



*"Bridge for Peace"*

## **Executive Council Meeting**

**13th – 19th August 2017**

**Lyon, France**

### **Agenda Point 3 President Report**

Dear Friends

Good afternoon and welcome to Lyon.

First of all, I believe that you all want to join me in expressing our warm congratulations to Marcelo Caracci, Sheena Rayner and Bernard Pascal on their re-election at the Presidency of respectively CSB, CACBF and ABF, being confirmed as member of the WBF Executive Council, to Chen Zelan who in the last Assembly, in April in Aarhus, has been elected by acclamation President of IMSA and to Marc De Pauw who at the same Assembly of IMSA has been by acclamation re-elected as Treasurer.

I am in addition very please to inform you, also if many of you are already aware of it and many of you have already met him, that the ACBL appointed its new CEO in the person of Mr. Bahar Gidwani. As soon as I was noticed, I forwarded to him a letter of congratulations on behalf of the WBF and then I met him in Toronto, having with him a very friendly and constructive interview.

Last but not least, congratulations to Simon Fellus, new husband, and his lovely wife Adriana.

We will have the opportunity during our meeting to examine and discuss the details of the organisation of the Championship that has been opened yesterday night at the Lyon City Hall, but since now I am pleased to thank and to express our gratitude to the Authorities of Lyon for hosting us and for the great support that they did to the organisation of the event, and to our friend Patrick Grenthe, President of the French Bridge Federation and to his colleague and co-operators for the excellent job by them done in the preparation of it. It was not for sure an easy task, including this event 3 main World Championships, the Open, Women and Seniors Teams, The Open Transnational Teams and the Open Youth Championship. In addition they provided the organisation of the French International, involving more than 2000 Club players and of a competition for school pupils attended by about 200 very young kids coming also from Europe and Asia to enjoy this three days meeting.

The activity done in the last twelve months after our meeting in Wroclaw was very intense, seamless, concerning the institutional commitments, the international relations, the organisation of the championships and the other participated events, the organisation of the WBF/ABF Seminar, the realisation and the launch of the new Website, the preparation of the online tournaments, the preparation and realisation of several initiatives concerning the Youth Bridge development, the finalisation and publications of the 2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge, the conclusion of important agreements and partnerships.

About all these items we have specific points in Agenda with reports and presentations, so we will examine in depth and discuss later.

I don't want to bore you, and above all the friends of the Management Committee, to whom I have already reported in our meetings, but I am pleased to report to you some details of the activity carried out since Wroclaw on.

From 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of September, I was in Beijing, with Marc, Simon and Marina for the final of the WBF/Ourgame World Wide Bridge Contest. We had the occasion to meet, together with Zelan, Zeng Peiyan our President of the Congress. I am pleased to underline, once again, the great attention reserved to bridge by the Chinese Authorities, which is the one of the main reasons of the development of the practice of our discipline and the fantastic job that the CCBA is doing with the school pupils and the youth in general. Of course we met the representatives of Ourgame, discussing about our agreement, the subsequent editions of the WWBC and our cooperation in future events, including the On Line Tournaments. About the OLT we had a meeting with the technician of Ourgame attended via Skype also by Mark Newton.

On 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October I was in Lausanne where we met together with David and Marc our Lawyers and then with Marc and Simon the representative of Nespresso, who is an official sponsor-supplier of SportAccord. With Simon I spent one day to discuss and define the various matters concerning the secretariat and the various activities, in particular the realisation of the new Website.

From 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> October I was with Simon in Dead Sea Amman for the Jordan Festival, kindly invited and hosted by the Jordan Bridge Federation and by Ghassam Ghanem and Bahjat Majali to whom I want to express my thanks and congratulations for the excellent organisation. We had a very profitable meeting with several officers of the Middle East and North African Countries attending the event, in particular with Bahjat I discussed about the situation of Zone 4 and the difficulty of connection and contact inside the Zone. Bahjat organized also a very profitable meeting with the new appointed Secretary General of the Jordan Olympic Committee, Nasser Majali. The relation between the JBF and the Olympic Committee that were already very good will for sure become better and better.

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of November I was in Torino for Yeh Cup, organised at the Lavazza headquarters. José will report about this event, but I want since now to congratulate him for this first online initiative, which reached a tremendous success and gave an invaluable acquaint to our discipline everywhere in the world. Personally I can say that in Italy all the newspapers reported and emphasised the event. Being in Torino I took the occasion to meet, together Simon, Matteo Baldi and the representatives of CPM Group who are providing the new WBF Website for a check of the project and the work in progress.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, with Simon, I met in Milano Gilad Ofir to discuss and define his function and role as Youth Development Coordinator and the planning of his activity to start in January 2017.

In the night I flew to Pescara where the day after, the 4<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Anna Maria Memorial Service where I was called by Jenny, the Anna Maria beloved granddaughter, who assisted her practically 24 hours a day through her illness, to give a speech. The Ceremony was very moving with a real astounding number of persons attending, to remark how Anna Maria was loved and admired. The WBF provided a wreath.

From 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November in Lausanne for the IFs Forum. *The Power of Sport to Drive World Health* was this year's programme theme and prof. Giovanni Capelli, member of our Medical Commission and WADA Liaison, by you well known, joined me. It was a very interesting seminar and Giovanni had the opportunity to make two very appreciated speeches. The Seminar, opened by the IOC President Thomas Bach and closed by the SportAccord President Patrick Bauman, has been presided by the SportAccord Convention President Francesco Ricci Bitti. In this occasion I met, together with Marc, Geoffrey Borg and Harry Otten from IMSA, discussing about various items concerning the general situation and the organisation of 2017 IMSA Elite Games. All together then we attended a meeting with the representatives of SportAccord to discuss in particular their intention to reinstate the SportAccord World Mind Games, suspended after the fourth edition in 2014. Being in Lausanne I had also the opportunity to meet, together with Simon, Geert Magerman and Julien Carrel, FISU representative, to examine and discuss our relations and to define the strategy for 2017 about which Simon will report later.

From 25<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> I was in Orlando where I met and congratulated Bob Haller, the new elected President of the ACBL and I met Robert Hartman and Howie, Merlin (congratulating him for his re-election) and Paul. With Al, Marc, David, Maurizio and Simon we had a profitable meeting where we discussed in depth the details of the organisation of Orlando 2018 and then all together we visited the Marriott Hotel, the venue of the event, accompanied by the Marriott manager with whom we discussed various issues. With Al discussed also about the Robot Online Tournaments and the organisation of the project. We had the occasion to meet Nader Hanna talking with him about the possible organisation in Canada of the World Bridge Games 2020. With Nader we discussed also about the problematic of Zone 2 and the position of the Canadian Federation. We met Lindsey Weinger who reported us about her activity in sponsorship. I also attended the meeting of the USBF board.

The 7<sup>th</sup> December in Lausanne I met Josef Harsanyi, Chairman of the WBF TDs Committee for a check of the activity done in 2016, to examine and discuss the retirement of Max Bavin, the list of the TDs for the Lyon Championship, the new appointments in the Official TDs Register and the proposal, to submit to the Management Committee, of upgrading the TDs list.

The 19<sup>th</sup> I was in Roma to attend at the CONI Headquarters the Ceremony of Prize-giving of the Italian Athletes World and Olympic Champions in 2016 with the delivery of the "Collare d'Oro" by the Ministry of Sport Luca Lotti. This year a Special award has been presented to the former President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, who was very supportive to sport and athletes during his presidency and to Francesco Ricci Bitti, President of the ASOIF and SportAccord Convention. The Ceremony has been

broadcasted on live by the National TV. In the afternoon at San Pietro I attended the annual "Messa degli Sportivi" with the special blessing from Pope Francesco. The day after I attended, in my position of President of International Federation, the meeting of the Board of the Italian National Olympic Committee.

The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> I was in Lyon with Marc to meet the French Federation and the LOC Representatives for a check of the situation and the progress of the works concerning the organisation of the World Championship.

On January 20<sup>th</sup> Simon, going to Torino for a meeting with CSB, stopped for half a day in Milano, reporting to me about the progress of the works and in addition we focused many items, concerning secretariat, communication, organisation and in general the various aspects of our activity.

On February 7<sup>th</sup> Frankie Frontaura, the factotum of the Cuban bridge, operating in strict connection with Enma Castro, visited me in Milano. We talked about many items, including some initiative that he want to propose for development of bridge in Central America, and in particular about the official recognition of bridge and consequently of the Cuban Bridge Federation (existing but practically frozen) by the Authorities. The occasion could be finally the organisation in Cuba by the University of Camagüey of the "*Conferencia Internacional de Deportes Mentales*" (International Mind Sport Conference), which includes bridge.

February 20<sup>th</sup> in Lausanne with David, Marc and Yves I met Ross Wenzel, our Swiss Lawyer about the letter sent to us by the Italian Federation, the Credential Committee function & power and the new eligibility rule, concerning the convicted cheaters introduced by the BY Laws. We talked also about other items.

On 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March in Kansas City the Meeting of the Officers and an extraordinary session of the Management Committee was held.

On 13<sup>th</sup> March, still in Kansas City, being invited by the President Marty Fleisher, I attended the meeting of USBF together with Yves Aubry, David Harris and Simon Fellus, while Al Levy was connected via Skype. The meeting was attended inter alia by the ACBL President Bob Heller, the CEO Robert Hartman, Howie Weinstein, Merlin Vilhaver and Nader Hanna from Canada. The main point in discussion concerned the ACBL motion regarding funding for WBF dues and the appointment of the representatives to the WBF Executive Council. I briefly reported about the history of formation of USBF, CBF & MBF to comply with Olympic requirement that there be a separate NBO for each country and about the works in progress to define the structure of Zone 2 and the relations with the ACBL. In summary it was decided that, between Kansas City and Toronto, representatives of ACBL, USBF, CBF & MBF will come up with a plan to deal with funding for dues and teams, choice of WBF representatives, and formal structure. We will come back to the item discussing the specific point in Agenda.

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March, coming back from Kansas City, I was in Lausanne to attend the Medical Commission Meeting that was attended also by Yves and by the SportAccord Representative, in charge for WADA matters, Mr. Matteo Vallini.

On Saturday 1st April, being Bernard Pascal in Milano for family commitments, I met him discussing about the organisation of the Seminar to be held in Cape Town in May.

From 2nd to 6th April I was in Aarhus, Denmark, together with Marc and Simon to attend the SportAccord Convention. Several very important events and meetings were organised in this week and all the matter will be examined discussing the specific points in Agenda.

The 20th April I was in Torun, Poland, kindly invited by Marek Malysa, to attend the Conference organised by the Copernicus University in cooperation with the EBL on the "Recreational Activity and Joy in Senior's Life". Marek will report to you later about this initiative and other connected very interesting projects.

From 3rd to 5th May the WBF/ABF Seminar was held in Cape Town, South Africa. The Seminar was very successful and appreciated by the participants who expressed their agreement thanking the WBF for the initiative.

From 23rd to 26th I was in Beijing and Su Zhou: in Beijing I met Chen Zelan and Patrick and then James Guan from Ourgames discussing the details of the WWBC organisation; in Su Zhou there was the Signing Ceremony of the 2018 World Youth Championship and I met the local Authorities and Organizers and I visited the venue and the hotels.

In April and May, being kindly invited and generously hosted, I visited the BFAME in Dubai, the ABF in Cape Town, the CSB in Santiago and the APBF in Seoul, attending their respective General Assemblies and Zonal Championships. We will come back later to these events with specific reports, but since now I want to remark the impressive and very successful organisation of all of them, to thank the Organisers for the opportunity that they gave to me, inviting me to attend and I want (and I am very pleased) to congratulate Mazhar and Azwer Haque for Zone 4, Bernard and Helen Kruger for Zone 8, Marcelo, Eduardo Rosen and Roberto Garcia for Zone 3, Esther and Hong Sup Hahn for Zone 6.

On June the 14th, kindly invited, by Yves Aubry, I attended a session of the EBL Executive Council Meeting, reporting about the WBF activity. The 18th many of us attended the Ceremony of the 70th Anniversary of the European Bridge League and I was very pleased to award to the EBL with the WBF Plaque. The 19th we had two sessions of the Management Committee Meeting. In Montecatini, with Simon, but let me Gilad, Micke Melander and Fernando Lema we discussed several topics concerning the Youth and in particular the realization of two very stimulating projects. The first concern the Youth Mini Site and the second a new very interesting way of teaching bridge. We will have the presentation of both of them.

Youth bridge and its development represents one of our main challenges. We will discuss later about the youth matters, but let me since now report some considerations. I believe that we are doing a marvelous job - continuously implemented with new projects and initiatives - with the youth and in particular with the kids, having been able to convince our NBOs to take care of its development and to start to teach bridge in the schools. We introduced the kids, as a specific competition category in 2012 and today the kids are an impressive reality. The Youth Championship today are at the same level of the main championships. This year in Lyon we have the participation of 69 teams (26 kids) and 198 pairs (76 kids). It's amazing. Next year in the World Youth Teams Championship we will have about 80 official National teams participating. A part Zone 1 and Zone 2 where since

many years the youth competitions and trials are organised, today we have youth trial salso in Zone 3, Zone 6 and Zone 7. It means, it proves that the work pays.

The 23rd of June I was in Lausanne being invited by President Bach to attend the Ceremony of the Olympic Day. Bridge is a true sport, the Olympic movement is our family, the Olympic Charter is the “summa” of our governing principles.

In the beginning of July, kindly invited by the the Israeli Bridge Federation, I was in Tel Aviv to attend the Anniversary of the IBF. The 18th of July I attended in Roma the meeting of the CONI National Committee.

From 21st to 25th July I was in Toronto, in occasion of the Summer National. AS I already reported I met Bahar Gidwani and the ACBL President Bob Heller, I met of course Georgia, Al, Howie, Merlin and Paul. I had the occasion to meet Lindsey and to attend with her the projection of a very interesting bridge documentary realized by John McCallaster, who started his work with the Youth World Championship in 2012 in Taicang. Probably we will have here in Lyon a presentation of the documentary and Lindsey is working about this point, I attended the Ceremony in memory of Michael Seamon, organised by Janice and on Monday the 24th I attended the Meeting of the USBF, attended also by Al, Yves, Howie, Merlin and Josef.

As you can well imagine the lasth three month, in addition to the various initiatives in progress and to all the other aspects of our administrative activity, we had to follow all problematics concerning the organisation of Lyon. Anna, Fotis, Marina and Anna have been under pressure. Marina was practically occupied full time; she was continuously in contact with the French Federation, the Organising Committee, the Hotels 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 and I want officially to thank Marina for her dedication and for the excellent work done.

Almost three years have passed since the beginning of the legislature and I believe that we can be satisfied with the activity undertaken and the results achieved. We have to be proud to have reached one year before the end of the legislature, one of our main objectives: the consolidation of our structure and economical position, about which the Treasurer will report later.

Another very important project, the WBF Online Tournaments, which can open a new window in our organisation, bringing great benefits, has been finalised and will be launched at the beginning of September. We will later discuss in depth the matter, but since now I want to express my gratitude to Al and his group for the excellent job done.

I am confident that at the end of 2014 we will entirely realize all the projects that we decided for the quadriennium and since now we can start to introduce new ones. At the end of this year we will close the office in Milano, concentrating all forces and resources on the Headquarters in Lausanne.

As I already said in Kansas City, with all the cautions of the case and keeping both feet on the ground, the current situation consents us to look with confidence towards the next future organisation and management of our institutional activity.

As we all know, our aim is not to make money, to deliver dividends or to increase our fortune for another's benefit, but to invest and deliver our income both to the organisation and management of our institutional activity - including the adoption of professional competences in the field of communications - and to services to our affiliated members. At the same time we are and have to be aware that every project or program can be realized step by step, brick by brick, only having the adequate resources and according to its sustainability.

Nevertheless our objective must also be to maintain sufficient capital to ensure the financial stability and viability and provide for the administration of our activities at least for the following legislature.

I want to thank all of you and express my gratitude to Anna, Carol, Fotis, Marina, Maurizio, Simon and all the marvellous members of the staff of our championships. You and they, each in his specific role did an amazing job, consenting 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.

## Institutional

### Programs

Every program can be realized step by step, brick by brick to reach the goal in the fixed period

- Consolidation of our structure and financial position
- Youth development
- Updating of the organisation of our events
- Technology
- Relations with Zones and NBOs
- Sponsorship