



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Buenos Aires, Argentina
24th - 26th October 2024

Thursday, 24th of October at 14:30

In Attendance

Mr Jan Kamras, President
Mr Ben Thompson, 1st Vice President
Mr Eric Laurant, 2nd Vice President
Mr José Damiani, President Emeritus
Mr Adam Wildavsky, Hon. Secretary
Mr Marc de Pauw, Treasurer
Mr Marcelo Caracci, Member
Mr Igor Chalupec, Member
Mrs Catherine Draper, HLPC Member
Mr Nader Hanna, Member
Mr Gonzalo Herrera, Member
Mrs Helen Kruger, Member
Mr Fernando Lema, Member
Mr Kirubakara Moorthy, Member
Mr Bernard Pascal, Member
Mr Franck Riehm, Member
Mr Douglas (Kip) Rotchell, Member
Mr AJ Stephani, Member
Mrs Yannan Wang, Member

Also, in Attendance

Ms Arianna Testa, Secretary to the Executive Council
Ms Lilian Sun, Interpreter

Online

Mr Gilad Ofir, Member
Mrs Suzi Subeck, Member
Mr David Harris, General Counsel

Excused

Mr Patrick Choy, Member
Mrs Kari-Anne Opsal, Member
Mr Chip Martel, Member

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

1. Opening & Greetings

The President welcomed the Council to Buenos Aires and the meeting. The President welcomed Mrs Suzi Subeck and Mr Gilad Ofir, who joined online.

2. President's Report

The President's report was previously circulated and unanimously approved without any comment or questions.

3. Zonal Reports

The reports from the zone were commented on. Mr Marcelo Caracci announced his retirement from the Council. Zone 2 raised the issue of Women's Online Events clashing with Canadian Nationals 2 years in a row. The matter will be referred to the Women's Committee for discussion. Zone 8 strongly objected to the proposed voting rights change, as Zone 3 did.

WBF would prefer that zones hold their zonal championships (qualifying for the WTC) no later than April of the year of the World Teams Championships so that there is time to register teams, process paperwork, invite replacement teams, etc.

The members had an extended debate about what is an essential element of WBF statutes & by-laws that Zones need to be consistent with. A broad view that we should clarify in statutes or by-laws what is meant; focus on principles, e.g., non-discrimination

The Council discussed the proposal for the new voting structure for Congress. Given it's a major change with significant implications, it's crucial that the process put the proposal and effect the changes.

4. Approval of the minutes of Marrakech

The Executive Council unanimously approved the minutes of the Marrakech's meeting.

5. Approval of the minutes of the MC in Louisville and Herning

The Executive Council unanimously approved the minutes of the Management Committee meetings in Louisville and Herning.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the accounts for 2022-2023, the Report to Congress, the 2023 Accounts approved by the MC for the Auditors, and the budget for 2025.

The Executive Council unanimously approved the Treasurer's Report (with the abstention of the Treasurer).

The Treasurer informed the Council that the Auditors from EY will end their mandate with the WBF, he will therefore contact other firms to be the new Auditors.

The Executive Council gave full power to the Management Committee to approve the new Auditors.

7. Finances, updates, and projections for 2024

Current new entries to secondary events are lower than expected (especially the Pairs); there seems unlikely to be a substantive surplus.

We still don't have the final results for Youth Transnational in Wroclaw, but participation was substantial, and we expect a small surplus. The final accounts will be presented in February 2025.

2025 Budget

- a. Assumed dues indexation gets passed (about 85k of the dues income is because of this)
- b. Noted have received feedback from some NBOs that they will vote for the one-time increase but not the indexed increases
- c. Herning – we just received a reaction to our proposal; as it is, we will not realize the 65k surplus in the budget, may not break even
- d. Overall, expecting 2025 to be a challenging year for the WBF (it will be hard to break even)

8. Increase/Indexation dues

EC has approved putting these proposals to Congress.

At 15.45, Mr Kirubakara Moorthy left the meeting.

9. Championship Staff Compensation

EBL is looking to increase tournament staff compensation.

WBF is considering if/what this would mean for our staff compensation.

We have done some modelling but are not ready to present a proposal to the EC yet. The President and the Treasurer will develop material and share it via email with the EC.

10. Zonal matters

Combined with 3. Zonal Reports item

11. Statutes

The President has asked the Statutes Committee to draft a complete statute revamp.

12. Eligibility Code

Discussion of the draft revision of the Eligibility Code

- supported that the only opportunity to use the Nationality basis (rather than the BFR basis) for choosing your NBO is at your first election
- approved revised eligibility code, effective immediately

13. Gender policy

WBF has an Open category, in which everyone is welcome to play. We have less risk than many sports because we don't deny people the opportunity to compete, only the opportunity to compete in a particular category. The General Counsel will gather information on CAS gender determination cases (number, outcome, key issues), and he will develop a legal opinion. The President will ask the Statutes & By-Laws Committee to make a recommendation to be then formalized in the Conditions of Contest.

14. Love Bridge

EBL contracted with Love Bridge for 2024 & 2025, and WBF only contracted for 2024. The cost to WBF will be between US\$12-15. Players appreciate the advantages of the tablets for bidding, and TDs have 30% fewer calls.

15. Nordic Bridge Union's concerns

The discussion was combined with 16. Championships item

16. Championships – Formats/Duration

- Herning will be 2 days less than previous world championships.
- Even year tournaments should be held in Europe or America.
- Odd-year events (Bermuda Bowl, Venice Cup, D'Orsi Trophy, and Wuhan Cup) can be held in different parts of the World.

2025 WTC would have been in Macau (but the Chinese National Games took precedence late in the process); 2027 might be elsewhere.

- To reduce tournament length – could play more boards per day
 - e.g. 4x14 per day vs 3x16 per day
 - in Buenos Aires, players in the Mixed here are very unhappy with the format (5x10 per day)
 - There are concerns that 4 days of qualifying would be costly [for teams that only come for the qualifying of the main event] – but players predominantly stay for the full duration
 - Australia + NZ are ok with 6+6 (6d qualifying, 6d finals) but very opposed to 4d qualifying (plus anything for finals) and 4d is too short

The discussion will continue when Mr Chip Martel joins the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 17.50 to be reconvened on Friday the 25th.

Friday, 25th of October at 10:15

In Attendance

Mr Jan Kamras, President
Mr Ben Thompson, 1st Vice President
Mr Eric Laurant, 2nd Vice President
Mr José Damiani, President Emeritus
Mr Adam Wildavsky, Hon. Secretary
Mr Marc de Pauw, Treasurer
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Ms Arianna Testa, Secretary to the Executive Council
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Excused

Mr Patrick Choy, Member

The President called the meeting to order at 10:15. He declared a quorum, and the meeting proceeded as follows.

Zonal Report Part II

Mr Bernard Pascal presented the report from zone 8 and expressed his disappointment with the loss of value of the EC members who are not involved in the decisions.

After a discussion about the proposal on the changes of the voting rights to be submitted to Congress, the EC unanimously approved the withdrawal of the proposal and the postponement of it to the next Congress.

17. World Bridge Games, Buenos Aires

The number of entries is disappointing. The EC tried to understand the reasons for this and discussed potential formats for the Pairs events.

18. Future Championships

2024 Small Feds

Mr Kip Rotchell, Chairman of the Small Fed Committee, gave an update. For the first edition, they expect about 30 teams. The organization is going well.

2025 World Youth Teams

The Council is leaning towards Salsomaggiore, Italy.
Mr Franck Riehm will look for a venue in France.

2025 WTC

Herning is a suitable emergency solution. Even though there are no 5-star hotels in town, the city offers a variety of dining options.

2026 World Youth Transnationals

Opatija is a potential location.

2026 World Bridge Series

The President of the PBU, Mr Marek Michalowski, presented Katowice to the Council. The venue would be available from the 18th of August to the 3rd of September 2026, so the dates of the Championships could be 20th of August – 2nd of September.

The EC took a soft decision and decided to proceed with the negotiation if the conditions were satisfying.

2027 Youth Teams

We are investigating potential locations. One is Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy. There might be an offer from Warsaw (Warsaw University Library building) and Hurghada that is suitable for the youth. Mr Bernard Pascal will investigate the possibility of holding a youth event in Hurghada.

2027

A delegation from Barbados, Mr Kamal Springer (Barbados Board of Tourism), Mrs Judy Payne, and Mr Kemuel Burke joined the meeting online to present Bridgetown as a potential host city for 2027.

Other proposals could come from Urghada, Egypt, Delhi, India, Qingdao, or Shanghai, China.

Celebration of Bermuda Bowl 75th Anniversary in 2025

The President proposed replicating the original event, inviting two teams, North America vs Europe (the original Bowl had Britain as well), for a 3 (or 4) day event.

Mr Kip Rotchell will test the interest with Bermuda authorities.

19. Bridge Development Group

Franck presented various initiatives of the French Federation

- Petit Bridge
- BRIDGEpedia
- Battle 13

20. Olympic eSports Games & 52 Entertainment

WBF is working on submitting the proposal to the IOC for the next Olympic eSport Games. Being part of the event would increase the chance of NBOs getting into national OC and getting some local Olympic funding.

21. IMSA

Geoffrey Borg joined the meeting to provide an update on what is happening with IMSA.

The meeting was adjourned at 17.00 and will be reconvened on Saturday the 26th, after the Congress.

Saturday, 26th of October at 13:30

In Attendance

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Mr Ben Thompson, 1st Vice President
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22. World "Online" Championship

The President Emeritus, Mr José Damiani, presented the WOK during Congress. Mr Damiani explained that the 52E proposal would be no risk to WBF and could realize some revenue if successful. The intention would be to distribute some share of profits to NBOs that actively promote the WOC (from their profit share to participation).

24. AOB

Congress debrief: The Council received good feedback. The proposal on the dues increase was approved; indexation was rejected.

Committees

With Mr Marcelo Caracci retiring, the President proposed that Mr Adam Wildavsky become chair of the Technology Committee.

The Executive Council unanimously approved.

The President also proposed Mrs Suzi Subeck replace Mr Adam Wildavsky as chair of the Rules & Regulations Committee.

The Executive Council unanimously approved.

Seminars

The new format was very successful (Bangkok, May 2024).

The next one should be in the Western Hemisphere in 2026: it could be in Acapulco or Zone 5.

The meeting was adjourned at 15.15 *sine die*.