



THE WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION

**MINUTES OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> MEETING  
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**Chennai, India**

**Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at 14:30**

**In Attendance**

Mr Gianarrigo Rona, President in the Chair  
Mr José Damiani, President Emeritus  
Mr John Wignall, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Mr Al Levy, Executive Vice President  
Mr Yves Aubry, Vice President  
Mr Patrick Choy, Vice President  
Mr Radoslaw Kielbasinski, Member  
Mr Mazhar Jafri, Vice President  
Mr Marc De Pauw, Treasurer  
Ms Georgia Heth, Hon. Secretary  
Mrs Sevinç Atay, Member  
Mr Marcelo Caracci, Member  
Ms Chen Zelan, Member  
Mr Josef Harsanyi, Member  
Mr Paul Janicki, Member  
Mr Bernard Pascal, Member  
Mrs Sheena Rayner, Member  
Mr Merlin Vilhauer, Member  
Mr Howard Weinstein, Member  
Mr David Harris, General Counsel  
Mr Simon Fellus, WBF Secretary  
Mrs. Carol Von Linstow, Secretary to the Council

**Excused**

Mrs Janice Seamon-Molson, Member

**Invited**

Mr Philippe Cronier, HLPC Member  
Mr Robert Hartman, CEO of ACBL  
Mrs Esther Sophonpanich, President Zone 6  
Mrs Suzi Subeck, President Zone 2  
Ms Lilian Sun, CCBA Secretary

The President called the meeting to order at 14:30. He declared that there was a quorum, and the meeting proceeded as follows.

The President welcomed Mr Robert Harman, CEO of ACBL, to the meeting and thanked him and Mrs Suzi Subeck for their kind invitation to a reception this evening.

**1. Approval of the Minutes from Sanya – agenda item 4**

These were approved unanimously.

## **2. Membership – agenda item 7**

Antigua, Dominica Bridge Association and French Guyana, as well as the Nigerian Bridge Federation, Timor Leste and the UAE, have applied for membership. This was unanimously approved retroactively from the moment they sent their dues.

Mongolia, Saudi Arabia and Montenegro have been suspended from active membership of the WBF and this was approved unanimously.

The President informed that Albania has been suspended by its National Olympic Committee and it was decided to delegate the General Counsel to investigate in depth the situation and then to report to the Council for any subsequent decision.

It was unanimously approved to update the official register of the Memberships.

## **3. 2015 Officers & Management Committee Meetings – agenda item 8.**

The minutes of the Officers Meeting held in New Orleans in March 2015 and of the Management Committee Meeting held in Lucignano in June 2015, annexed as Exhibit 3.1 and 3.2, were ratified.

## **4. Lausanne headquarters and organization of the office – agenda item 9**

The Treasurer reported that there were no real changes except that the WBF has now taken over the office that was previously shared with IMSA. Both Fotis Skoularikis and Simon Fellus were now working there, Carol von Linstow having left the office at the end of 2014.

## **5. Final considerations about the 14<sup>th</sup> World Bridge Series, Sanya (October 2014) and proposed changes in format for the future editions – agenda item 10**

The President reported as per following: *“The Treasurer has already reported on the good financial result of the event and now I am pleased to summarize the result from the point of view of the organisation and management. As you know the Championship was organised in cooperation with the Chinese Contract Bridge League and Ourgame, with the sponsorship of Red Bull. Attendance The attendance was much lower than expected. If you look at the numbers reported by the treasurer the participation of representatives coming from outside China was as anticipated within the budget. However, the participation of the Chinese representatives was not satisfactory and heavily under the budget considering the numbers initially given us by the LOC and not fulfilled. If you check the statistics for this event, you can see that Sanya shows the lowest numbers in the history of the World Bridge Series. You can also see that year after year the numbers of participating our open events are decreasing. The financial crisis and the continuing increase in costs everywhere in the world together with the general political situation and happenings in different areas have revolutionized the habit and life-styles of our potential participants and this has a direct impact on our events.. People are afraid to move, to travel, to undertake long journeys to foreign countries. In conclusion we have to forget, in my*

opinion, the massive participation that we registered in the past in our open events. We have to consider organising these type of events in countries that are easily accessible, seen as politically stable and which can potentially offer a good local attendance. Management Having two different locations for the playing areas, MGM and Sheraton, we had to increase both the equipment and the personnel but from the point of view of the running the championship we were prepared and, since the two venues were so close to each other, we did not have any particular problems. Nevertheless we had some difficulty concerning the time schedule for the various events in the second week, due mainly to the big difference among the numbers of the participants in Open, Women and Seniors, necessitating different formats. In addition we were constrained by the TV broadcasting, according to the rental of the satellite that of course was fixed and could not be changed. What created many problems to our organisation was the internet connection, due mainly to the restrictions imposed by the Chinese Government in this matter, but also due to a very slow connection, which meant a great deal of extra work our operators. Thanks to them, *Fotis in primis*, the circulation and delivery of data on site in general did not suffer, but the outside communication, including the broadcasting of the matches via internet, was often impossible or, at best, extremely slow. Looking at the future, this is, I believe, an aspect that cannot be undervalued and must be examined with care when selecting a venue for any Championship. Broadcasting The CCBA and LOC provided an excellent service of broadcasting of the event through the Chinese National TV Channel and via satellite worldwide. The internet broadcasting was undertaken by both Ourgame and BBO. And if we did not doubt the BBO service, we have to say that also the service given by Ourgame was also very good: of course their software has to be improved, but the general features are excellent and bode well for future events. The only problem was, as I said above, the restriction of the internet service in China. Communication, Image & Publicity Ourgame and Red Bull did an excellent job in the realization of the Championship Website, in the layout of the venues, in the publicity and delivery of the image of the event through the media, in the provision of gifts and prizes. Concerning the communication from our own part, I have to say the Communication Section, with Anna, Simon, Mario, Alex, Fernando, Virginia and Francesca, did an excellent job, daily publishing information, pictures, interviews and film on our web and on Facebook. You have in your folder a CD containing what was published. Ceremonies and Social Events The Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the Journalist Outing and the Staff Dinner were very well organised, creating a wonderful atmosphere and were much appreciated by the participants. In particular I want to underline the success of the Closing Ceremony which, according to the guests, was one of the best in the history of the championship. Format In Sanya we changed the format of the event, splitting it in two parts: mixed first week and open, women and seniors in the second. In general the idea was appreciated, but it meant sacrificing some of the technical aspects of the Rosenblum Teams which caused some criticism. We discussed this point in Sanya, at the end, with Ernesto and, taking into account the suggestions of some athletes, we agreed that we could solve the problem by reducing the mixed competitions to five/six days and so giving more space to the Rosenblum adding another day of qualification and staging the KO as at least 48 board matches. Conclusion In conclusion, in my opinion, of course not forgetting the negative circumstances already mentioned, in general we have to be quite satisfied with the result of the championship in Sanya and I am pleased to thank the CCBA, Ourgame and the LOC for their great support, but I want to underline the excellent job did by

*our marvelous championship staff, led by Maurizio Di Sacco, who as always worked with their usual dedication, professionalism and enthusiasm, to achieve once again our goal.”*

The EC thanked the President and unanimously approved his report.

#### **6. 42<sup>nd</sup> World Teams Championship, Chennai, 26<sup>th</sup> September – 10<sup>th</sup> October 2015 – agenda item 11**

The President expressed, on behalf of the WBF, their appreciation to the Indian Bridge Federation and its President NRK Moorthy for organizing this event. The preparation and the organization by the LOC was really up to the task and the Championship start with an exceptional Opening Ceremony.

The EC shared unanimously the appreciation of the President and thanked and congratulated the Indian Federation, remarking the ideal conditions of comfort of the venue (including the playing area and the services) and the first class standard of the Hotel Accommodation.

The President informed that it was introduced an updated sophisticated system of online broadcasting and recording of the matches, managed by Traian Chira. Concerning the security, a control with an electronically devise has been introduced.

A new Live News from the Championship has been introduced, being still produced the printed version of the Daily Bulletin and for the first time the Press Conference (as already reported) and the Opening Ceremony have been broadcasted on line via streaming, as well it will be done for the final Press Conference and the Prize-Giving and Closing Ceremony. A live webcam will cover and broadcast continuatively the common spaces of the venue, so the spectators at home can follow in real time what happens.

#### **7. German Case – agenda item 13**

Mr David Harris, General Counsel, reported in detail on the action brought against the German Bridge Federation (DBV) by Elinescu/Wladow in the German courts to which the WBF has been joined. German lawyers have been appointed to represent the WBF. A preliminary hearing was held on 7<sup>th</sup> May and the Court has requested further information, particularly with regard to anti-trust issues. There original suggestion was that the parties attempt to reach a mutual settlement out of court. The Swiss and German lawyers advised the WBF to obtain a report from Prof. Reimer and this was done. The case is proceeding.

The Executive Council unanimously adopted the report of Mr.Harris.

#### **8. Insurance Coverage – agenda item 16**

Mr De Pauw reported briefly on the insurance coverage that had been reviewed recently and new insurance taken out with JLT that includes travel insurance. This latter covers all members of the Executive Council, spouses and partners, as well as all the staff. A special travel insurance waiver has been taken out to cover persons over the age of 75. This would normally become effective on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. However, Mr De Pauw suggested that it might be wise to start this

immediately even if it means paying for two policies until the original one ends. Ms Heth seconded this. Mr Harsanyi congratulated Mr De Pauw on his work on these contracts.

The meeting unanimously approved and agreed to give the mandate to the President to sign the new contracts not waiting for the expiring of the first insurance.

#### **9. Bermuda Bowl, Venice Cup & d'Orsi Trophy Qualifications & Participation Quota – agenda item 19**

Following the report of the President concerning the attendance of the affiliated NBOs at the qualification trials, the Executive Council, with the abstention of Marcelo Caracci, approved that if the trials held by Zones 3, 4 and 8 are not attended by at least 50% plus one of the NBOs then the Zone would lose one berth. That extra berths will go first to Europe (up to two) and then to Zone 6.

The EC reconfirmed unanimously the principle that “ No pay, no play”. If an NBO is not in good financial standing, referring both to the membership dues and the championship entry fees, then it should not be allowed to play in any stage of the WBF Championships, including the trials.

#### **10. Agreement between BBO and Ourgame – agenda item 21**

Mr Damiani reported that Ourgame signed an agreement with BBO for the use of the software to play bridge online and informed that Mr. Frank Ng, the CEO of Ourgame, will be introduced to the EC members on the meeting to be held on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September. On-line bridge will be available to play in China later this year in conjunction with BBO.

The President remarked that this agreement is very important also for the WBF, both for the starting of the project of the online bridge championship and the broadcasting via internet of the matches of the WBF championships.

#### **11. 2016 Promotion Week in South America – agenda item 24**

The President reported on his proposal to organize a Promotional Week in Zones 3, 4, 5 and 8 – the WBF would provide the format of the event, the needed documentations and the speakers, covering the travel expenses and the fees, while the Zones would provide the accommodation and hospitality. The first one is planned for the Confederation Sudamericana de Bridge (CSB) and will be held in Medellin, Colombia, in May 2016. The President and the Treasurer will define all the details with the CSB President Marcelo Caracci. The cost at charge of the WBF will be covered by the newly instituted “Development Fund”

The EC unanimously approved.

#### **12. Bridge Proposal from WCB – agenda item 23**

The Treasurer gave a short update of the proposal from WCB, a Dutch company, to organize an event with all NBOs invited to play on-line. The final would be played at a venue of choice. This would be focussed on younger players under the age of 40 years.

The initiative is in progress and we are waiting to be updated by WBC about the status of the works.

### **13. 2016 WBF Meetings**

In 2016 the meeting of the Officers will be held from 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> March 6, in Reno, USA, kindly hosted by the ACBL; the Management Committee from 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> June in Budapest, Hungary, kindly hosted by the EBL; and the Executive Council Meetings from 4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> September in Wroclaw, Poland, in occasion of the World Bridge Games.

The meeting was adjourned 17:30 to be reconvened on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September at 14:30.