



THE WORLD BRIDGE FEDERATION

**MINUTES OF THE 1st MEETING
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Philadelphia, USA
Friday, 9th March 2018 at 10:00**

In Attendance

Mr Gianarrigo Rona, President in the Chair
Mr José Damiani, President Emeritus
Mr John Wignall, 1st Vice President
Mr Al Levy, Executive Vice President
Mr Yves Aubry, Vice President
Mr Patrick Choy, Vice President
Mr Mazhar Jafri, Vice President
Mr Radoslaw Kielbasinski, Vice President
Mr Marc De Pauw, Treasurer
Ms Georgia Heth, Hon. Secretary
Mrs Sevinç Atay, Member
Mr Marcelo Caracci, 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

Also in Attendance

Mr Simon Fellus, WBF Secretary
Ms Carol von Linstow, Secretary to the Executive Council

Excused

Mr Giorgio Duboin, Member
Mrs Chen Zelan, Member
Mr Josef Harsanyi, 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. Opening & Greetings

The President welcomed the members to the meeting, in particular the President Emeritus, José Damiani. He noted that Mrs Chen Zelan was unable to attend due to previous commitments. He reported that Giorgio Duboin had broken his hip; and Josef Harsanyi and Janice Seamon-Molson were both indisposed. The President thanked the ACBL and the new President, Mr Jay Whipple III for their generous hospitality in hosting these meetings. There was much to be done in the next six months which is why he had called a meeting of the Executive Council rather than the Officers.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the E.C. Meetings in Lyon 2017

The Minutes of the 7 meetings held in Lyon, France in 2017 – previously circulated to the Executive – were approved unanimously.

3. President's Report

The President read his report which covered his numerous activities since Lyon.

Since then, he had travelled extensively in the course of which he had visited most of the Zones. The details of his work would appear in the course of the meetings.

The Executive Council congratulated the President on his excellent and detailed report.

4. Treasurer's Report

4.1 2017 Balance Sheet

The Treasurer presented the 2017 Balance Sheet which has been submitted to the auditors and, once this has been finalised, it will be sent to the Swiss fiscal authorities. The global bonus was of €353,270 and the Treasurer proposed the following allocations:

- To the Youth Fund	35.290
- To the Promotion & Development Fund	61.770
- To the General Provision Fund	50.000
- To the Equity of the WBF	206.210

With these figures, at the end of 2017 the financial situation of the WBF (figures in k€) is:

Equity	Youth Fund	P&D Fund	Gen. Prov.	Total Finances
2.196	152	87	175	2.610

Since the WBF has now have a large credit balance at the banks, we will need to re-visit our investment policies and take some advice.

The Executive congratulated the Treasurer on his very clear and detailed report and on the excellent job done, achieving such result.

The balance sheet and the allocations were approved with the abstention of the Treasurer.

4.2 2018 Budget

The Treasurer presented the updated Budget for 2018, remarking that first to be noticed is the effects of the weakening US\$ against €. The adopted exchange rate (1€ = 1,20\$ / 1\$ = 0,833€) and the Budget showing a surplus of some 148 k€ (177 k) were unanimously approved.

It was unanimously suggested that, in future, the contribution of \$300,000 that an NBO has to provide the WBF to host an event should be reduced.

5. Memberships

5.1 General

Zone 1 – compared to 2017, there are now 11,052 fewer players with the biggest losses coming from France and The Netherlands.

Zone 2 – a reduction of 2431 compared to 2017 from the USA.

Zone 3 – most of the countries have not responded to the request for membership figures. The Treasurer asked Mr Caracci to investigate.

Zone 4 – There is a problem with most of the countries not having provided any figures. It was decided that Saudi Arabia, being a completely new structure under the umbrella of the NOC, will be re-admitted without penalty into Zone 4.

Zone 5 – Mrs Rayner will chase up the countries that have not provided any information.

Zone 6 – China, Chinese Taipei, Indonesia and Korea have not replied.

Zone 7 – French Polynesia were expelled in 2017.

Zone 8 – Madagascar, Morocco and Tunisia have failed to provide any current figures. Mr Pascal will follow up.

The general trend, which has been going on for some years, is a reduction in the overall membership.

5.2 Affiliations

5.2.1 Haiti

Mrs Rayner was in on-going contact with Haiti who are still keen on affiliation.

5.2.2 Saudi Arabia

Mr Jafri reported on the recent request received from Saudi Arabia to join the WBF after the Saudi Arabian government had finally acknowledged bridge as a sport. This is a major success for bridge. The President thanked Mr Jafri for his work in achieving this result. The Executive unanimously approved the affiliation of the Bridge Committee of Saudi Arabia under the Umbrella of SAFEIS, incorporating it in Zone 4, BFAME..

The Treasurer noted that a Saudi Arabia Federation was in the past member of the WBF. The President and Mr. Jafri remarked that the Bridge Committee of Saudi Arabia is a complete new organisation, without any relation with the previous and recommended to consider its affiliation ex novo. The Executive approved

5.2.3 – Vietnam

The President reported on the request received from the Vietnam Bridge & Poker Federation, accompanied by all the requested documents including the official recognition by the Vietnam Olympic Committee. He forwarded the documents to the Zone 6 President Esther Sophonpanich who visited in Ho Chi Min City the representatives of the Federation and gave her positive opinion.

The Executive unanimously approved the affiliation of the Vietnam Bridge & Poker Federation, incorporating it in Zone 4, APBF.

5.3 Suspension

5.3.1 – Position of Kuwait

The IOC has suspended Kuwait which, therefore, cannot participate in any IOC event unless under the IOC flag. This will also apply to WBF events.

5.3.2 Position of Cameroon, Nigeria and Zimbabwe after removal

Mr Pascal confirmed the removal and that no activity had been done by the three NBOs to be reinstated.

5.3.3 Position of Bolivia, Paraguay and Ecuador

Mr Caracci reported that he would contact these countries and report back to the Treasurer.

5.3.4 Position of French Polynesia

Mr Wignall reported that French Polynesia is not interested in playing either in Zone 7 or in the WBF.

5.3.5 Zone 5 NBOs not in good standing

Mrs Rayner reported that Panama will pay the 2017 and 2018 dues to CABF and the WBF and will rejoin both organizations.

6. Disciplinary Matters

6.1 The German Case

General Counsel provided an update in respect of the decision made by the Appeal Court in Dusseldorf brought by Elinescu and Wladow. He reported that having considered the reasons for their decision and discussed the same with our German and Swiss Lawyers, an application to seek permission to appeal to the Federal Court of Justice was most unlikely to succeed. Under German law, decisions relating the application of foreign law are not generally appealable and, even if allowed, the likelihood of success on any appeal would be low. If successful, the probable outcome would be a referral back to the same Court in Dusseldorf that had already given an adverse decision. Using additional funds to pursue such an appeal without merit under the German legal system would not be justifiable.

6.2 The Fantoni-Nunes Case

Mr Aubry reported that following the adverse decision of CAS in respect of the Fantoni-Nunes case, the EBL Executive Committee had decided that there was no good reason to appeal the decision.

A copy of decision by the Regional Administrative Court for Lazio refusing the application of Fantoni-Nunes to suspend the decision of the FIGB was provided to the Executive Council and reported upon by the President, who informed that the hearing on the merit will be held on 18 December 2018.

6.3 The Principle of Reciprocity and the position of the Spanish Bridge Federation

General Counsel reported that following reports that Fantoni was playing in the Bridge Festival in Barcelona at the beginning of February, the EBL sent out formal notifications to their NBOs informing them of the decision taken by the FIGB in respect of Fantoni and Nunes. The decision of the FIGB (confirmed by the CONI Tribunal) was that Fantoni and Nunes were suspended from all

federation activities for 3 years ending 19th April 2019. NBOs were reminded of their obligations to respect the decision of the FIGB and reciprocate in its application.

Consequent upon that notification the WBF sent a similar notification to all NBOs (copy attached to these minutes).

The President of the Spanish Bridge Federation had responded to receipt of those communications (copy attached to these minutes) to state that this was his first official notification of these matters and seeking assistance as to how and what action if any could or should be taken. It was not accepted that the CAS decision had any bearing or relevance to the FIGB decision suspending Fantoni-Nunes and confirmed it remains in force until April 2019 or at least until the decision of the Appeal in that matter has been concluded in December 2018.

It was agreed that a suitably worded response would be drafted and sent to the President of the Spanish Bridge Federation by the President of the WBF confirming our position.

6.4 HLPC

Philippe Cronier provided a written report on adverse player reaction to Fantoni playing in Barcelona. This response was supported by an e-mail provided from Giorgio Duboin but with a plea that the primary importance for the WBF and the Zones is that we take care of the integrity of the Official Championships. Private Organisers might be discouraged by players from accepting entries from "unwanted players" if it might have the effect of reducing the attendance by the usual attendees as a result. However, the WBF and the Zones should not involve themselves in such a movement.

6.5 Credentials Committee

Yves Aubry reported on the position of the Credentials Committee. It is confirmed the Committee is not required to give reasons for its decisions to refuse or withdraw an invitation to participate in our Championships. However, such a decision may be subject to challenge before CAS and it is therefore important that the Committee has a clear rational reason for taking such action.

The meeting was adjourned at 17:10 to be resumed at 09:00 on Saturday, 10th March 2018.