



**WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION**

**WBF Congress  
Wroclaw, Poland, 8th September 2016**

**President's Report**

Mr. José Damiani, WBF President Emeritus, Mr. Mike Joyce, Sport Coordination Manager of the International Olympic Committee, Members of the WBF Honour Committee, Colleagues of the WBF Board, NBO Presidents and Delegates, distinguished Guests, dear Friends, good morning and welcome to the meeting of the WBF Congress.

First of all, I would like to thank Mark Joyce here today with us, representing the International Olympic Committee and its President Thomas Bach. It's for us a great privilege and we appreciate this gesture of sensibility of the IOC which gratify our entire movement, remarking our being part of the Olympic Family and make us proud of it.

I take the occasion to thank once again the Polish Bridge Union, its President Witold Stachnik and all our Polish friends for the remarkable preparation and organization of this event and for their very warm welcome and hospitality here in Wroclaw.

Before starting our work, I have sadly to remind you that the we all have suffered great losses with the suddenly passing of Patrick Jourdain, IBPA President and Goran Grguric, the deus of machina of the Croatian Bridge.

Both of them, were great friends, eminent and unforgettable personalities, extraordinary people who worked with enthusiasm, dedication and passion

for the development and affirmation of our discipline and whose memory, will accompany us and all their bridge friends everywhere in the world for the rest of our lives.

To these friends and all the others who sadly passed away, we pay tribute with gratitude and fondness.

Coming to our works, I am pleased to report:

### **Headquarters in Lausanne & WBF Organization**

At the meeting of the Congress in Sanya, I reported to you in detail about the organisation of the Headquarters in Lausanne and the plans of reorganization and reinforcement of our structure. Starting from the beginning of January 2015 , Simon Fellus assumed the function of Secretary, operating full time in Lausanne, while Carol Von Linstow left the Lausanne Office, continuing to be part of our family in her position of Secretary to the Council. The WBF has now two full time employees in Lausanne: Simon and Fotis Skoularikis (employed since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013), who provides the management of the website and IT services. Both of them provide their services to the European Bridge League as well and the related costs are shared by the WBF and EBL. The WBF maintained the Presidential Office in Milano, confirming the employment of Marina Madia, who provides the secretarial services to the presidency. From a legal point of view, after a very long and complex procedure, the WBF has finally been registered, at the Registre du Commerce of Lausanne, obtaining its official status required by the Swiss Laws. The plan to reach the next step, creating a complete centralized organization in Lausanne in order to further reinforce the structure and to improve the operational workings of the WBF is in progress.

### **Legal status, Constitution and Statutes, notarization**

In Sanya I have already reported that the legal status was the WBF was clearly defined: The World Bridge Federation, founded on August 18, 1958 in Oslo, recognised by the International Olympic Committee – IOC – as an

International Sport Federation, is a non-profit making organisation of a strictly civil nature, incorporated in the Swiss Laws and registered in the Commercial Register in accordance with art. 60 ff. of the Swiss Civil Code. The WBF is a recognised member of SportAccord – Association of International Sport Federations –, ARISF - Association of Recognised IOC International Sports Federations –, FISU - Federation International du Sport Universitaire – and IMSA – International Mind Sports Association –. In Sanya I have already reported that one of the topic issues concerned the notarization of our Constitution and the introduction of a modern Statutes and its Rule of Enforcement, not only in conformity with the Olympic Charter and the IOC Principles, but definitively respecting the fundamental principles of democracy, transparency and division of the powers. I will be pleased to illustrate to you the General Principles, discussed with our Lawyers that of course have to be defined also in detail before to be formally submitted to the approval of the Congress with the contextual notarization.

### **Information & Communication**

A second and no less important purpose was to restructure and renovate our system of communication and information. We decided to provide the restyling and the renovation, also under the point of view of the functionality, of our Website: in the next meetings, here in Wroclaw, the E. C. will assign the commitment to a supplier. We improved in our events the activity of daily films, interviews and a synthesis of the day. Since Chennai we launched the “Live News from the Championship” which has been very welcome and well received by our audience, enriching our communication system. We have improved our Facebook and Youtube presence. We provided in addition to realize electronical and papery tools to develop the image of bridge. We pay great attention to this aspect and we are continuously implementing this service.

### **Discipline**

As you can well imagine more than many hours of our time, especially in the first months of the year, have been dedicated and absorbed by the cheating affaire, with contacts, questions and answers, communicates, interviews, letters and so on

In any case let me once again repeat that what has to be clear and cannot be confused or misunderstood and cannot be object of any degraded speculation is that, as unfortunately for all the other sport organisations, we don't have and cannot have a magic wonder to eliminate the cancer of cheating, but being the administrators of the WBF our main duty is (because is an essential part of our purposes since our birth and not just because we immediately adopted the 2015 IOC Sport Integrity Declaration),

- to adopt, introduce and continuously update and improve the appropriate tools and rules to assure that the play in our competitions could be correct and fair and to introduce the appropriate rules, including every related sanction in case of breaking, to guarantee that who does not want to observe the rules and assume an unethical behaviour could be submitted to the organs of justice;
- to provide sentence guidelines for all the components of our structure and organization – Zonal Conferences and affiliated NBOs –, to control that they will introduce and strictly apply appropriate rules to guarantee the security in playing and the pursuit of any unethical behaviour, and to intervene and act in case of missing;
- to assure and recognize the absolute independence and autonomy of the Organ of Justice and respect and apply their decisions.

We approved an implementation of the Disciplinary Code, the Code of Ethic and the Guidelines for Unethical Behaviour. We defined new rules concerning the competence and jurisdiction to be included in our Constitution and that later today we will submit to your approval.

To guarantee the security we introduced and continuously implement new electronical tools which consent to register and broadcast on line all the data and the images related to a match.

## **Bridge Development**

In addition to the Youth Fund we instituted a Development Fund to support various activities in favour of the Zones and the NBOs.

We planned to organize every year in the various Zones, except Zone 1, Zone 2 and Zone 7 that already since many years ago provide by themselves, an Officers Seminar. We started this year, last May, with Zone 3 and the Seminar was very successful held in Medellin, Colombia, with the attendance of officers representing all the NBOs of South America. Next year the Seminar will be held in Zone 8, Africa.

Youth Bridge is our challenge and I have to say that I am very proud of the results that we are obtaining. Everywhere in the world the NBOs started to take care of the youth, to develop youth bridge also introducing and teaching bridge in the schools. Youth are our future and guarantee

Less than one month ago we lived in Salsomaggiore an exciting Youth World Championship attended by 67 qualified teams representing all the WBF Zones. A part any other consideration, what is marvelous is that in the Kids category 14 teams competed, doubling the number registered in Istanbul two years ago.

### **Sponsorships:**

We defined an important quadrennial sponsorship agreement with OurGame to organize the World Wide Bridge Contest.

We signed an agreement with a Company, chaired by Mrs. Lindsey Weinger finalized to the research of Sponsor and we hope to have the chance to achieve concrete result.

### **Institutional activity**

During the past two years I have visited several Zones and several NBOs, attending their championships and events. Everywhere I enjoyed my stay being gratified by marvelous welcome and generous hospitality. I had the

occasion to meet old and new friends and many of them are here today in this room. Of course I found several differences among the various countries, but everywhere and every time I met the same passion and enthusiasm and I was impressed by the dedication and professionalism showed in administration, promotion, development and management. And I was very happy discovering everywhere a great interest in youth.

## **Conclusion**

I believe that we have to be satisfied for the result achieved, despite the very difficult and dramatic historical period in which we are living and which of course influences our activity.

From the economical point of view (the Treasurer will show you the data) we may also be satisfied because the results shown reflect the good work undertaken in the administration and management .

All this has been possible thanks all my colleagues of the Executive Council, the members of the Committees, the extraordinary members of the Staff of our championship, and our marvelous employees and cooperators.

But I want to thank all of you, the representatives of the NBOs and of the Zonal Conferences, and express my gratitude not only for your remarkable work in your own countries, but for your confidence and for helping, supporting and stimulating me and my colleagues in friendship, always showing your co-operational spirit to achieve the common goal.

Thank you for your attention.

Gianarrigo Rona