



THE WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION

## **WBF EXECUTIVE COUCL MEETING Veldhoven, October 2011**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Dear Jimmy, Dear José, Dear Bobby, Dear Friends,

Before going more deeply into our matters, I would like to remember with you the friends who have sadly passed away. From all these friends I am pleased to remember Maria Erhart, a great friend who died recently after a long and terrible illness. Maria was not only a friend, but she was also one of the greatest players who illustrated the bridge history. Her passing away will leave a great void in the bridge family, but also, I am convinced, a great memory.

One year has passed since our last meeting in Philadelphia, where I succeeded José at the presidency of the Federation. It has been a full year and I am pleased to report to you about the activities carried out since Philadelphia.

First of all, let me introduce a brief but proper preamble. We have to be aware that we are living one the most difficult moments for the economy. It is one of the most severe crises of the last century: a crisis that persists for long time, involving almost every sector and which provides a very heavy spin-off for the daily life.

It is impossible to think that this situation could not influence our discipline and our movement. It influences the organisation and development of our discipline starting from the clubs (which represent the flywheel of every sport movement) level; it influences the organisation of our events and its attendance; it influences the research for resources both internal and external in our world, making it ever more difficult every day.

The success of this event, that we are living in Veldhoven, which will probably give to us an economical profit, does not have to give us the impression of being immune. For this reason, in planning our future activity, we need to take care of the situation. We must not forget that, behind each corner, a surprise is always possible and we need to be able to face any difficult situation.

Many of the topic points concerning the activities undertaken and the programmes planned are specifically indicated in the Agenda and so we will examine and discuss them in depth: what we did and what we have to do.

But let me resume the activities undertaken through the various meetings, travels, visits and contacts.

On 25<sup>th</sup> October 2010 I went with Marc De Pauw to Lausanne for a meeting at Bank Paribas, to open the new account of the WBF, about which Marc will report later.

On 10<sup>th</sup> November, together with Paolo Clair, Secretary of the Youth Committee, I went to Opatija, Croatia to meet the local authorities, the President of the Croatian Federation, Jurica Caric, and the organizers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Youth Congress.

From 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November, I was in Izmir, Turkey, where I was invited to attend the meeting of the EBL Executive Committee and the Closing Ceremony of the European Champions Cup. This event in Europe has a tremendous success and contributes to showing and developing the image of bridge. I am thinking of trying also to introduce this sort of competition at world level, which could be very interesting for the Clubs' Teams and their sponsors.

From 24<sup>th</sup> November to 3<sup>rd</sup> December I was in Orlando, kindly hosted by the ACBL, on the occasion of the Fall Nationals. I had the occasion to meet the ACBL President Craig Robinson, the CEO Jay Baum, to whom I want to express my gratitude for their very warm and friendly welcome and hospitality. I met all our American and non-American friends too, who were in Orlando because of the Fall Nationals. In particular I had profitable talks with Ernesto, Al, Joan and Georgia. It was also an occasion to meet and to speak with many bridge players and bridge officers from USA and abroad: I have to say that I was really touched by the manifestations of friendship and esteem and for the sincere wishes that I received.

On 14<sup>th</sup> December I was in Brussels where I had a meeting with Marc De Pauw to examine the situation and to prepare the meeting that we had in Paris the day after with José Damiani to discuss the procedure of handing over of duties and commitments.

On 6<sup>th</sup> January 2011 I went to Veldhoven with Marc De Pauw to visit the venue of the World Championship and to meet the members of the Organizing Committee.

In the first two weeks of January we provided the transfer of the Milan Office into a new building, leaving the rooms that we had occupied in the Italian Federation.

On January 17<sup>th</sup> I was pleased to receive a visit in the new office in Milan from the President Emeritus Jimmy Ortiz-Patiño. I would like to take this occasion to thank Jimmy, who is always very close to us and his suggestions and advice are of great help.

On February 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> I attended the meeting of IMSA in Paris, hosted by José.

On 14<sup>th</sup> February, I left Milan for a visit to New Zealand and Australia where I was kindly invited by the respective boards.

With just the time to briefly visit my home and change my luggage: the day after I left Milan again to go to Louisville, to attend the meeting of the WBF Officers from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> March. You have in your folder the minutes of both the Louisville Officers meeting and the later Management Committee meeting in Poznan. I am pleased to have the occasion to thank again, on behalf of the WBF and personally, the ACBL President Craig Robinson for his very friendly welcome and generous hospitality.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March in Veldhoven with Marc De Pauw, I attended the meeting between the Local Organizing Committee and the WBF Technicians to examine and discuss all the details concerning the World Championship. After the meeting, we went to the High-tech University to meet the people who are working on the new system of reading the cards.

From 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> April I was in London to attend the SportAccord Convention, the General Assembly and the IMSA meeting. From

London, I flew to Brussels to meet with Marc de Pauw on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> April.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> May I went to Lausanne to have a look at the office in the Maison du Sport Internationale and to hold discussions with the representatives of Lausanne about the conditions of the rental.

On 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> May I was in Lucignano, Tuscany, invited by the EBL President, Yves Aubry, to report to the EBL Presidential Council.

From 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> May I was in Bali with Ernesto D'Orsi and Marc De Pauw to visit the venue and hotels and to sign the agreement for the 2013 World Bridge Championship. Esther Sophonpanich, President of the Zone, joined us and was very helpful. We received a very warm welcome and generous hospitality from the Indonesian Federation.

From 29<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June I was in Chennai, India, with Mazhar Jafri, on the occasion of the BFAME Championship, invited by the new President of the Indian Federation, Kirubakara Moorthy, and I attended the meeting of the BFAME Board. I take this occasion to thank again Kirubakara Moorthy for his very warm and generous hospitality, but above all for the excellent organisation of the Championship. As I have already reported to the Management Committee, during my stay in Chennai I visited the Bridge School at the Gymkana Club and I was really impressed by the number of youth pupils and by the teaching programme.

From 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> June I was in Asuncion, with Ernesto d'Orsi, on the occasion of the South American Championships and I attended the meeting of the board.

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June I again went to Lausanne to the MSI to sign the agreement for the office which started from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011.

From 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June in Poznan, Poland, on occasion of the European Open Championship, we had the meeting of the Management Committee, hosted by the European Bridge League and I am pleased to thank, once again, Yves Aubry for his friendly welcome and excellent hospitality. In Poznan we had also the meeting of the Technological Committee: Al Levy will report late.

From 13<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> July I was in Albena, Bulgaria, invited by Yves - I attended the EBL Youth Committee Meeting and the Girls Teams Prize-

Giving - and in Berlin, Germany, where with Marc De Pauw we had a meeting with the German Federation President, Uli Wenning, Josef Harsanyi and the local Authorities about the organisation of the 2014 World Series. This is a matter that we will examine and discuss in depth later.

On 1<sup>st</sup> August I was again with Marc in Veldhoven to check on the progress of the organisation with the members of the LOC.

From 19<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> August I was in Opatija, Croatia for the Youth Bridge Congress. The organisation of the event has been almost perfect, thanks to Ata Aydin, Paolo Clair, Secretary of the Youth Committee and the remarkable work made by the LOC, chaired by Goran Grguric and the Croatian federation, chaired by Jurica Caric, to whom our gratitude goes together with many congratulations. Unfortunately the attendance was lower than expected. We will discuss this point later, after the report from Ata, but now I want to present once again my thanks to the non-European Countries - Australia, Argentina & Uruguay, Japan, USA, Venezuela - who attended the event.

From 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> August I was in Beijing with Patrick Choy and Chen Zelan to attend the Hua Yuan Cup. It was a great occasion to meet the Chinese Authorities, Mrs. Chen Zhili, one of the most important members of the Chinese Parliament, the Mayor of Beijing, Mr. Guo Jinlong, the President of the Chinese Bridge Association, Mr. Xiang Huaincheng, and the President of the Beijing Bridge Association, Mr. Wan Siqian. I went several times to China, but once again I was impressed by the elegance of the welcome and the magnificence of the organisation. I am pleased to remark, once again, that bridge in China is a very important discipline, recognised and fully supported by the Government and with a very high role and position in the social relations. I want to congratulate our colleague and friend, Chen Zelan, Vice President of the Chinese Bridge Association, for the marvellous job they did and are doing. I want in addition to express my personal gratitude to Mrs. Lilian Sun for her outstanding assistance to me, during my stay in Beijing. I had the opportunity to speak with the Bridge authorities about the organisation in China of the 2012 Youth World Teams Championship and we will discuss this later.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> September, together with Marc, we had the last meeting with the LOC in Veldhoven.

On 24<sup>th</sup> September I was in Opatija to close the accounts of the Youth Championship.

On 6<sup>th</sup> October, I was in Lausanne with Marc de Pauw at the headquarters, where Carol has already started to work, and we met the representative of Delen Bank and then Maître Nicolas Gillard, the lawyer who follows all matters concerning our being in Lausanne. In the afternoon, together with Yves Aubry and Geert Magerman, we had a very fruitful meeting with the new FISU President, Claude-Louis Gallien and his co-operators. We will discuss all these points later, being specifically in Agenda.

In the office in Milan, the work – in addition to the definition of all the complications concerning the Lausanne Headquarters, the organisation of the championships in Opatija and Veldhoven, and all the other activities of the Federation, which involved and involve very important political and economic matters and arguments – has been continuing. I want to thank Federica Zorzoli who assisted me in the first six months of the year, leaving now the place to Marina who took the function of secretary since 1<sup>st</sup> August.

I have been in continuous contact with Marc De Pauw and in strict contact with Ernesto D’Orsi and Ata Aydin for the organisation of the championships, with Jeff Polisner and Georgia Heth for the legal matters, with John Wignall for the general WBF issues, Al Levy for the technological matters and Jens Auken for the WADA and anti-doping matters.

I was in contact by mail with many of you, practically daily with Carol and Anna to settle the various matters and I cleared the correspondence with all the people who contacted me for the many varied issues.

We surely get advantage from the e-mail and the other technologies, but surely we need to spend “paranormal” time and attention and we do not give any possibility to free ourselves from slavery of “real time”. Practically we are in permanent meetings to check, to study, to answer about all the “bridge knowledge”.

Let me just conclude that this first year has been full of activities and meetings and very fruitful.

We had two meetings – Officers and Management – with the attendance enlarged by the members of the Council who were present both in

Louisville and Poznan. I am pleased to submit for your ratification and approval the minutes of both of them. Now here in Veldhoven we are holding the third meeting, this time in plenary. I am convinced that this is the best way to manage and administrate our Federation.

I am pleased to take the occasion for thanking all of you for your co-operation, suggestions and support. And I want to thank Carol, Marina and Anna for their precious work done in favour of the WBF and our common intents.

Finally I want to express my gratitude to Jimmy and José, not forgetting Bobby, for their confidence, friendship and closeness to me, never refusing their advice and support.

Thank you for your attention

Gianarrigo Rona  
President