial in developing national theatre poetics, and makes them stay progressive, fresh and future oriented. In the world which takes so less care for education of its youngest inhabitants, in the same world where virtual media is progressing hard, and unnecessary facts are present anywhere and anytime, I strongly believe that taking care for theatre audience and educating its youngest members – spectators and critics – is international priority no. 1.

I am professionally familiar with the state of affairs in theatre for children and youth, and by working hardly and honestly, I want to improve and enrich it. Personally, I am 100% ready to invest my enthusiasm, calmness and effort in hard work and volunteering. Big amount of my daily obligations brings me nothing but personal, extraordinary satisfaction. By doing so, I always focus on the status of individual in the global context. The latest is a result of my empathic sensibility, energy and believe. Additionally, my affection for theatre for children and youth is not nominal, so I always try to keep up with happenings in the world of theatre in Croatia and abroad by visiting festivals and performances as much as time allows me.

As a candidate, I offer Executive Committee of Assitej International new energy and experience of one European, Mediterranean and Balkan theatre person. In return, I expect them to provide me new satisfaction, and new knowledges on theatre for children and youth in the global context.

Thank you for considering my candidacy.

Leo Vukelić