



WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION

International Sport Federation (IF) recognized by the International Olympic Committee

President's Report to the WBF Congress Lille, 2012

Mr. Jaime Ortiz-Patiño, WBF President Emeritus, Mr. José Damiani, WBF Chairman Emeritus, dear colleagues, dear Delegates, dear friends, good morning and welcome to Lille for the celebration of the WBF Congress.

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 particularly remember Ding Guangen, President of the WBF Congress, who died few days ago. Mr. Ding was a great personality who honored his Country and the entire bridge movement. His passing will leave a great void in the bridge family, but also, I am convinced, a great memory. May I ask you to please rise for a minute's silence in his memory.

Almost two years have passed since our Congress in Philadelphia, where I had the privilege and the honor to succeed José Damiani as President of the Federation and today, for the first time, I am here, in the position of WBF President, to report to you about the activities carried out since then.

First of all I want to express my gratitude to my predecessors Jimmy Ortiz-Patiño, Ernesto d'Orsi, Bobby Wolff and José Damiani for the exceptional job they did in building and developing this great Federation. I had the opportunity to work with them, to learn from them and, above all, to have their friendship. I hope to have been a good student and to be able to put into practice their valuable teaching, and I am grateful that they are still close to me and offer me their suggestions and support.

In my presentation to the Executive Council in Philadelphia I said, and I repeat here, that our primary objective should be to consolidate definitively the organizational structure of the Federation and its rules. Thus a solid and unshakeable structure can be built which permits us to plan calmly without worrying about the future; a structure capable of guaranteeing functioning and efficiency, irrespective of the officers at the helm: men pass but institutions remain, and this is more probable the more solid the institution's structure is.



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I believe that the WBF today needs modern, clear and precise By-Laws (Statutes), maintaining and consolidating, of course, our roots, principles and traditions, inspired by the most advanced associative criteria, the fundamental principles of the IOC, and especially by the inalienable criteria of transparency and democracy. The general principles of the By-Laws (Statutes) are therefore democracy, the certainty of the rules, the division of power, transparency and publicity. The Statutes must include the Institutional and Constitutional rules of the Federation. It is necessary to institute Systematic Regulations; that is, the Regulations for putting into effect the statutory rules which dictate the fundamental principles but not the procedures: Regulations, therefore, which provide not only the functioning procedures of the Executive Council and the various Committees, but also the procedures and administrative functions of the whole apparatus. This is necessary in order to have guidelines which will allow us to operate without problems and especially without needing to re-interpret every time and consequently require opinions and consultancy.

The Executive Council unanimously shared this program and we immediately started work.

The first step was to organize the work of the Executive Council and the Committees. We decided to continue the annual EC Meetings during the World Championships, and to have a meeting of the Presidential Council and the Management Committee in Spring and in Autumn respectively, hosted alternatively by the ACBL and the EBL, who both agreed to cooperate with us, giving us the opportunity to realize this program. The system works and is very successful, and I take the occasion to thank both the ACBL and EBL once again for their great help and support.

With respect to the structural organization, we agreed to put all our efforts into building and organizing of a true secretariat structure with all the services brought together in the headquarters in Lausanne, in common with the majority of the other International Sport Federations. In addition to any other political consideration, this is the best way to rationalize the work organization and the resources at our disposal, finally bringing together what used to be spread out in different places.

Now the office is alive with personnel operating. The office has been equipped with the necessary furnishings, we have our own telephone and internet lines and Carol von Linstow has been working there regularly since 1st July 2011.

At the same time, the Technological Commission started to work on restructuring the organization of our web-site and at the end of this year the project will be completed. From 1st January 2013 it will start to operate. It means that we will have our new self-governing web-site and the operator web-master will take his place in the Lausanne Office.

We have already obtained official recognition from the Canton de Vaud and the City of Lausanne and we can benefit from all the fiscal and administrative facilities (i.e. tax exemption).

With the help of our Swiss lawyer, we planned to fulfill all obligations concerning the documentation to submit to the Authorities, to be definitively incorporated in the Swiss Law. First of all the registration at the Chamber of Commerce in Lausanne as an

International Sports Body and then the notarization of our Constitution and By-Laws, to have finally an official recognized document to prove our legal existence beyond doubt.

From the point of view of the Laws and the Regulations, the Executive Council approved the Disciplinary Code, instituting the Disciplinary Commission, the Eligibility Code, the TDs Rules & Regulations, and instituting the WBF TDs Official Register. With our Lawyers in Lausanne we are studying a restructuring of our By-Laws, to introduce Statutes which reflect the above mentioned considerations, in perfect harmony with the principles of the Olympic Charter.

The organization of the Championships is one of the most important duties of our office. In 2011, we organized the World Youth Congress in Opatja, Croatia and the World Teams Championships, together with the World Transnational Open Teams, in Veldhoven, Netherlands. In 2012, we organized the Youth Teams Championship in Tai Cang, China.

All the events have been successful, and I am very pleased to express once again our gratitude to the Organizers and the Sponsor friends who enabled us to achieve this success.

The Youth Bridge Congress was held from 19th to 31st August 2011. The organization of the event was excellent, thanks to the Youth Committee, chaired by Ata Aydin and the remarkable work done by the LOC, chaired by Goran Grguric, and the Croatian Federation and its President Jurica Caric, to whom our gratitude goes together with many congratulations.

The 2011 Veldhoven Championship, sponsored by Bc' Oenstein and its Chairman Hans Melchers, met with tremendous success. It was organized in cooperation with the Dutch Federation following the criteria of the highest standards for the comfort of the players and was characterized by the latest technology and media broadcasting. For the first time in a World Championship, the Card Reader System was used, operating with cameras registering the bidding and play, thus capturing all the data and providing video-records of the entire match. I am very pleased to commend the perfect job done by our Dutch friends, led by Eric Laurant, Jos van der Mars and Armand Trippaers.

Just a few days ago in Tai Cang, we ran the World Youth Teams Championship. I can assure you that it was a truly great event, attended by 47 teams representing 23 NBOs, thanks the marvelous organization of the LOC and the CCBA. I want to express once again our gratitude to the President Xiang Huaicheng, the General Secretary Fan Guangsheng and our colleague Chen Zelan.

Despite the success of these events, we need 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 has persisted for a long time, involving almost every sector and which has had a very heavy effect on daily life.

It is impossible to believe that this situation would not influence our discipline and our movement. It influences the organization and development of our discipline starting at club level (which represents the grass roots of every sports movement); it influences the

organization of our events and the attendance; it influences the research for resources both internal and external in our world, making it ever more difficult each day.

In any case, the success of these events should not give us the impression that we are immune. For this reason, in planning our future activity, we need to pay particular attention to 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. The Championship that we are living here in Lille seems to confirm this.

One of the primary objectives of our activity is the development of Youth Bridge. We all have to be aware that Youth Bridge represents the sole guarantee of our future, the sole guarantee of the continuity and the existence itself of our discipline and our movement.

We are working to constitute a fund for the solidarity and development of Youth Bridge and we decided to organize three or four simultaneous events a year, starting next autumn, devolving the entire income to this project. In addition, the Technological Committee is studying the possibility to introduce regular internet tournaments, whose income will be entirely devolved to this project.

We believe that Internet today is the most important way to stimulate the Youth to approach bridge. We already have a fantastic internet bridge program both for teachers and pupil, very easy to find and to use, and we are reinforcing the activity of our Teaching Committee to improve it further

Our relations with the International Bodies, IOC, SportAccord and IMSA are excellent and we can reap great advantages in developing, improving and consolidating our movement by cooperating with them.

Starting from November 2010, I had the opportunity to visit practically all the Zones, many NBOs and several clubs. Everywhere I was warmly welcomed with friendship and I found passion, enthusiasm, professionalism and dedication everywhere I went, which showed that our movement is alive and has tremendous potential.

Before closing my report I want to express my thanks to my colleagues of the Executive Council and the Committees, to Anna, Carol, Marina and Maurizio who are my closest collaborators and practically assist and support me daily, armed with great patience, and last but not least to our fantastic Championship Staff: all of them have done and are still doing a very good job, enabling the WBF to realize its programs and achieve its objectives.

Finally I want to thank you, the Federations, for your friendship and cooperation. Let me say, once again, that if the WBF is able to achieve any result it is because of you, because you have to be aware that you are the WBF and we are at your service. You are the sophisticated car, we are simply the privileged drivers, hoping to be up to the task you assigned to us for this fantastic race.

Thank you dear friends and un abbraccio to you all.

Gianarrigo Rona, President, World Bridge Federation

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