



THE WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION

## **EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING Nusa Dua, Bali, September 2013**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Dear Friends,

Let me say, once again, that this year we very sadly lost two giants of our movement, Jimmy Ortiz Patiño and Joan Gerard and their memory will accompany us for the life.

I am pleased to give you a report about the activities undertaken since the Executive Council's last meeting in Lille and the status of the WBF.

First of all let me congratulate Alvin Levy on his re-election and Paul Janicki who, last November, was elected by the ACBL as a member of the WBF Executive Council. I am particularly pleased for Al and I am confident that Paul will waste no time in integrating himself into our team and will give us great support. I am pleased also to congratulate the new ACBL President, Bill Cook, who was elected in August by the ACBL, replacing Joan Gerard, after her sad death, up to the end of her term.

I take the occasion to express our gratitude and to thank, once again, George Retek who left the Executive Council after 23 years since his election in 1989.

After the meeting of the Officers in Lausanne, as a result of a postal ballot, we elected Georgia Heth as Honorary Secretary, which she accepted and I am pleased to officially congratulate Georgia, with my best wishes of good work.

The Management Committee in Milano provided the election of José Damiani, who accepted, as President Emeritus. The election was unanimously approved by a postal ballot of the Executive Committee. In his position of President Emeritus José withdrew from the title of Chairman Emeritus of the Executive Council. I am pleased and proud to officially congratulate José to whom goes the gratitude of the entire bridge movement for such amazing job he did and is still doing for the development of our discipline. Thank you José.

As discussed in Lille, after the sad death of Mr. Ding Guangen, and officially confirmed by the Officers at the meeting in Lausanne, the President appointed Mr. Zeng Peiyan as President of the Congress. On 8<sup>th</sup> December, together with Patrick Choy and Chen Zelan, I met Mr. Zeng Peiyan in a Ceremony organised by the CCBA in order to officially award him the title of President of the WBF Congress. The Chinese Ministry of Sport and President of the Chinese Olympic Committee, Liu Peng, the CCBA President Xiang Huaincheng and several other Authorities attended the Ceremony, which was widely reported by TV and media.

In San Francisco last November the ACBL elected President Donald Mamula to whom I sent a letter of congratulation on behalf of the WBF. Last August in Atlanta, Mamula resigned and Bill Cook was elected.

The major part of the activity from September to November 2012 was dedicated to summarising the results of Lille both technical and financial, to planning the organisation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SportAccord Mind Games and the preparation for the Lausanne's Officers meeting.

You have in your folder the minutes of the Officers meeting held in Lausanne from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> November, so I don't want to bore you, also because we have in the Agenda several points, examined in Lausanne, which will be later discussed again.

At the end of the Officers Meeting, the day after, still in Lausanne, I attended with Yves Aubry, the joint meeting of the Medical and Prevention Commission and TUE Antidoping Sub-Committee. We will discuss later this item, examining point 17 in Agenda.

With regard to Lille, the Treasurer will report to you about the final financial results. Ernesto has already reported in Lausanne and in Milano and you have copy of the report in your folder. For my part I want just to summarize what was reported and discussed in Lausanne and Milano. From the point of view of the venue, the technical organisation, the managing and the expectations of the players we have to be more than satisfied. From the aspect of the financial result and preliminary organisation we had to face a very bad situation, because of the responsibility of the IMSA's sponsor-partner which exhibited intolerable behaviour, and despite the various continuous promises, disappeared, obliging IMSA to face an unexpectedly dramatic situation. Only the personal good relationship of José Damiani with the Lille Authorities

enabled them to avoid a disaster and to organize the championship. We have really to be grateful to José.

We had already decided that if we did not have an assurance from IMSA about the venue and the organisational criteria of the 2016 Mind Sports World Games, we would arrange the organisation of our own World Games. Now, following the decision taken by IMSA in its meeting in St. Petersburg not to organize the Mind Sport Games in 2016, we will organise directly in 2016 our own World Bridge Games. We will discuss later this important item, examining the specific point in Agenda.

Concerning the 2<sup>nd</sup> SportAccord Mind Sports Games, on 11<sup>th</sup> September and on 31<sup>st</sup> October I was in Lausanne to meet the SportAccord Officials, to discuss the various items and to define the agreement. Being in Lausanne of course I spent some hours in our office examining with Carol many different issues concerning the administration and secretariat. From 8<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> December I was in Beijing with John Wignall, Alvin Levy, Marc De Pauw, Yves Aubry, all of us invited by the LOC and completely at their charge, to attend the event, about which we have a specific point in Agenda.

In Beijing I attended the meetings of IMSA with Marc De Pauw and a meeting called by Ms. Francoise Dagouret, the SportAccord Officer in charge for the liaison with WADA. I met Mr. Frank Ng, the owner of Ourgame, to discuss with him the proposal to organize, together with the CCBA, the World Series in 2014. We had the opportunity to enjoy two marvellous experiences, visiting the bridge students in a School and a University and, of course, I had the occasion to talk with the SportAccord President Hein Verbruggen and other Officers. We will discuss all these points later in more detail.

The preparation of Beijing practically occupied Marina full time; she was continuously in contact with the SportAccord officer in charge, the Chinese Travel Agent, the Hotel and the participating athletes to discuss and arrange all the details concerning the visa, the travel, the accommodation etc, having to face and define a lot of problems, due to the continuous changes, different requests and difficulties of contacts. It was really an exhausting job, but at the end everything went well, very well. I want officially to thank Marina for the work done with dedication and professionalism.

Between Lille and Lausanne I was:

- in Roma on 19<sup>th</sup> of September invited by the President of the Italian Republic to attend at Quirinale the Ceremony in honour of the Italian medallist in London and I met my good friend Mario Pescante, former Vice President, current member of the Executive Board of the IOC and IOC representative at the United Nations, speaking with him about the position of the Mind Sports Disciplines in the IOC in general and the 2016 World Games in Brazil
- in Opatija, Croatia on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of September together with the EBL President Yves Aubry, invited and very kindly hosted by the Mayor for a City Celebration. We met the President of the Croatian Federation, Jurica Caric and the President of the Opatija Association, Goran Grguric, and visited the new Sport Center that will be inaugurated next May. Our Croatian friends want to host a World and European bridge event there in the near future, and I am pleased to note that this has now been arranged and the European Teams Championships will be held there next summer
- in Montecarlo on 16<sup>th</sup> of October, invited by Jean-Charles Allavena for the Cavendish. José Damiani also attended the Opening Cocktail where I presented Pierre Zimmerman with the Certificate of World Grand Master (the title he achieved in Lille).
- in Destelbergen on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> to examine the accounts (in primis Lille) with Marc De Pauw
- in Rimini on 26<sup>th</sup> for the celebration of the Sport Day organised by the Italian Olympic Committee and then just two days later, the 30<sup>th</sup>, in Rome for the meeting of the CONI National Council, in my position as President of an International Sports Federation.

Since the Lausanne meeting the activity has been very intensive because in addition to the preparation for Beijing we had to take care of the various problems arising with the organisation of the Atlanta and Bali Championships. Concerning Atlanta (and of course Bali) we will discuss in depth later.

In San Francisco at the end of November I spent the entire period of my stay with Joan discussing and planning the organization of Atlanta. I met Paul Janicki, congratulating him for his election to the WBF Executive

Council and I had several meetings with Al about the activity of the Technological Committee, the status of the new web site. With Ernesto about the organization and the rules and regulations for Bali. With Georgia and successively with Nader Hanna about the position of Canada in the ACBL: this is a delicate point that I hope to be able to define in brief. With Kirubakara Moorthy, President of the Indian federation, about the candidature of Goa for the 2019 (and in case for the 2015 too) World Teams Championships and the organization of a Teaching seminar in India, With Eric Laurant about two projects that he will present later in this meeting. With Eric Kokish about the function and role of the High Level Players Commission and the plans for the future. With Radek about the candidature of Poznan for the 2014 World Series. With Jan van Cleeff about bridge broadcasting. With Chris Compton about fund raising and with Jeff Johnston about equipment, both for Atlanta. I also had the opportunity and the pleasure to meet a lot of friends and above all Bobby and Dan.

Just before San Francisco and Beijing I was in Eilat, Israel, from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November to attend the European Champions Cup. This is a short but great bridge event, attended by the best European athletes, which delivers and reinforces a strong image of bridge. I am pleased to congratulate the EBL and its President, our colleague and friend Yves Aubry, and the Israeli Federation for the success of the event

The 9<sup>th</sup> of January with José I attended the Funeral Ceremony of Jimmy in Sotogrande, representing the World Bridge Federation.

In the first two months of the year I was in close contact with Joan and Ata and our American friends for Atlanta and with Ernesto and Marc and our Indonesian friends for Bali, with the outstanding help from Anna and Maurizio for the preparation of the Supplemental Conditions and in particular with Anna for the various communications concerning also the WADA matters and the relations with the affiliated members.

Al periodically updated me about the progress of the work on the website and now I am more than pleased and proud to congratulate him and his team, because in a short time, overcoming several problems and difficulties, achieved the goal. What in the beginning of the legislature could seem a simple dream, today is a reality.

With Marc we were and are practically in daily contact and we spent two days (22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> February) in Milano examining the financial matters, before leaving together with Ernesto to Australia and Bali.

The last week of February and the first weeks of March were very intensive.

The 24<sup>th</sup> of February we flew to the Gold Coast where from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> we met the Australian Authorities and visited the venue for the 2017 Championship. The 1<sup>st</sup> of March we went to Bali to discuss the details of the organisation of the 2014 Championship coming back and arriving the 5<sup>th</sup> to Milano where from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> we had the meetings of the Management Committee, at the FIGB Headquarters. The 10<sup>th</sup> with Ernesto I flew to Paris for the Memorial Service for Jimmy Patiño. Many friends attended the ceremony, including Mazhar, Yves, Anna Maria, Jean-Claude and Carol. José gave the funeral oration. The 14<sup>th</sup> I flew to St. Louis with Maurizio Di Sacco for the meetings with the ACBL and USBF in preparation of Atlanta, coming finally back home on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

The 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of April I was in Lausanne for the Medical and Anti-doping Commission Meeting, attended also by Mme Françoise Dagouret, the SportAccord responsible for WADA matters. I had the occasion to work with Anna and Carol about administrative items, and with Carol I went to the Credit Swiss to open a Bank Account to enable Carol to provide to face the office expenses.

The 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> April I was invited by Yves to attend the meeting of the EBL Presidential Council.

The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of May I was with Marc and Sevinç in Antalya to meet the President of the Turkish Federation to discuss the candidature of Kusadasi for the 2015 World Teams Championship and the 12<sup>th</sup> in Istanbul with Sevinç and Ata Aydin I visited the Koç University which will host the 2014 World Youth Teams Championship. Concerning Kusadasi we signed a preliminary contract, but in June in Wroclaw we agreed with the Turkish Federation not to give effect to it. Being already committed the TBF in the Youth Championship organisation and not having the financial support of the Turkish Authorities it was impossible to finalize the agreement.

The 15<sup>th</sup> of May I was in Roma to attend the meeting of the CONI National Council and from Roma I went directly to Panama City to attend

the meeting of the CACBF. On this occasion I had the opportunity of an interview at the Radio and the occasion to meet the Governor of Panama City together with Sheena Rayner and the Panama Bridge Officers.

From 26<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> of May I was in St. Petersburg with Marc, to attend the General Assembly both of ARISF and SportAccord and the Meeting of IMSA. As you know José Damiani decided not to stand for re-election and the Fide President was elected as President, while Marc was elected Treasurer. But about these points we will come back later. In St. Petersburg I also attended the meeting for the 2013 SportAccord Mind Games.

The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of June I was in Hong Kong, invited by Esther to attend the meeting of APBF and I took the occasion to go the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> to Sanya together with Chen Zelan to visit the venue and the hotels for the 2014 World Bridge Series and to meet the CCBA Officers and the representative of the local Authorities and of Ourgame. The 10<sup>th</sup> in Hong Kong I met John who was there for the APBF Trials and then I flew to India.

In India I attended the meeting of the BFAME and the Prize-giving of the Zonal Trials in Ahmedabad and then I went to Goa, together with the President of the Indian Federation, Kirubakara Moorthy, to visit the venue and the hotels and to meet the local Authorities for the 2015 World Teams Championship. Mazhar organised everything but unfortunately could not attend being temporarily unable to travel.

From 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of June I was in Ostend, to attend the European Open Championship and on this occasion I participated in the Executive Committee meeting.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of July I was in Lyon with Marc and Jean-Claude invited by the French Federation President, Patrick Grenthe, after the presentation of its candidature to host the 2017 World Team Championship.

From 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> July I was in Wroclaw, on the occasion of the European Youth Teams Championship and I was invited to attend the meeting of the EBL Youth Committee.

Coming back from Wroclaw I was from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July in Beijing to attend the 23<sup>rd</sup> the BODA meeting for the 2013 SportAccord World Mind

Sport Games, attended also by Maurizio Di Sacco in his position of Technical Delegate. Then the 24<sup>th</sup> with Patrick and Chen Zelan there was the Ceremony of the signature of the contract concerning the organization of the World Series 2014 in Sanya.

From 31<sup>st</sup> July to 11<sup>th</sup> August I was in Atlanta for the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Open Youth Bridge Championship. We have a specific point in the Agenda about this event, but since now I want to express my gratitude and to thank Alvin Levy who, following the passing away of Joan, practically coordinated all the activity in USA. Without his amazing job and that of his colleagues the championship would not have materialized.

In this period we had to follow all the logistical problems concerning the organisation of Atlanta and Bali in addition to all the other aspects of our administrative activity.

Three years have passed since the beginning of the legislature and I believe that we can be quite satisfied with the activity undertaken and the results achieved. I am confident that at the end of 2014 we will realize all the projects that we decided for the quadriennium.

I want to express my gratitude to Anna, Carol, Fotis, Marina, Maurizio and all the marvellous members of the staff of our championships. All of them in their specific roles did an amazing job, permitting to us to achieve the expected results.

We are here “to serve” and I hope to have personally been up to the task that you assigned to me.

Thank you for your attention