



**MINUTES OF THE 4th MEETING
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Wuhan, China
Wednesday, 18th September at 10:00**

In Attendance

Mr Gianarrigo Rona, President in the Chair
Mr José Damiani, President Emeritus
Mr Al Levy, 1st Vice President
Mr Patrick Choy, 2nd Vice President
Mr Marc De Pauw, Treasurer
Mr David Harris, General Counsel
Mr Giorgio Duboin, Member
Mr Nader Hanna, Member
Mr Jan Kamras, Member
Mr Eric Laurant, Member
Mr Eitan Levy, Member
Mrs Kari-Anne Opsal, Member
Mr Bernard Pascal, Member
Mr Douglas (Kip) Rotchell, Member
Mrs Esther Sophonpanich, Member
Mrs Suzi Subeck, Member
Mr Ben Thompson, Member
Mr Adam Wildavsky, Member

Also in Attendance

Mr David Harris, General Counsel
Mr Simon Fellus, WBF Secretary
Ms Arianna Testa, Secretary to the Executive Council

By invitation of the President

Mr Panos Gerontopoulos, Honour Committee Member
Mrs Georgia Heth, Honour Committee Member
Mr Mazhar Jafri, Honour Committee Member
Mr John Wignall, Honour Committee Member

Excused

Mr Marcelo Caracci, Member
Mr Kirubakara Moorthy, Member
Mrs Janice Seamon-Molson, Member

The President called the meeting to order at 10:00. He declared that there was a quorum, and the meeting proceeded as follows.

1. International events and relations with international organizations (agenda item #10)

a. IMSA agenda item #10.2

Mr De Pauw presented the following report:

The present memo brings an update on IMSA matters, following the informal meeting in Gold Coast, Australia (the venue for the 2019 SportAccord Convention – May '19) and the IMSA Executive Board Meeting on May 14, 2019, during the first edition of the IMSA World Masters in Hengshui, China.

1. Organisation

1.1. **IMSA Membership**

No change in the membership situation has been decided upon. At present, IMSA consists of 7 full members, of which the 5 founding members (Chess, Bridge, Draughts, Go and Xiangqi) and 2 recently added members (Mahjong and the Federation of Card Games - FCG).

*The **FCG** organizes competitions for various formats of card games. The most successful are: Gin Rummy (400 mio of players, mainly in China, India and Malaysia), 2 against 1 (300 mio) and Guandan (200 mio). For more information see: www.fcgworld.org. The FCG has strong partnerships with the Alibaba Group and with AGtech (with whom IMSA has an agreement for its funding).*

Several other International Federations are knocking at the IMSA door to obtain membership:

- *The **International Federation of Poker (IFP)** has been asking for recognition by GAIFS (the status of "observer" has been granted in 2018) and for membership of IMSA for several years now. No new developments in these processes have been signalled at the meetings.*
- *Under the impulse of its new (South African) President, the **E Sports** are striving for international development and integration in the Sports Organisations, of which IMSA. During the past year, the IOC (via GAIFS) has been examining the way forward in view of a possible participation of the E*

Sports in the forthcoming Olympic competitions (in particular, the 2022 Asian Games and the 2024 Paris Games).

1.2. IMSA Advisory Board

Regarding the direction of the IMSA Advisory Board it was decided that future actions should include the promotion of IMSA branding, marketing and sponsorship, helping to develop training and social programmes, and possibly set up a foundation. Inviting top class people to be part of the Board, helping to attract financial resources, remains a target to be fulfilled. For this purpose, on the proposal of the IMSA President, the FIDE President Mr Arkadiy Dvorkovich has been appointed Chairman of the IMSA Advisory Board.

1.3. Finances

The accounts 2018 and the budget 2019 have been approved by the Board.

The end of 2018 Balance sheet looks as follows (figures in €):

	2018		2017
<u>ASSETS</u>			
<i>Fixed assets</i>	<i>0</i>		<i>0</i>
<i>Receivables</i>	<i>2.000</i>		<i>54.000</i>
<i>Cash & Banks</i>	<i>364.680</i>		<i>250.147</i>
<i>Prepaid expenses</i>	<i>5.900</i>		
<i>Total assets</i>	<i>372.580</i>		<i>304.147</i>
<u>LIABILITIES & EQUITY</u>			
<i>Capital</i>	<i>344.534</i>		<i>220.886</i>
<i>Beginning of the year</i>	<i>220.886</i>		<i>122.402</i>
<i>Result of the year</i>	<i>123.648</i>		<i>98.484</i>
<i>Accounts payable</i>	<i>0</i>		<i>10.990</i>
<i>Accrued expenses/Prepaid amounts</i>	<i>28.046</i>		<i>72.271</i>
<i>Total Liabilities & Equity</i>	<i>372.580</i>		<i>304.147</i>

2. Championships & Competitions

2.1. 3rd IMSA Elite Mind Games 2018 – future events

*Though the organization of the Elite Games is covered by a 4-year frame contract (2016-2019) with the Board and Card Games Administrative Centre of the General Administration of Sport, Beijing (BCGAC) and with the city of Huai'An, during **2018** no organization of the "Elite Games" has taken place. Apparently, this is due to the*

refusal of the BCGAC and/or of the city of Huai'An to admit Guandan as a participant in this event.

Waiting for final confirmation and contract signing, the next edition of the Elite Games is now planned for Dec 10-16, 2019.

According to the IMSA President, most probably, this 3rd edition will be the final one.

For the bridge section, as in the past editions, 24 Men and 24 Women top players will participate in this event. They all will receive a travel subsidy and they are being hosted full board. Sharing an amount of 150k€ (coming from 200 k€ in the past editions) in prize money is also a factor of attraction. Format for bridge = 7 days (against 6 days for the other sports)

The global budget for the IMSA Elite Mind Games now amounts to 1,8 M€.

2.2. IMSA World Masters

A contract has been signed with the Beijing Five Forces Culture Sports Development Co.Ltd covering the organisation of 4 editions of the IMSA World Masters, a new competition format very comparable to the "Elite Games".

From 13-18 May 2019, the 1st edition of the IMSA World Masters has been organized in the city of Hengshui, China. Participating IFs have been: Chess, Bridge, Draughts, Go and Xiangqi. In view of the requirements of the General Administration of Sport in China, though initially foreseen in the contract and in the budget, Guandan has not been allowed to participate (recently the authority over the Federation of Card Games, of which Guandan is a part, has been transferred from the Ministry of Sport to the Ministry for Culture).

More details concerning the participation of bridge in this competition will be given in separate agenda items.

Regarding the finances, the global budget for this event (1,9 Mio € of which some 352 k€ for the bridge section) covers, more or less, the same items for the bridge players (travel subsidies, accommodation, prize money) and for the bridge officials and staff members as foreseen in the Elite Games contract.

Recent developments:

During the SportAccord Convention in Gold Coast, Australia, we had the opportunity to discuss the future relations between GAIFS (the Global Association of International Sports Federations) and IMSA with the GAIFS officials. It was clear that, after the sudden death of Patrick Baumann, GAIFS is searching to identify its own future, comprising the relations with bodies such as IMSA (does GAIFS wants to privilege bilateral relations with the IFs or is there any role for "intermediary" organizations?).

GAIFS has decided to build a portfolio of events who must be sustainable (i.e. based upon a multi-year contract) and, preferably, multi-sports (as in the past: cf. the Urban Games and the Combat Games). In first instance, the "World Masters" format had been offered to GAIFS, adding the requested 250 k€ fee for their logo and support to the budget. For the 2019 edition, no agreement had been reached and the first edition has been organized by IMSA itself (see above). For the 2020 edition, an agreement has been reached with GAIFS to organise the 2nd edition of the World Masters under their umbrella. More details will follow.

2.3. World Mind Sport Games III - 2020

Following the 1st (Beijing, 2008) and the 2nd (Lille, 2012) editions of the WMSG, the project is to organize the WMSG III in (October) 2020 in the city of Qingdao, province of Shangdong, China. This event would include, for bridge, the World Bridge Games (the format used for the 2016 Wroclaw WBG, covering a 2 week period) and, for the other mind games (besides the usual IFs, possibly also card games, E-sports and duplicate Mahjong), about 5 competition days. A budget of 8 M€ covering the various costs of this event has been approved by the city.

During the past months, several site visits and discussions have taken place, preparing the contract and the budget for this event. Because the WBF needs to take position concerning the 2020 World Bridge Games vs. the possible organisation of the WMSG III by IMSA, during this summer, we have been pushing for urgent action.

2.4. IMSA Youth Mind Sport Games

The city of Tianjin, China, is ready to host a youth event for IMSA. The budget would be like the Elite Games (offering travel and accommodation), without prize money. There would also be a financial contribution to IMSA (100 k€) and to each of the participation IFs (40k€).

Awaiting decisions on the contract, at present, the aim would be an "U16" event organised during one week in the month of August 2020. The size of the competition would be rather small (for bridge: 12 boys & 12 girls + accompanying persons + officials & staff).

The Executive Council thanked Mr. De Pauw for his detailed report.

b. SportAccord Convention agenda item #10.1

The President reported that from 5th to 10th May the 17th SportAccord Convention was held in Gold Coast, Australia:

As you know this Convention is an annual meeting, with the attendance of the IOC President and higher Officers, of GAISF, ARISF, IMSA, WADA, the Olympic Associations, the International Sport Federations, the National Olympic Committees, the Sport Media, the Cities involved in Olympic and World events organisation, the Companies supporting and sponsoring sport. In other words, is the annual meeting of the World of Sport.

During the week, there are work-shops, conferences, debates, exhibitions, meetings and in particular the annual General Assembly of GAISF, ARISF and the Meeting of IMSA. The WBF attended all the 17 Conventions, since the 1st in Madrid, May 2003. In Gold Coast I attended the Convention together with Marc De Pauw, David Harris and Simon Fellus. It seems superfluous to remark, once again, the importance of the presence at this “unique” meeting and I am pleased to report to you about what it happened.

ARISF has the role to actively unite, support and represent the interests of the International Sports Federations which have been granted recognition by the International Olympic Committee as per the Olympic Charter. ARISF represents these federations collectively as one of the pillars to the Olympic Movement and promotes the Olympic spirit through the sports which they govern. Through ARISF, the Member Federations maintain an effective dialogue with the IOC and with other sports organisations on matters of common interest. The Assembly, chaired by President Raffaele Chiulli, was held on Sunday 5th May and the WBF by the President Gianarrigo Rona and the Secretary Simon Fellus.

GAISF (Global Association of International Sport Federations)’s General Assembly brings together its 95 Members, 20 Associate Members and 12 Observers to discuss and decide on topics that will influence the direction of the wider sports movement.

On Friday 10th May the GAISF General Assembly was chaired by the acting President Raffaele Chiulli, appointed after the suddenly passing of the President Patrick Baumann. The Assembly was very successful with the participation and the WBF was represented by the President Gianarrigo Rona, the Treasurer Marc De Pauw and the Secretary Simon Fellus. After the Report from the Acting President and the Treasurer, the Assembly unanimously elected Raffaele Chiulli as President. Some changes in the Statutes concerning the rules of Presidency, the procedure of recognition and admission.

The Executive Council thanked the President for his report.

2. Youth Matters agenda item #15

The President read Mr Ata Aydin report on the World Youth Open Championship in Opatija (Mr Aydin due to personal/business situations, didn't have the opportunity to be in China):

2019 (6th) World Youth Open Championships

The championship composed of pairs, teams, board-a-match teams, and individual competitions and an overall ranking in Triathlon are realized with the second highest participation, with 66 teams and 187 pairs in 4 age categories - U26, U20, U26 Woman and U16.

In general Opatija once more proved to be a perfect venue for such youth events not only with its location but also with its vivid environment, being a friendly place to strangers, beautiful landscapes with every means for a nice leisure time and a with its cuisine of wide variety of foods. I can definitely say that complaints were minimal-if any-and everybody had fun which is a very important aspect of any youth event.

Budget wise we had a loss of approximately 3000 Euros due to the financial support that is provided to certain countries.

Its known that the WBF youth events are generally played with high level of fair play without any significant disputes and Opatija 2019 was no exception. There was not a single challenge for directors' rulings.

Nor any demand of a review. In one case – a semifinal match between Australia and Japan- after it was announced that Australia had won by 1 imp difference and accepted by the Japanese team, team Australia protested the result claiming that the score was wrong and the match was a tie which sent the semifinal match to a tiebreak of 2 additional boards.

The Tablets.

For the first time and experimentally, a part of the championships, the BAM, is played with tablets. During and after the event feedback was looked for and the outcome is highly conflicting.

Although the negative and positive feedbacks were proportionally close in numbers, the negatives were quite strong if not harsh. My opinion is that mainly for health reasons, no tournament with a length of more than 2 hours a session and a maximum of 2 sessions a day should be played with the existing tablets. If the tablets are to be implemented into bridge championships they are to be much improved technologically. The existing state of the tablets are by no means adequate. On the other hand, adaptation and adjustment of the rules for tablet tournaments are strongly recommended.

Democratic Republic of the Congo participation incident.

This one controversial incident in the event is perhaps to be discussed during the executive meeting therefore I omit to go into details.

Commenting the report, the President said that at the end the accounts will show a substantial break-even and reminded that the expenses of the Youth Championships are covered by the Youth Fund and in case of profit it will be transferred to the Youth Fund.

Concerning the Democratic Republic of Congo, the President Reported that his friend Riccardo Fraccari, President of the International Federation of Baseball and Softball introduced to him Mr Sharadi Kanga, President of the Congolese Bridge Federation (and also of the Baseball Bridge Federation) who was in Lausanne in their office for a meeting. Mr. Kanga met Simon Fellus on 11th July requesting to affiliate to the WBF and to the ABF the Congolese Federation and asking to have the opportunity to participate with one youth team in the Opatija World Championship. This participation will make they available for support and subsidy by the Congo Olympic

Committee. He delivered to Simon the application, together with the Statutes and the composition of the Board. I informed immediately Bernard Pascal, ABF President, for the needed arrangements and also informed Mr. Kanga that we accept a Congo Youth Team in Opatija, giving a temporary recognition to make perfect by the Executive Council in Wuhan, after duly carrying out the provision of our Statutes and By-laws. The Congolese youth teams had a lot of problems and vicissitudes concerning the issue of the visa and the travel that at the end have been solved thanks the efforts done by Jurica Caric, Croatian Federation President, who involved directly the Croatian Prime Minister, his good friend. Finally they arrived in Opatija, just at the end of the Round Robin and before the start of the Tablets Tournament. Three players with Mr. Kanga reached the venue and we meet them. Mr. Kanga reported that the players were very stressed, in particular the fourth player, who was in bed, because of the very bad and brutal treatment received by the custom police at their entry in Croatia (not himself holding a diplomatic passport). The President told us that he had to go to Paris for business, coming back the day after. In any case just at the start of the Tablet competition the three players arrived saying that the fourth was not able to participate because still stressed. E arranged a fourth player and they played. Immediately we discovered that they were total beginners with very little and approximate knowledge of bridge, producing terrible results in the hands by them played. When after two rounds they referred to be to stressed and tired we were very happy to accept they forfeiture. The problem arises the day after when Mr. Caric told us that the Police referred to him that the Congolese players paid the hotel and disappeared. We contacted by phone Mr. Kanga who replied that he did not where the players were and that he was not able to contact them, but he had to go back immediately to Congo by order of the Sport Ministry. After the Championship I talk with the Baseball Federation and they told me that never had problems with Congo. We will try to have further news, but in any case the application of Democratic Republic of Congo for the moment is frozen.

The President remarked the success of the championship and expressed once again the gratitude to the Croatian Bridge Federation and its President Jurica Caric, the City of Opatija and the Amadria Park and its Manager Vedran Grzetic, with a special thank to the Croatian Prime Minister, Mr. Andrej Plenkovic who personally welcomed the participant at the Opening Ceremony, attended also by the Ministry of Turism, Mr Gari Cappelli, the President of the Croatian Olympic Committee, Mr. Zlatko Matesa and authorities from the City and the Region.

The President showed the "statistic" of the participation, remarking the massive participation of Chinese players in Under 26 Women and in Under 16:

STATISTICS WORLD YOUTH OPEN BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIP						
PAIRS						
Year	Venue	Under 26 Op.	Under 21	Under 26 Wom	Under 16	Total
2009	Istanbul	94	NO	NO	NO	94
2011	Opaija	61	NO	NO	NO	61
2013	Atlanta	32	40	12	NO	84
2015	Opatija	37	21	23	41	122

2017	Lyon	35	37	42	78	192
2019	Opatija	49	54	27	56	186

TEAMS						
Year	Venue	Under 26 Op.	Under 21	Under 26 Wom	Under 16	Total
2009	Istanbul	40	NO	NO	NO	40
2011	Opatija	27	NO	NO	NO	27
2013	Atlanta	12	15	NO	NO	27
2015	Opatija	16	8	7	13	44
2017	Lyon	17	12	15	26	70
2019	Opatija	20	20	10	15	65

INDIVIDUAL						
Year	Venue	Under 26 Op.	Under 21	Under 26 Wom	Under 16	Total
2019	Opatija	67	66	24	99	256

BAM TABLET CONS		
Year	Venue	Total
2019	Opatija	48

36 Countries (EBL 24 - NABF 2 - CSB 3 - BFAME. 1 - APBF 4 - SP 1 - ABF 1)
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Mr Simon Fellus read Mrs Sevinç Atay report:

Upward trend in the Under 16 category continued in Opatija. A new record in participation was established in Opatija last August which surpassed the Lyon 2017 attendance figures

The overwhelming participation from China was of course an important factor. China's firm support for mind games in general and youth bridge in particular is highly commendable for which we are most grateful.

An important first in the World Youth Open in Opatija was the introduction of "tablet bridge" for the BAM event. In my several discussions with kids, I found out that the majority of the players preferred playing with cards in these championships.

Many players had reservations prior to the beginning of the Individual event as well. However, positive impressions were received as the tournament progressed.

The Under 16 series will continue to develop in the upcoming international events and we shall do our best to promote this important category.

Mr Eitan Levy and Mr Kamras pointed out that reading the numbers is a reductive perspective. Analyzing the data, it comes out that comparing to the EBL European

Pairs Championship that took place in the same place (Opatija) in 2018, the number of European pairs attending the World Championships is considerably lower. They suggested that the Youth committee should investigate why the participation of the NBOs is decreasing.

The President observed that the Open Youth World Championships some time take place after the half of August, when in Northern Europe and other Countries schools have already started. It has to be considered to harmonize the calendar of the Youth Open Championships, both World and European.

The Executive Council thanked the President, Mr. Aydin and Mrs. Atay for their report, congratulating them and the Youth and Kids Committee for the success of the event.

3. WBF Eligibility Code & Eligibility Criteria agenda item # 11

The President reminded that at the Meeting of the Management Committee in Lucignano Mr. Kamras raised the issue of the current situation relating to the apparent abuse by individuals seeking to circumvent and/or exploit the rules relating to Bona Fide residence. There have been several examples where the credibility of the genuine nature of supposed Bona Fide Residence is at best highly questionable. He proposed to strengthen the application of the rules. In the occasion the members from the HLPC expressed the players' view that this abuse was undesirable and should be avoided in the future. It was accepted that those cases where a person had genuinely relocated to a country that was not the country of their birth and were able to demonstrate the same to the satisfaction of the Credentials Committee, was a legitimate and proper application of the policy. The Management Committee approved to adopt the BFR Requirements requested by the EBL, to avoid any possible conflict of rules (see the delivered Minutes of the M.C. Meeting).

The President added that doubts have arisen about the interpretation of the Eligibility Code and the Credentials Committee examined and discussed the matter.

Mr De Pauw reported that, the general idea is to make the Eligibility Code and the Bona Fide Criteria more transparent, clear and coherent. If this objective is reached, certainly in cases of "Bona Fide" players, the Credentials Committee would be in an easier position to apply the rules. Also, in our relations with CAS, clarity in our eligibility rules, would be in our favour.

The Executive Council unanimously agreed and after the discussion requested to the Credentials Committee to draft such rules and submit them to the Management Committee Meeting in December in San Francisco for the approval of the final text.

4. Disciplinary Matters: HLPC position and recommendation about discipline agenda item #12.4

The President invited Mr Philippe Cronier, HLPC Chairman, to join the Meeting and together with Mr Duboin they presented their proposal as follows:

In recent years, many steps have been taken to protect the integrity of the game by adopting new control systems. Most of the tables are monitored by video cameras and, recently, supplementary rules to the competition code have been introduced aimed at regulating the "passage of the tray", the handling of the cards and the curtain as well as the orientation and arrangement of the cards played.

The purpose of these guidelines are to provide greater control over all that happens at the table that involves a potential "ethical" violation or, in any case, that goes beyond the common sense of sports fair play according to the following provisions:

1.1) All TD reports that presuppose an ethical violation will be recorded and filed in a specific database that can be accessed by the WBF disciplinary organs.

1.2) The TDs must compile reports for all calls that may satisfy the conditions set out above.

1.3) The first infraction assuming the characteristics described in point 1 will be subject to a verbal warning.

1.4) The repetition of the same infringement will result in an automatic procedural penalty according to the criteria of the type of tender being held.

1.5) The third violation of the same type will be the responsibility of the arbitration panel to recommend an intervention by the disciplinary organs at the end of a disciplinary procedure and, in parallel, to suspend the pair for the following two rounds of competition. In a pair tournament, the pair will be eliminated.

1.6) In the case of offenses differing in form but nevertheless invalidating the principles of sporting ethics, the TD will transmit the data to the database and, at the same time, check whether the profile of the player in question already exist.

1.7) At the third violation that assumes the characteristics referred to in the previous point, it will be the responsibility of the arbitration panel to make an official complaint against the player under examination. The fourth violation will involve the restrictions regulated in point 1.5.

1.8) The data will remain stored in the database without time limit but the rules will be applied only referring to the last 5 years starting from the date of entry of the violation.

The meeting thanked and congratulated Mr. Duboin and Mr. Cronier for their report. The President remarked that some of the points reported have already been introduced in the Conditions of Contest and are in effect, but that all the suggestions presented by the HLPC will be considered and all the related actions will be taken.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 to be reconvened on Thursday, 19th September at 14:00.